TORAH TREATS

An Anthology of Short Divrei Torah & Stories

Compiled by Yitzchok Henry











לעילוי נשמת

אבי מורי ר' גדליה דוד ב"ר איסר הענרי ע"ה

ר' איסר ב"ר זרח הענרי ע"ה

ואשתו מרת גאלדא ב"ר יצחק אהרן ע"ה

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Authors of the High Holiday Prayers

The following are brief biographical notes on some of the paytanim/liturgists who authored the additional prayers which are recited during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

The identity of the most prolific paytan, R' Elazar Hakalir, is unknown.

R' Shimon Hagadol lived in the 10th century and may have been Rashi's uncle. His biography appeared in Hamaayan for Bemidbar 5758.

The story of how R' Amnon composed U'nettaneh Tokef is well-known. In contrast, the person himself is unknown, other than the fact that he lived in Mainz, Germany around the year 1000. After his death, R' Amnon appeared in a dream to R' Meshullam ben Kolonimus of Lucca, also known as R' Meshullam Hagadol ("the Great"), and taught him U'nettaneh Tokef. The version of the Yom Kippur Avodah (the description of the Temple service) recited by Ashkenazim is the work of R' Meshullam, as are many other piyutim.

While the basic prayers of Tashlich are taken from Tanach, some machzorim include additional supplications by R' Chaim Yosef David

Azulai ("Chida"). He was born in Chevron in 1724 and died in Italy in 1806. He wrote approximately 70 books on halachah, kabbalah, chumash, bibliography and other subjects.

R' Yose ben Yose Hakohen lived in the sixth century in Eretz Yisrael. He and his colleagues wrote liturgy whose purpose was to teach Torah at a time when open Torah study had been outlawed by the Byzantine emperors.

R' Yom Tov ben Yitzchak of Joigny was a student of Rashi's grandson, Rabbenu Tam. R' Yom Tov was martyred in York, England in 1191.

R' Shlomo ibn Gabirol lived in Spain in the 11th century. He also wrote works on philosophy and ethics.

R' Shlomo Habavli – his full name is believed to be R' Shlomo bar Yehuda – is thought to have lived before 990. He was referred to by one of Rashi's teachers as one of the "Kedoshei Elyon"/"exalted, holy ones." He should not be confused with R' Shlomo Ha'sfardi, i.e., R' Shlomo ben Yehuda ibn Gabirol, who was roughly his contemporary.

R' Eliyahu bar Shemayahu lived in Bari, Italy in the late 10th and early 11th centuries. About forty of his selichot are extant.

R' Shephatiah was a well-known kabbalist who lived in Oria, Italy. When the Byzantine emperor Basil I issued anti-Jewish decrees in 873, R' Shephatiah traveled to Constantinople to convince the emperor to annul his decrees. While there, R' Shephatiah cured the emperor's daughter who had been "possessed." As a result, the emperor released the Jews of Oria and four other communities from his decrees. R' Shephatiah's son, R' Amittai, also was a prolific author of selichot.

Some of the piyutim recited during ne'ilah are fragments of longer works by R' Shephatiah (mentioned above), by the Tosafist R' Yitzchak of Dampierre, who was Rashi's great-grandson, and by one R' Silano of 9th century Italy.

The identity of R' Binyamin bar Zerach is uncertain. Some say that he lived in late seventh-century Germany and identify him as the first dayan/Torah judge in that country. Others find allusions in his works to the First Crusade (1096), and place him later. Some refer to him as "R' Binyamin Ba'al Shem."

R' Yosef ben Avisur lived in 10th century Spain.

One of the most famous piyutim, the story of the Ten Martyrs as told during the Yom Kippur mussaf, was written by one R' Yehuda, whose identity is unknown.

Why? by R' Yaakov Mizrahi



The first mitzvah of the year is called Shofar. Have you ever thought about it? This Mitzvah is a *Chok* – It really does not make sense to us. That we have a commandment on the first day of the year to take a horn and to blow it a certain number of times with a certain sound.- That really does not make sense to us. Can anyone explain why we have to hear a horn? I understand that there are various remazim for this mitzvah, but can anyone really explain the depth of this mitzvah?

This is in a way, a very big chok. I think that this is the most beautiful way to begin the year, and the most beautiful way to crown Hashem. We are doing something that to us, makes zero sense!

It makes zero sense, and we're still going to go to shul, and we're still going to put our tallis over our head, and we're still going to listen to the shofar, and I have no clue what I'm doing!



I don't know why Hashem wants me to hear a long tekiah, and then a 'tu,tu,tu', and then 'tu,tu,tu,tu,tu,tu tu,tu,tu,tu,tu,tu', and then again the tekiah! - I have no clue why this is! Zero clue! This does not make sense to us. This is beyond our comprehension.

And that's exactly precisely the most beautiful way to start the year. By telling Borei Olam, "Hashem, who cares if I understand or not? At the end of the day, if You said we should do it, we're going to do it. Because we want to be Your *Eved*."

That's what an 'Eved Hashem' is. - Someone that understands that Hashem is the only One Who is in control, and whatever He says, goes.

Be'Ezras Hashem, we will be zoche to have a beautiful Rosh Hashono and be better people, and to realize that everything that happens, is all decreed from Above for our good, as Hashem loves us endlessly.

"Each good point within you, every mitzvah and good deed you do is like a musical note. These notes come together to create exquisite songs – your own beautiful melodies." ~ Rabbi Lazer Brody.

Even if you are on the right track, if you just sit there and do nothing, you'll still get run over!

בס"ד

למודי משה

A New Look at the *She'he chiyanu* We Recite on Rosh Hashanah Night

At the beginning of each Yom Tov, we recite the *berachah* of *she'hechiyanu*, thanking Hashem for keeping us alive and sustaining us to reach this special Yom Tov. However, Rav Pinchas Goldwasser suggests that the *berachah* of *she'hechiyanu* that we say on Rosh Hashanah is unique. He explains that as a person progresses through the year and recites the *berachah* with tremendous gratitude and enthusiasm on Succos, Chanukah, Purim, Pesach, and Shavuos, he has no way of shaking the doubt that he may not survive that year.

The fact that he survived to enjoy yet another Yom Tov mandates a blessing expressing his appreciation, yet it provides no guarantee that he was sealed last Yom Kippur in the book of life. Sadly, we have all heard tragic stories of people dying just before Rosh Hashanah, at which time it becomes clarified that they were inscribed in the book of death, just that they were given more time to enjoy their final year than others.

The moment at which it becomes retroactively revealed that a person's repentance last year was accepted and he merited to live another year is the night of Rosh Hashanah. As the solemnity appropriate for the Day of Judgment descends upon a person with its onset, he may take inspiration from the simultaneous recognition that it is precisely the arrival of this awesome day which signals that he succeeded last year in the *teshuvah* upon which he is about to embark once again.

As a person returns home from *shul* and raises his cup to make *kiddush*, it behoves him to reflect upon the mercy Hashem showed in granting him another year of life. This recognition should fill him

with an unbelievable feeling of gratitude, and in the merit that he properly expresses his appreciation when he says the *berachah* of *she'hechiyanu* blessing, he should be able to do so once again next Rosh Hashanah. (R' Ozer Alport)

Why We Dip the Apple into Bee Honey and Not Date Honey



The *Rema* (*Orach Chaim* 583:1) records a custom to dip a sweet apple into honey on Rosh Hashanah and to *daven* that it should be a good omen for us to have a sweet new year. For this purpose, we traditionally use honey made by bees.

In *Parshas Ki Savo* (*Devorim* 26:9), the Torah describes Eretz Yisroel as a land flowing with milk and honey. This expression also appears in *Parshas Bo* (*Shemos* 13:5), where Rashi writes that the honey for which Eretz Yisroel is praised is that which flows from dates. Similarly, Rashi writes in his commentary on the Gemara (*Eruvin* 4b) that whenever the Torah discusses *devash* [honey], it is referring to honey that comes from dates. If so, why do we use honey made by bees instead of date-honey, which is the *devash* of the Torah?

Rav Yisroel Reisman notes that a key difference between the two types of *devash* is that date-honey flows naturally from the sticky fruit and is therefore easily gathered, while the sweet honey produced by bees can only be obtained with significant effort and danger. To remove honey from a beehive, one must cover his entire body in special garments to protect him from the angry swarming

bees, and even then, there is a risk that some of the bees will manage to sting him as he takes their precious honey.

When we dip an apple into honey as a symbolic sign for a sweet year, we do not use date-honey because something that is easily acquired does not represent the sweetness that we desire, which is the product of hard work and the occasional painful sting. As we know from our own life experiences, an accomplishment that is only reached after much struggle and exertion is far more gratifying than one handed to us on a silver platter, and for this reason, we specifically use bee honey on Rosh Hashanah to denote the type of sweetness we seek in the year ahead.

Rav Reisman adds that this insight can also help us appreciate why the *Rema* specifies that we should use a sweet apple for this practice, even though sweet apples are typically red, which is a color associated with sin. However, although the apple appears red externally, it is white on the inside. Sweet years are never purely white, and there is always an element of redness mixed in. The true sweetness comes when we persevere in spite of the setbacks and challenges represented by the red peel and uncover the whiteness waiting within. (R' Ozer Alport)

'בִּשְׁבִילִי נִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם'

The Talmud (Sanhedrin 37a) teaches, "Each person must say, 'The world was created for my sake.'"

We are obligated to be aware of our own greatness. Feel proud that you are created in the image of G-d. Pride in the awareness of the greatness and elevation of your soul is not only proper, but it is actually an obligation. It is a binding duty to recognize your virtues and to live with this awareness.

A *Remez* Hidden Inside the Order of the *Shofar* Blasts

The *Gemara* in Rosh Hashanah (34a) quotes various opinions regarding the sound the Torah intended when it instructed us to blow the *shofar* on Rosh Hashanah. In order to avoid doubt and to perform the mitzvah according to all opinions, we are accustomed to blowing three different sounds: *shevorim, teruah* and *shevorim-teruah*.

The *Shelah HaKadosh* writes that although we sound the *shofar* according to each possible interpretation, there is nevertheless a specific order in which we arrange the sounds. When blowing them all together, we first blow the simple *tekiah*, then the three *shevorim* sounds, then the broken *teruahs*, and finally another unbroken *tekiah*. This order was specifically chosen to symbolize the concept of *teshuvah*. Shlomah HaMelech writes in *Koheles* (7:29) that Hashem made man straight, but people sought out numerous complex calculations.

We begin by sounding an unbroken *tekiah* to symbolize the simple, straightforward manner in which Hashem initially created us. Unfortunately, as the verse prophesies, we inevitably complicate situations unnecessarily, as represented by the broken sounds of the *shevorim*.

As if that weren't sufficient, we fail to recognize the error of our ways until we have reached rock bottom, as suggested by the short crying sounds of the *teruah*. Sometimes, it is only after a person has reached the nadir that he is able to recognize how far he has fallen from his original heights.

It is this realization that jolts and inspires him to full and proper repentance, allowing him to return to the straight *tekiah*, just as he was created. (R' Ozer Alport)

Yosef Hatzadik

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 11a) tells us that Yosef left prison on Rosh Hashanah. Now, why is that fact of interest to us? Is the Gemara merely telling us a historical fact that the day when Yosef left the dungeon happened to be on the First of Tishrei?

The Tolner Rebbe says that *Chazal* make the point that Yosef came out of prison on Rosh Hashanah to teach us something:

A prison, in Biblical times, did not resemble, in any way, shape or form, today's prisons. I am not talking about minimum security facilities set aside for white collar crimes. Even a maximum-security prison today in Texas – where it is 120 degrees in the summer, and the prisoners are living in eight by ten cells without air conditioning – they are still living in the Taj Mahal compared to prisons in Biblical times.

In Biblical times, they dug a hole in the ground, a dungeon, and they threw the prisoners in. There was no ventilation and there was no sanitation. It was literally living in a rat hole. For those old enough to remember this, think back to what the prisons looked like for the POWs (prisoners of war) during the Vietnam War. That was already in "civilized times."

So, consider the following: Yosef is in this pit with minimum food, minimum water, no ventilation, and no sanitation. Who is he with? He is with the dregs of society. He is abused there because he is a Jew and because he is accused of assaulting Potiphar's wife.

And yet, something miraculous happens. They take him out of this pit. They put him in front of the most powerful man in the world and he is asked to give advice. Did they not know of the concept of PTS (Post Traumatic Stress syndrome)? It was miraculous that he was sane. And yet, Yosef came out, they gave him a haircut, they gave him new clothes, and they put him in front of Pharoah – the most

powerful man in the world – in the presence of all his advisors. They told Yosef, "Let's hear what you have to say about the matter?"

Yosef came up with this brilliant plan and in a matter of days he went from being in the pit to being the second most powerful person in the world. Overnight! What does that tell us? It tells us that a person can go from being the lowest of the low and almost instantly he can reach the greatest heights. You can be in prison and then the next day you can literally rule the world.

When *Chazal* say that Yosef left prison on Rosh Hashanah, the message they are trying to teach us is that people can feel imprisoned – they can feel imprisoned by their lusts, by their evil inclinations, by their troubles. - *Nebech*, people have so many problems and it weighs them down. They feel literally like they are walking around with a ball and chain. However, the lesson of Yosef is that — in a flash — you can go from the greatest depths to the highest heights. – A person can rid himself of his imprisoners and his tormentors and his captors and that can all happen in one fell swoop. We too can all leave our "prisons" on this day of the New Year.

Rosh Hashanah is the day that Yosef left prison, and in a moment he went from being a prisoner to being a ruler. I wish everyone a healthy New Year. We should all have health, *nachas* from our children, we should have prosperity, and we should see the complete redemption, speedily in our days. (R' Frand)

Once, a student in Yeshiva came to **HaRav Nosson Tzvi Finkel zt"l** (the former Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir Yeshiva) before Rosh Hashana, and asked him what should he think about when he hears the sound of shofar on Rosh Hashana.

The Rosh Yeshiva answered the student: "You should think about other people!"

Torah Wellsprings ~ R' Elimelech Biderman

Reb Gedalyah Eisenman Shlita is the mashgiach of Kol Torah. One Erev Rosh Hashanah, someone asked him for chizuk for Rosh Hashanah.

Reb Gedalyah replied, "There are still a few moments left to Elul. We can still benefit from the specialness of this time."

The man cried in anguish, "If only I knew that at the beginning of Elul!"

The Chasam Sofer (Drashos) writes, "Rosh Hashanah is an awesome and fearful day. It is a day of judgment for the entire world. However, it isn't a sad day. It is a joyous day, the joy of teshuvah, ahavah, and deveikus…

Sadness draws strict judgment on oneself. Therefore, according to the Chasam Sofer, it is important to be happy on Rosh Hashanah, and then we will be judged with compassion and mercy.

A young avreich once came to **Rav Moshe Feinstein** to ask him for his advice. He had been offered a job to serve as chazan for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur in a certain shul but was concerned because the Shulchan Aruch and poskim write that one who serves as shaliach tzibur for the yomim noraim must be chozer b'teshuva (repent). - Scared by the thought of violating this directive, the yungerman suggested that perhaps then, he shouldn't take the job.

R' Moshe heard his question and began to chuckle.

When asked for an explanation, the rosh yeshiva answered: 'and so if you don't take the job, you don't have to do teshuva?'

The Piaseczna Rebbe, Hy"d in his sefer Aish Kodesh (Shabbos Shuva) writes the following incredible words: כשאיש ישראל עובד ה' מתגלה מכל אחד ואחד אור וקדושה מה שאין מתגלה מחבירו – 'When a Jew serves Hashem, a unique light and holiness emerges from him that cannot come from anyone else.'

בס"ד

Menucha

A Shabbos table companion for the whole family

לע"נ ר' ברוך חיים בן סלמון ז"ל



You probably knew that the effect of shofar sounds on Rosh Hashana is very great. But did you know that the Midrash (Vayikra Rabba 29:10) reveals that because we sound the shofar on Rosh Hashana, Hashem rises from the thrown of judgment and sits on the thrown of mercy?! Why even tefilla cannot equal to the power of shofar?

Shem Mishmuel explains that tefilla simply does not have the necessary power to accomplish this. Only the shofar does. The shofar is **קלא פנימאה** - the inner voice - the expression of the heart's cry. The heart has a cry that cannot be expressed in words, as the verse says: **צָעַק לִבָּם אֶל־ ה'** - Their heart cried out to Hashem (Eicha 2:18).

Only the strength of the heart's cry, expressed through the shofar, has the power to do something so extraordinary - i.e., to "disturb" judgment on the Day of Judgment!

A man once approached the **Chazon Ish** before Rosh Hashana to ask where he should daven for the upcoming Yamim Noraim: in a local synagogue where he could get seats for both himself and his son; or in a renowned yeshiva, where the atmosphere would be more conducive to praying with proper focus, but he would not be able to secure an additional seat for his son.

The Chazon Ish told him that although davening in the yeshiva would be better for his own prayers, he should nevertheless forego this experience to enable his son to come with him and see how a Jew davens on Rosh Hashana, which will leave an impression that will remain with him for the rest of his life.



The Spring Hill Times is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to spreading the goodness of Hashem around the world.

What a beautiful year it was!

Thank You, Hashem, for giving us the great gift of life in this world.

Thank You for giving us the opportunity to grow and become like You. We cannot wait for another year in Your wonderful world.

A year with so many delicious and heilige Shabbosos. Yummm...

A year full of happy wonderful Yomim Toivim, each one a mini Gan Eden in this world.

A year where we will make thousands of Brachos; thanking and praising You.

A year of learning and keeping Your delicious wonderful Torah.

A year full of love, kindness, happiness and warmth.

A year when we will be able to say as many times as we want, "I love You, Hashem."

A year when we can tell ourselves and everyone else in the world of Your great kindnesses.

A year of over 350 of Your majestic sunrises and sunsets.

A year full of feelings of being loved by our families, friends, other Yidden and of course by You, Hashem!

A year when we can be non-judgmental and love every Jew.

A year when we can realize how close You are to us.

A year filled with opportunities with goldmines and diamonds everywhere we turn. Tzedakah, Chesed, Tzitizis, Mezuzah, Tefila and so much more!

What a beautiful world we live in! Have a Wonderful Shabbos and Shana Tova U'mesukah!

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

Rav Avraham Pollak, zt"l, the Mashgiach of Slabodka, once asked the **Chazon Ish, zt"l**, "Why do we go through the process of doing Teshuvah in Elul and during the Yomim Nora'im? - When Cheshvan comes around, we will be back to our old selves again!"

The Chazon Ish answered, "It's all worthwhile for a few days of closeness to Hashem!"

"How wonderful it is that a person can tell all his worries before the Master of the World as one speaks with his friend." ~ The Chazon Ish zt"l.

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Blasting and Breaking

The sound of the Shofar known as a **תרועה** is a broken sound. The Sefer Hachinuch tells us this alludes to breaking the Yetzer Hara. Rosh Hashana is referred to as **יום תרועה** - a day to break the Yetzer Hara, Satan.

The Satan is known as the **ס-ם**. Adding up these two letters we arrive at a total of 100. On Rosh Hashana we blow 100 Shofar blasts. These are to overcome the power of Satan.

The purpose of the 100 Shofar blasts is to get us closer to Hashem, to live a more spiritual life. The Gematria of the word **שופר** is 586. Tallying another 100 to this (100 Shofar blasts), we arrive at 686, the precise sum of **ובחרת בחיים**! - This is telling us that through the Shofar, we are empowered to choose real life - spirituality.

A Siman in the Simanim

During the Rosh Hashana seuda, when we eat the simanim, we say **יהי רצון...לראש ולא לזנב**, '*...to be as the head and not the tail*.'

Taking a closer look at the word **לראש**, we notice it serves as an acronym for **לעשות רצון אבינו שבשמים**, to do the will of our Father in Heaven. This is one of the intentions that we should have in mind when saying these words.

Pele Yoetz (Rosh Hashanah) writes, "If only a person's heart would be filled with yiras Shamayim on Rosh Hashanah... This would grant him chiyus for his soul for the entire year."

Which Foods Should One Avoid Eating on Rosh Hashana?





Just as we eat sweet apples and other foods on Rosh Hashana because of their symbolic significance, it is customary to avoid bitter and vinegary foods on Rosh Hashana (see, for example, *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* 129:9).

The Rama (*Orach Chaim* 583:2) writes that some avoid eating *egozim* (walnuts) on Rosh Hashana. This is because the *gematria* (numerical value) of the Hebrew word "*egoz*" is the same as the numerical value of the word *cheit* (sin).

Additionally, nuts cause an increase in phlegm which can disturb one's prayers. **Magen Avrohom** (583:4) points out that according to the second reason, one should not eat any nut, and not only *egozim* (walnuts). Be'er Moshe (3:97) writes that ground nuts (other than walnuts) that are part of a recipe do not pose a concern.

It is recorded (*Ma'ase Rav* 210) that the **Vilna Gaon** did not eat grapes on Rosh Hashana. Some explain that this is because on Rosh Hashana, Adam ate from the Tree of Knowledge, and according to some opinions in the Gemara the forbidden fruit was the grape.

However, **Kaf Ha'chaim** (583:21) writes that only black grapes need be avoided. He explains the custom of the Vilna Gaon based on the Gemara (*Berachos* 56b) that black grapes are considered a bad sign.

A closer look at the Rosh HaShanah simanim



Eating special foods, simanim, on the eve of Rosh HaShanah is one of the most widely observed and cherished of all Jewish minhagim. From America to Yemen to Australia — and everywhere in between — there may be some differences in what is eaten, but on the eve of the new year, as the books of life and death are open and being written for the year to come, you will find the simanim on nearly every Jewish table.

Every child (and many adults!) look forward to dipping the apple into the honey and savoring a taste of the sweet year we all pray will come. You'll scarcely find a Jewish home anywhere in the world where this minhag is not cherished as the centerpiece of the simanim on the eve of Rosh HaShanah. Among some families, it remains the only siman eaten.

One might expect that it would be the earliest food instituted as a siman by our forefathers that is dipped in honey on Rosh HaShanah — but it is probably not. Almost everyone is familiar with the beloved minhag of dipping round egg challos in the small bowl of honey, instead of in the usual salt, during all of the seudos of Rosh HaShanah; some continue until Shemini Atzeres. This minhag

appears to have developed even later than that of dipping the apple in the honey. So, which food was the first to be dipped in the honey?

Believe it or not, it was the meat of the head of a ram that seems to be the first dipped in the honey! The minhag is attributed to none other than the great Maharam of Rothenberg, the rebbi of three primary poskim rishonim of Ashkenaz: Rabbeinu Asher, the Rosh; Rabbeinu Meir HaCohen, author of Hagahos Maimonios; and Rabbeinu Mordechai ben Hillel, author of the Mordechai. His custom to dip the meat is documented by Kolbo, yet Maharam's talmid the Tashbatz HaKatan does not mention Maharam's dipping of the ram's head.

Two other towering figures of Ashkenaz, Rav Yaakov ben Moshe Moellin (the Maharil), and Rav Yisrael of Krems (the Hagahos Ashri), both record dipping the meat of a sheep's head in honey.

With the passage of time, the ancient minhag of eating animal heads on "Rosh" HaShanah has fallen by the wayside. Oddly enough, this ancient minhag of Eretz Yisrael, later a purely Ashkenazic custom, is still hanging on today back in Eretz Yisrael, practiced primarily by Israeli Sephardim loyal to the Beis Yosef, who somewhat uncharacteristically codified this Ashkenazic custom in the Shulchan Aruch.

Nowadays, Ashkenazim tend to gravitate towards the more manageable fish head. The eating of the rest of the fish as a siman is itself an old Sephardic custom, symbolizing prosperity and fertility, mentioned by Avudraham.

The 'dag' is not without its detractors though, such as Rashbatz, who points out that its letters suggest the root dalet-alef-gimmel — meaning worry, a bad omen.

The common minhag of dipping an apple in honey is first recorded by the Tur and seems to be a fusion of the ancient custom of eating

honey as a siman, and the French custom of eating red apples (sweet ones, as opposed to green, sour ones).

Dipping the challos in honey is later recorded by Rav Mordechai Yoffe, the Levush, and is mentioned in Magen Avraham.

Getting Berachos Giving Berachos – R' Naftali Weinberger

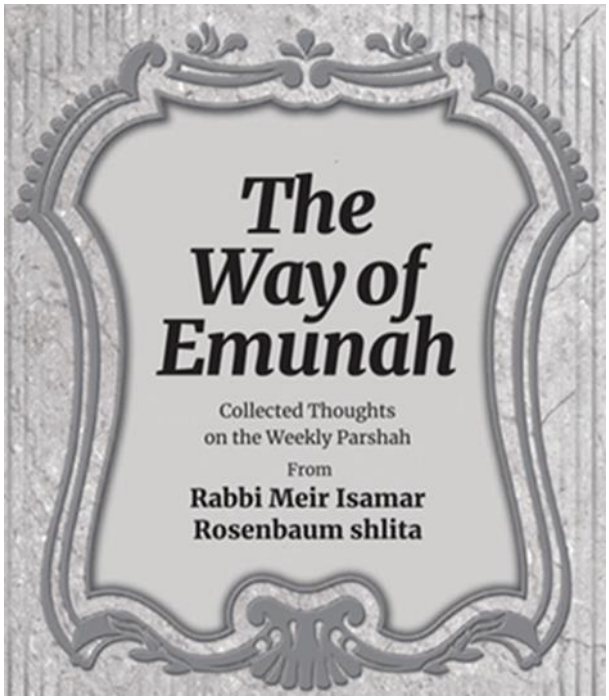
For many years, hundreds of men converged on the Lederman Shul in Bnei Brak on the first night of Rosh Hashanah to offer the customary greeting of shanah tovah to Rav Chaim Kanievsky. The line started before Maariv, as people tried to bypass the two-hour wait by approaching him before davening.

One year, the greetings took over four hours, as hundreds of people filed by Rav Chaim in the men's section of the shul. One year, after hundreds had passed by to wish him a good year, Rav Chaim told the rebbetzin, "With Hashem's help, we will have a very good year, since so many Yidden gave us a berachah for a shanah tovah!"

After giving berachos, Rav Chaim hurried to eat the Rosh Hashanah meal before midnight, as he was planning to wake up at his regular time to follow his chovos schedule of learning before sunrise. During the meal, one of the grandchildren asked him, "If you are going to get up so early tomorrow morning, how can you wish shanah tovah to so many people in one night?"

Rav Chaim replied, "If many Yidden come to wish us the brachah of a good year, how can we not stand there and get so many brachos?"

The Tiferes Shlomo was searching for honey to dip his apple into on Rosh Hashana. When he encountered a fellow Jew, he placed the apple on the person's head and proclaimed – "Every Yid is as sweet as honey!"



● I Wish I Was in Sanz

The custom amongst chasidim is to spend the Yomim Noraim in the presence of tzadikim. It is related that one year on Rosh Hashanah, **Rav Eliezer of Dzikov zy"a** was sitting at his tish, surrounded by his holy sons and chasidim, when he signed and said, "If I were an ehrlicher Yid, I would be in Sanz right now!"

After the seudah, his sons asked him why he made the chasidim feel bad. They had left their families and spent a lot of money to travel to be with him, and they felt bad when they heard their Rebbe say that he wished he were somewhere else.

Rav Eliezer replied, "What do you want from me? Do you want me to lie even on this holy night?"

● Preparations for Rosh Hashanah

The Satmar Rov zy"a related that his father, the **Kedushas Yomtov zy"a** would say that when the week of Parshas Naso arrived at the beginning of the summer, his stomach would start to churn out of fear of the Yomim Noraim. - He explained the pasuk of 'Naso es rosh" to mean that when the Parshah of Naso arrived, one must start to prepare for "Rosh" Hashanah.

"Rosh Hashana is the one day of the year when our soul has the ability to ascend to new levels in its relationship with Hashem. Ask yourself: - 'What spiritual level do I want to reach this year?' ~ Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler.



Rabbi Shimshon Pincus, ZT"L, tells an incredible story about an aspiring doctor in the middle of his residency, who was told that he would be in charge of an entire ward of the hospital for the duration of his night shift. With many patients and no other doctors on call, it was sure to be a challenge. But he was told as soon as it became too much for him there was an available phone which had a direct line to other doctors and nurses who would immediately wake up and come to his aid.

The evening began quietly, and the doctor was able to take care of everything himself. Although he was worn out, he was proud of his ability to keep everything in order by himself. However, as midnight approached, there was a sudden explosion of issues, as numerous patients required immediate care simultaneously.

The doctor ran through the ward with all his strength and tried to tend to all the issues. By the end of the night, two patients were in serious condition due to lack of treatment, and one other was on the verge of death.

The doctor was summoned before the hospital authorities and warned that they were going to be forced to press charges against him for endangering the lives of the patients under his care. The doctor was shocked. "There was absolutely nothing more I could have done," he countered. "I was put in an impossible situation, and I pushed myself to my limit."

The director of the hospital shook his head. "You are wrong. There was something more you could have and should have done. You were told that there was a phone line available for you to reach the head doctor. Why did you arrogantly try to do everything yourself? Why didn't you utilize the means of assistance that were available to you?

It was your naïveté and hubris that convinced you to try to do it alone. Therefore, you are indeed culpable!"

Hashem puts us into this world with certain strengths and weaknesses. He doesn't expect us to do it all – He knows what we can and can't do. However, He does expect us to call out to Him and say, "Hashem, it's Your World. I want to honor and respect You." It's not about what we can do, but about what Hashem can help us do. We recognize that Hashem is the Melech, that what we do for the King is from Him (like a gift to a king bought from His funds), and that everything belongs to Him.

As we enter the judgment day, we may start by thinking of who we are – righteous, wicked, or in between, but what we need to work on is the realization that Hashem is the King and that everything is His, our lives, our families, our health and all our belongings and blessings belong to Him.

"Try your best to stay calm on Rosh Hashanah so you can have a year without anything upsetting".

We eat different *simanim* (symbolic foods) on the night of Rosh in lieu of a prayer. For example, we eat sweet products so we should have a sweet year. We eat other foods whose names hint at a specific blessing we are seeking.

On this note, the **Mishna Berura** says that if we make sure to not get upset at anything, this will be a prayer that we should not have anything to get upset about the whole year!

Rosh Hashana is not just about crowning Hashem as our king but recognizing that you are His royal child.

A Thought from the Haftorah of First Day Rosh Hashanah

The Haftorah for the first day of Rosh Hashana is the story of Chana (Shmuel I Chapter 1). Chana was barren for so many years. Finally, she goes up to the Mishkan, receives a *bracha* from Eli Hakohen and becomes pregnant. *Chazal* say that she was barren for 19 years and that (according to one Medrash) she was 130 years old when she finally gave birth to Shmuel!

It is most noteworthy that once Eli gave her the *bracha*, she felt that she did not need to worry anymore. She was so confident in the *bracha* of Eli Hakohen that she did not go back up to Yerushalayim for *aliyah l'regel* again. The question is that if she was so confident in Eli's blessing, why did she not go up to Eli in the first year and ask him for a *bracha* then? What took her so long?

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

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

Yes, a *bracha* from any *tzadik* certainly has significance, but it is extra powerful when that *tzadik* **owes** you the *bracha*. That is why Chana made this case. She could have merely denied the accusation that she was inebriated, but she did more than that. She built the argument that she was wrongly and unjustly accused. Why does she

do that? She does that to create indebtedness on the part of Eli. "Eli, you did something terrible. You were *choshed b'ksherim*. And now I want something from you. I want a *bracha*." That type of *bracha* is the most effective *bracha* that a person can receive.

Now, what does this do for you and me? People go to Eretz Yisrael. They seek out *tzadikim* and receive all kind of *brachos*, left and right. Rav Elya Baruch Finkel makes the point that if a person can somehow make the *m'varech* (the one bestowing the blessing) indebted to him, the *bracha* will be much more effective. How a person goes about making a *tzadik* indebted to him may indeed be difficult, especially when dealing with people who don't need anything and don't want anything. But if a person can somehow create that "*shibud*" (debt) so that the *tzadik* feels "I owe him," then the *bracha* becomes a whole different level of *bracha*.

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

Rav Halberstam again said, "Very nice. But how do you know that?" The man explained: When I was a little boy, I was a barber's assistant. I lived in Prague. The Rabbi in Prague at the time was **Rav Yechezkel Landau (the Nodeh Beyehudah)**. When Rabbi Landau came to take his haircut, his custom was to not remove his *yarmulka*. The haircut was thus to cut around the *yarmulka*. One time, the Nodeh Beyehudah dozed off during his haircut while sitting in the barber chair and his *yarmulka* fell off. When he woke up, he noticed

that his head was uncovered and he anxiously asked "Where is my *yarmulka*?" He was upset. The old man told Rabbi Halberstam: "I was a little kid and I found the *yarmulka* and I gave it back to the Rabbi." The Nodeh Beyehudah, in gratitude, blessed me and told me: You should live to be 120 and you should never need a doctor.

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

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

While we are on the subject of *brachos*, it is not only the *bracha* of a *tzadik* that is considered significant but rather *chazal* say not to underestimate the *bracha* of (even) an ordinary person. So, I will take this opportunity to wish you and your families a *kesiva v'chasima tova*. Hashem should grant you all a *shana tova u'mesuka*.

FACEBUKER SHABBOS TABLE TALK

Continuing the Legacy of Rabbi Dovid Winiarz of blessed memory

What Price Sweetness?





We all know that we dip the apple in honey as a sign for having a sweet new year. But Nearly every time the Torah speaks of honey, as in "Land flowing with milk and honey," it's referring to date honey. That honey is much more easily accessible than bee honey, yet it seems that bee honey is the accepted companion to the apple. Why is this so? Shouldn't we go with the Biblical honey, especially when it's easier to get?

The answer may surprise you. Yes, with bee honey, you need to put on the beekeeper suit, and hold that smoking can, and risk getting stung multiple times, but that is part of the sweetness. The bee honey is the reward for the hard work, the efforts, and the risk. When you achieve something you've had to work for, it is much sweeter than anything someone just gave you.

We ask Hashem for a year of sweetness symbolized by our putting in effort and achieving goals. We don't ask for life simply to be able to relax and enjoy it, but for time to make a difference and get things done. We use bee honey to remind us that there is no sweetness like the things we make happen, and finding the sweetness in the challenges, or even in getting stung, is priceless.

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ

One of the prayers we recite daily between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, as well as on fast days, is called Avinu Malkeinu, Our Father, our King. Essentially it is a laundry list of requests we make of G-d. A deeper look will show that there's more than meets the eye.

● אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֶלָּא אָתָּה - "***Our Father, Our King, we have no king but you.***"

While the basic understanding is that Hashem is the solitary king in the universe, there is another way to read this phrase. If we were to put a comma after the word melech, we come to a new insight in the phrase: We have nothing, O King, but you! That is to say, we understand and acknowledge that nothing in the Universe exists without Hashem and He is the source of everything we have.

● אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ חַדֵּשׁ עָלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה- "***Our Father, Our King, bestow upon us a new year of good***"

The word Shana (as in Shana Tova) means year, but it can also mean to review or repeat. There are countless repetitive acts of kindness that G-d does for us. We awaken in the morning, we breathe, we see, we hear, we can function as human beings. All this is a miracle of G-d's kindness, yet because it is repeated so often we take it for granted and don't appreciate it.

At this point we may envision ourselves asking for Hashem's help to see these blessings anew and marvel and appreciate them. Our Father, Our King, make [Your] repeated goodness new to us [so that we may appreciate it and praise you for it.

"A single moment of teshuvah in this world is greater than all the reward in the world to come." ~ Talmud Avodah Zarah 17a.



Project Mesorah – Rabbi Paysach Krohn

In Selichos today, it occurred to me that many of the piyyutim are written as an acrostic – each line begins with an alef and continues through the Alef Beis. And when it does this, it symbolizes that the bracha and the tefilla is complete as it goes from **א-ת**.

And so, I want to give you all a bracha that this following year should be a complete year of bracha based on this idea –

א - אריכות ימים

ב - ברכה

ג - גדלות

ד - דעה

ה - הצלחה

ו - וְתוֹר

ז - זכותים

ח - חסד

ט - טהרה

י - ישוב הדעת

כ - כפרה

לימוד תורה – ל

מזל - מ

נחת - נ

סליחה - ס

עושר - ע

פִּיקְחוּת - פ

צידקות - צ

קדושה -ק

רְפוּאָה - ר

שמחה - ש

תורה – ת

This is the bracha that I give to all of you.

Story of the Week Compiled by Aaron Leitner

One of the central themes of our Tephillas on Rosh Hashono, is 'Remembrance'.

We, usually, tend to take our ability to remember for granted, until we find ourselves having difficulty recalling a distant memory. Even when it could be crucial for our future.

Two orphaned Jewish girls, victims of the war, were languishing in an orphanage. They were given only one opportunity to save themselves by recalling a long-suppressed memory.

This is the story of sisters Mina Rivkin and Tova Althoiz, of blessed memory, long time distinguished residents of Kfar Chabad, who were the daughters of Zusha and Nechama Margolin.

Mina and Tova were born into an impoverished family in White Russia, several years before the Holocaust. When Mina was seven and Tova was only five, the Second World War erupted in all its

intensity. Their father Zusha was inducted into the Red Army, leaving Nechama to care for the two young girls and their baby brother who was only a few months old. After a period of intense bombing and harrowing living conditions, Mrs Margolin, who had no idea where her husband was or even if he was alive, decided to take the children and move to the centre of the country in the hope that their situation would improve.

The journey was horrific. The family suffered from intense cold, malnutrition and a lack of sanitary facilities. Nechama Margolin bravely cared for her children as best she could, but she eventually succumbed to the elements and was *niftar* before reaching their destination.

Mina and Tova and their baby brother continued the journey alone. But without a mother, the baby was starving and he, too, soon passed away from hunger. With the help of kind-hearted locals, the two young girls buried their baby brother on the side of the road.

The two traumatized orphans were then bought to a local orphanage, where they remained until the end of the war.

When the war was over, the director of the orphanage, who was a kindheared man, told the girls that he was ready to send them to friends or relatives, or anyone else who could take them in. The only thing they had to do was to provide that person's address anywhere in Russia. The director would then write to this person and ask him or her to take them in.

If the children were unable to come up with an address, they would remain in the orphanage, growing up with the non-Jewish orphans in a place devoid of *Yiddishkeit*. The brave girls – now 12 and 10 years old – realised that this was a pivotal moment. This was their only opportunity to leave the orphanage and live among Jewish people.

Yet try as they might, they couldn't think of a single address. After all, they had been in the orphanage for a while, and the trauma of

the war had played havoc with their memories. It had been years since the beginning of the war. All they could think of was the house in which they'd been raised with loving parents and sweet baby brother who were now all gone. All they had was each other.

The girls knew that the rest of the lives depended on remembering an address – any address - of someone who could help them. So, they *davened* that Hashem restore their memories and give them a shred of hope. It was then that Mina remembered an incident that had occurred before the war and had been long suppressed.

Her beloved mother was preparing for Pesach, and despite their poverty, had somehow procured a small amount of *schmaltz*, goose fat that could be rendered for cooking. [Vegetable oils weren't readily available in those days]. A few days before Pesach, she had packed some in a small container and then buried it in the snow outside to keep it fresh. The following day, she wrapped the whole thing in heavy paper and wrote the name and address of her brother, who lived in Leningrad, on the outside of the package, knowing that her brother was, equally, impoverished.

Mina and her mother brought their special package to the post office. It took quite a while to get there by foot, and then they had to wait in line to mail the parcel. The man behind the counter took one look at the package and refused to accept it because it was dripping. Nechama Margolin begged him to make an exception, and he finally relented, provided that she brings more paper to wrap it in and prevent the schmaltz from leaking.

It was a long walk back home, so Mrs Margolin left her daughter in the post office to watch the package while she went to bring additional paper and string. Mina had stood there with nothing to do for hours, keeping her eyes on the package – which had her uncle's name and address written on it in big, clear letters – so no one would steal it.

After a while, Nechama Margolin returned and wrapped the package up more securely, reattaching the address label on top. A few days later, the precious goose schmaltz arrived at the home of her brother, Rabbi Yaakov Yosef Raskin in Leningrad.

Now, so many years later, after *davening* for the gift of memory, Mina was able to recall the name and address of her uncle that she had stared at for ages! She had never imagined that those long hours of waiting would eventually be of such enormous significance, enabling her and her sister Tova to recall a living relative.

When Mina repeated the information to the head of the orphanage, he immediately sent a letter to their uncle. They waited and waited, but there was no response. They found out later that their uncle and his family had moved to another neighbourhood. A few months went by and then another miracle occurred.

One of their uncle's children, their cousin, was on his way to his new home when out of habit, he mistakenly got off the train at his old station. He could have waited for the next train to continue his journey, but he decided that since he was already there, he would go to his old address to see if there was any mail. Finding the letter from the orphanage, he bought it back to his father, who learned that his two nieces were still alive.

Mina and Tova's uncle travelled thousands of miles to bring the girls home with him. Eventually, they all moved to Eretz Yisroel, where they were raised in a warm and loving Jewish home.

Postscript: Rabbi Zusha Margolin survived the war and was later reunited with his two beloved daughters in Eretz Yisroel. And to think that it all began with a package of goose fat and a little girl's lonely vigil in the post office – all part of the Divinely orchestrated plan to bring the two Jewish orphans back home.

Good Shabbos

102 Stories That Changed People's Lives – Rabbi Tzvi Nakar

Message of Repentance



I once traveled abroad for business from Eretz Yisrael to Miami, where I was looking forward to seeing a cousin I hadn't seen in years. Although my uncle and his children were non-observant and remote from Torah and mitzvos, our families shared a warm relationship and I'd kept up with my cousin over the years, always with a prayer that he would, one day, find his way back to Torah.

Shortly after I landed and checked into my hotel, I called my cousin and asked if he was available to meet. Delighted to hear my voice, he eagerly invited me to visit him at his house, and we arranged to meet up that very evening.

I drove along Miami's picturesque streets, enjoying the wide roads and stately houses until I reached my cousin's home, which, to me,

resembled a mansion. He was outside waiting for me, and the first thing I noticed, even before being engulfed in a bear hug, was the yarmulke sitting quite conspicuously on his head. I was touched by the gesture, which he'd obviously made on my behalf, but then my eyes widened when we entered the house and I spied an ornamental mezuzah positioned in the entranceway-which I certainly did not recall ever seeing in the past, in either his house or the house of his parents.

My curiosity metamorphosed into wide-eyed astonishment when my cousin led me past a breakfront displaying shiny silver candlesticks, bechers, and other Judaica items, and a well-stocked library filled with sifrei kodesh.

After we'd exchanged pleasantries and caught up on major family events over the past decade, I couldn't restrain myself any longer and asked the question burning on my mind. "Mark, I hope you don't mind the question, but I couldn't help but notice that you've made some significant changes in your life. Seeing you with a yarmulke, your house with a mezuzah and Shabbos licht... I'm so happy for you. Would you mind telling me what caused the change?"

Mark smiled sincerely, and joy shined from his eyes as he recounted the amazing events in his life that had stimulated his return to his heritage.

"Last Rosh Hashanah, I was sitting on the terrace admiring the vast ocean with its endless blue and white-crested waves. Suddenly, I spied a line of people exiting the local synagogue and walking toward the shore. Even though our family, as you know, was never observant, as a kid I used to go with my parents to the temple for the High Holidays. I vaguely recalled a custom of tossing sins into the water on Rosh Hashanah, which was the highlight of the day for us kids.

"The sight of a long stream of people walking to the ocean in their holiday best stirred happy memories of my childhood, and I recalled myself as a little boy holding my father's hand and walking to a little

creek close to the temple. I don't know what did it-maybe it was the memories of Dad, who's no longer with us--but I suddenly felt a deep pull to join them in the mitzvah. Before I could change my mind, I joined the group of Jews-me in my T-shirt and jeans, and they in their Shabbos attire, holding prayer books-in reciting Tashlich.

"Someone approached me and stuck a siddur with transliteration and translation into my hands, pointing to the sections I was supposed to say. I recited Tashlich fervently, feeling a deep well of emotion in my heart The ceremony ended, and I returned the siddur, thanking my benefactor and wishing him a happy New Year.

"I was about to head on my way, when someone tapped me on the shoulder. A tall, dignified man with a black hat and jacket wished me 'good Yom Tov' in a slightly foreign accent and asked if I'd heard shofar yet. When I replied that I hadn't, he immediately removed a small shofar from his jacket pocket and instructed me to listen and focus on the thought that I was fulfilling the mitzvah of the day. He blew a string of blasts, introduced himself as Moshe Katz, and again wished me a happy New Year before heading on his way.

"I went home feeling slightly dazed; something inside me had stirred. and I shared the episode and my feelings with my wife. I ended by saying that right before we'd parted, the shofar blower had mentioned that his name was Moshe Katz.

"Upon hearing this, my wife burst into tears. Sobbing, she asked me to describe what he looked like, and as I vividly described his appearance, she wept even harder. The man who had appeared to me on the beach that day was none other than my wife's father, who had been a Torah scholar in the city of Pressburg, Hungary, before the Holocaust, and a renowned ba'al tokeia who blew shofar on Rosh Hashanah. He, along with six million of our brothers and sisters, had perished in the Holocaust.

"My wife, who had spent her war years in hiding, was adopted after the war and changed her last name, so I only vaguely recalled her

once mentioning that her real last name was Katz. After the war, there was nothing left of her family's home, not even a photo, so I'd never met or even seen a picture of my father-in-law.

"We were overcome by the miracle, and after Rosh Hashanah, made an appointment with the local Orthodox rabbi. We shared our story, and when he repeated it to his rabbi, who was a student of Rav Chaim Kanievsky, and told the story to the gadol hador, Rav Chaim said it was certainly possible that I had glimpsed a Heavenly messenger, and that it was a sign for our family to perform a personal accounting.

"The rest, as they say, is history."

Fascinating INSIGHTS

Pomegranates

The Drashos Chassam Sofer 2:249b tells us it is known that in a pomegranate there are 613 seeds corresponding to the 613 mitzvos.

Similarly, the Malbim on Shir Hashirim 4:13 writes that a pomegranate hints to the 613 mitzvos like the number of seeds it has.

However, if one opens up a pomegranate today, he may not find 613 seeds. How do we explain that?

Nowadays due to sin, there aren't 613 seeds there, as R' Yitzchak Isaac Yehuda Yechiel Safrin of Kamarna (1806–1874) writes that if one doesn't find 613 seeds there, it is because of a curse as in זָנְתָה תִּזְנֶה הָאָרֶץ - '***the land is straying completely***.' (Hoshea 1:2).



The Gemorah says that there are three books opened up every year. The book for the completely righteous people who get inscribed immediately on Rosh Hashanah, the book for the extremely wicked, who also get inscribed on Rosh Hashanah, and the book of those whose good deeds and bad deeds are equal. This third category of people are held in the balance during the 10 days of repentance. If they return to Hashem, they will be forgiven and placed in the "good book", however if they don't, they will be inscribed in the "bad book".

One could pose an interesting difficulty on this famous Chazal. Why does it say that if we repent and return to Haashem will we be inscribed in the "good book" implying that this is the only way? Why can't a person merely do more good deeds to tip the scale in his favor? Why does repentance seem to be the only successful ticket to a good year?

R' Yitzchak B'lazar explains beautifully that during this period that we find ourselves in, Hashem is waiting for our repentance, so to speak, and expects us to come close to Him. If He sees that we do, that attempt alone will earn us a good year. But if, on the other hand, He sees that we seem apathetic to this tremendous opportunity then even if we add many more merits to our slate, this will not save us from an unfavorable judgment.

"Every Jew must believe that everything in life follows Hashem's plan – Nothing is by chance. When Hashem sends someone somewhere, they are entrusted with a mission to fulfil the will of The king. ~ Sefas Emes.

Rav Shrage Feivel Medelowitz, zt"l, used to cry every Rosh HaShanna during the Mussaf prayer when he came to the words "ma'aseh ish u'fekudoso" (G-d will take into account) the actions of man and his mission. [Fekudoso comes from the word "tafkid" – mission].

Every person has a mission. We are judged according to how close we came to accomplishing our designated mission in life. This mere thought — did we accomplish it or not — is something we are not going to know until we come to the next world.

The Roptshitzer Rebbe quotes a story involving two chassidim of the Baal Shem Tov. They were talking with each other: One chossid said, "Oy, what will be with me? After 120 years, I will approach the Kisei haKavod and I will need to give an accounting on all the aveiros that I did during my lifetime."

The other chossid answered back: "I am not worried about my aveiros. When the Ribono shel Olam will call me on the carpet and ask me why I did this and that aveira, I will explain that I had this lust and that lust and I could not control myself. However, I am really worried about the mitzvos that I did. I am worried that perhaps I did not do them properly. What is my excuse for that?

We may have lapses and fall spiritually by transgressing certain prohibitions. That may be understandable. But once we are already doing a mitzvah – do it correctly!

"In the palace of the king there are many chambers, and each one needs a different key. There is one key, one instrument, however, which can open all the doors - the shofar." ~ Baal HaTanya, Rabbi Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812).



The Head of the Fish by Rabbi Yissocher Frand

On the holiday of Rosh Hashana, there is a Jewish custom that after returning home from shul at night, we eat various foods that are symbolic of a propitious start to the New Year. We eat the head of a fish or the head of a lamb so that we "will be at the head and not at the tail". We dip challah and apple in honey so that we will "have a sweet year". We eat fish so that we will "multiply like fish".

Isn't it peculiar that we spend all day in shul on Rosh Hashana, pouring out our hearts, asking for what we need, and yet when we come home from shul we need to rely on these "signs"? Will the head of the fish accomplish what 6 hours of davening did not accomplish?

To answer this question, let us ask one other question. Our Rabbis tell us that three barren women were remembered on Rosh Hashana — Sarah, Rachel, and Channah [Rosh Hashana 11a]. What point are our Sages making by telling us this?

The Shemen HaTov quotes a Tikunei Zohar: "The people, on the day of Yom Kippur, bark like dogs, 'give us sustenance' (like an aggressive dog, who barks for bread)." People come on the Days of Awe with a wish list. "Hav, Hav (Give, Give) — give us food, give us sustenance."

This human tendency to focus on one's physical needs causes us to miss the major focus of the day. If we look at the nature of the Rosh Hashana liturgy, we will notice that it contains very little by way of asking for personal needs such as livelihood, sustenance, etc. On Rosh Hashana we primarily ask G-d to "rule over the entire world

with Your (His) Honor". Rosh Hashana is a cosmic day. Rosh Hashana does not deal with trivial and mundane pursuits. Rosh Hashana must be more elevated than that. Rosh Hashana is really all about the concept that He is the King and we are the servants. Nothing else in our entire life should concern us, other than that we establish that He is the King.

On Rosh Hashana, we stress that G-d is the King and we are indeed the servants. The true servant has no other wish in life other than that the King should be exalted and glorified.

This is true to such an extent that the only time we really worry about our sustenance, about our ability to have children, or about having a little sweetness in our own lives, is when we come home at night after having finished in shul. Then we have the "signs". The context of those "signs" becomes "Yes, G-d, I know what it is all about. It is about serving You. But I cannot serve You unless I have a livelihood, unless I have health, unless I have children, etc. Therefore, please help me out."

That is why these three women were remembered on Rosh Hashana. These three women had something in common. They all worried about someone else.

"G-d remembered Sarah as he said" [Bereishis 21:1]. Rash"i cites the connection between this portion and the immediately preceding portion. Since Avraham prayed for a cure for Avimelech, Avraham's own needs were answered. Avraham thought about someone else's needs, and therefore his needs were provided for.

"G-d remembered Rachel" [Bereishis 30:22]. Why did G-d remember Rochel? G-d remembered Rochel because she remembered someone else. Rochel thought about the embarrassment of her sister. She was selfless. That is what Rosh Hashana is about — selflessness.

Chana was also remembered on Rosh Hashana [Shmuel I 2:21]. Why did G-d remember Chana? He remembered her because of the

reason why she was asking for a child. Chana was not asking for a child because she wanted someone to cuddle. Chana wanted to have someone to dedicate to G-d all the days of his life. Her request was altruistic.

This is the difficult task of Rosh Hashana. It is a day when we must put things in their proper perspective. Life is really about being a faithful servant. As hard as that may seem for modern man living in the end of the twentieth century, that is the name of the game. All the needs that we present to G-d must be in the context of "Can I thereby become a better servant?"

As important as all of our needs are, Rosh Hashana is the day on which we must put them in perspective. All these needs are only the medium for being able to do what we are supposed to be doing — working to establish the Kingship of G-d over the entire world, speedily in our days.

The Sobering Experience of Applying for TSA Pre Check Approval

The following is a true story which I found to be a tremendous ethical lesson:

Last night I went for a personal interview with the Department of Homeland Security of the United States Government. I have mentioned in the past that I really do not like to take my shoes, jacket, and hat off and take out my laptop each time I need to board an airplane. I also do not like the line! Maybe the lesson is I should be more patient, but I hate that line!

Every time I go to the airport, I see there is something called a "Pre-check." These people go right through. They do not remove their jackets or shoes or hats. They walk right through with their laptops. I said to myself, "I need to do this."

I went online to try to figure out how to do it. There is a significant process to complete. I was in doubt whether I filled out the form correctly. This procedure allows me to drive a truck from Mexico into the United States, which I have no intention of ever doing. But that is how the process works. You go to a website, and you fill out a form online and you need to pay $85 and you need to wait to find out whether you are conditionally approved.

I did this in the middle of the summer and did not hear anything back from the government for a long time. Finally, I got an e-mail from the government, "You have been conditionally approved. You need to go for your interview." My interview was scheduled last night between 6:50 pm and 7:10 pm. I went to the Baltimore-Washington International Airport to the Customs Office in the International Terminal. (Finding the Customs Office took me longer than the entire interview, but I finally found it.)

The government employee asked for my passport and my driver's license. He asked me to sit down and began asking me questions: Where were you born, etc.? — Standard questions confirming my identity. Finally he asks me, "Have you ever been arrested?" I answered, "No." "Have you ever been in violation of United States Custom Laws? I answered, "No." "Have you ever brought into the United States anything you are not allowed to bring in?" "No." He looked at the computer and said, "It says here on the computer that you brought in oranges, grapes, and peas. What is that about?"

Do you know what that's about? I will tell you what that's about! When we travel overseas, my wife does not like the airline food. She likes to eat fresh fruit. I do not remember where we were – perhaps England or Israel – and my wife took with her oranges, grapes, and snow peas that she could eat on the plane. One of the severe sins of the U.S. Customs Department is to bring fresh fruit into the United States of America. I always tell my wife, "Get rid of the stuff before we land. Get rid of the stuff before we land."

She did not finish eating the fruit and she forgot to dump it. We got to Dulles Airport. They have a dog there, and the dog attacked my wife's suitcase. The Federal Agents found oranges, grapes, and snow peas. This must have happened ten years ago. I explained to the TSA interviewer, "Listen, I did not do it on purpose. It was my wife. She forgot. (I tried to use Adam's old trick: It's not my fault, it's my wife's fault. She gave me the fruit to eat!") The interviewer said, "Okay. You will probably be approved. We will send you a confirmation of the decision within two to five business days."

However, it was shocking to me that an insignificant incident that occurred over ten years ago is still there in the computer! We threw the fruit into a garbage can and we apologized. However, it is an official record of the United States Government that the Frands brought forbidden fruit into the United States of America more than ten years ago!

It was a most sobering moment. "All your actions are inscribed in a book." (Avos 2:1) "And every man's signature signs upon the record." (From High Holiday Liturgy – U'Nesaneh Tokef prayer). The Almighty, as it were, has a much more effective "Laptop" than the custom agent sitting in BWI airport. Every little action, every little thought, the smallest iota in my life is written into that Book, and I will need to give accounting for that.

Whether TSA approves me or not does not make that much difference in the larger scheme of things. However, whether the Master of the Universe approves me or disapproves me – that is in fact very important. This is the lesson I learned last night at the United States Border Patrol at BWI airport: All your actions are recorded in a book.

Have a good year. May you be inscribed and sealed in the Book of Life.

The Best Preparation For The Days of Awe: Try A Little Kindness

I once heard the following incident from **Rabbi Kulefsky (zt"l)** who personally observed it one Erev Rosh HaShannah when he was learning in Yeshivas Torah V'Daas.

Rav Shlomo Heiman (1893-1944) asked **Rav Simcha Schustel and Rav Moshe Shisgal** (who were two of the most outstanding students of the Yeshiva of that era) for a favor. He requested that they write L'Shanah Tova cards for him and mail them.

Rav Shlomo Heiman then told them, "and if you question – is there not anything better and more spiritual that we should be doing on the eve of Rosh HaShanah other than writing Shanah Tova cards – I have an answer for you. It may in fact not be so appropriate for me to write my own Shanah Tova cards today. However, if you will write the cards for me, then you will be doing me a great favor (Chessed) and what could be more important to do on Erev Rosh HaShanah than an act of kindness for someone else?"

Blowing Shofar 'At The Time of Hiding'

I would like to give an example of dedication to Torah under trying circumstances by sharing a story from the introduction to a Sefer called Shaylos U'Teshuvos Mekadshei HaShem (Responsa to those Who Sanctified G-d's Name) by **Rav Tzvi Hirsch Meislish**, who spent his later years in Chicago but who spent the war years in a number of Concentration Camps. He was known as the **Weitzener Rav**.

Rav Meislish tells about one Rosh HaShanah in Auschwitz. There were a bunch of young former Yeshiva students who were about to be cremated alive. They found out that Rabbi Meislish had smuggled in a shofar. It was the first day of Rosh HaShanah, toward the end of the day. They bitterly begged that Rav Meislish come into their

cellblock and blow for them the 100 shofar blasts so that they might fulfill this mitzvah one last time. Rabbi Meislish writes that he was deeply troubled. He did not know what to do, as such an act of defiance would certainly jeopardize his life if he were caught by the Nazis. To compound the dilemma, his young son Zalman Leib was begging him to please NOT risk his life by doing this, begging that he not be left an orphan because of his father's foolhardy action.

Rav Meislish writes that he made a decision that he was not going to listen to his own son and was going to blow shofar for the Yeshiva students, come what may. He writes that if truth be told, his action was not in accordance with halachic principles (which would forbid even possible martyrdom for the sake of performing a positive commandment such as Tekias Shofar). Rav Meislish states that he only took this action because he in any case did not expect to live long in Auschwitz and felt that under those circumstances perhaps normative Halacha prohibiting martyrdom in such a case did not fully apply. He decided to go into the block and blow shofar for them. He was about to blow shofar and they begged, "Rebbi, Rebbi have mercy. Please say words of spiritual arousal for us before you blow shofar." Let us imagine this! These are young boys who are about to die in a matter of hours and they insisted on hearing a "shmooze" before Shofar Blowing in Auschwitz!

Rabbi Meislish expounded for them the pasuk "Blow shofar on the new month, at the 'time of hiding' on the day of our holiday" [Tehillim 81:4]. The simple interpretation of the phrase 'time of hiding' (b'keseh) refers to the fact that the moon is hidden at the start of the month. But he homiletically interpreted that they were in a time when G-d's Providence was hidden from them. They could not figure out why all this was happening to them. Nevertheless, he told them, "we need to have faith".

He gave them this "shmooze" and then he blew shofar. He writes that he recorded the story because he wanted the world to know

forever the great mesiras nefesh [sacrifice for mitzvos] these young men demonstrated. Right before they were taken out to the crematorium, just as Rabbi Meislish was about to leave the cellblock, one of the young men stood up and addressed his comrades: "The Rebbe gave us strength and he told us that we should never give up hope and we should always hope for the best; but we must also be prepared for the worst. For G-d's sake, dear brothers, let us not become confused and forget to cry out with great devotion and intensity at the last moment of our lives: Shma Yisrael!" They then all called out with great devotion and intensity "Shma Yisrael Hashem Elokeinu Hashem Echad". Then another student got up and said "Let us all acknowledge the great self- sacrifice of the Rebbe for coming here to blow shofar for us. Let us all give him a blessing that in the merit of this action he be spared, make it out of here and go on to have a long and good and healthy life." Everyone shouted out at the top of their lungs "Amen v'Amen".

The Torah itself will bear witness to the fact that it was not forgotten from the mouths of the nations' children. Even in the worst of times, Klal Yisrael did not forget the Torah.

The Torah will tell how during the Holocaust, Jews ran to the forest to blow the Shofar, so as not to miss the mitzvah on Rosh HaShanah. Jews willingly gave up slices of bread for extended periods so that they could exchange them for potatoes for Pesach. They saved bits of margarine and rendered them into oil using a steaming tin of tea. They then poured the oil into the buttons of their striped uniforms to kindle the Chanukah candles, pulling threads from their sleeves for wicks.

These stories describe mind-boggling levels of mesiras nefesh of great heroes of our people who lived not long ago. Let the mesiras nefesh of so many members of our people over all the generations be a source of merit for us all. When G-d remembers Akeidas Yitzchak on Rosh HaShanah, may He remember not only the mesiras

nefesh of the Patriarchs but also of righteous anonymous young boys throughout the generations who are typified by the story recorded by the Weitzener Rav.

In such merit, may the Almighty bless us with a good year, a Kesivah v'Chasimah Tova. May we have peace and tranquility, and pride from our children. May He bring us the redeemer and final redemption, without having to endure any further suffering of 'Chevlei Moshiach' [birthpangs of the Messiah].



Not Such a Small Thing by Rabbi Shlomo Landau

It was Rosh Hashanah 5782 and R' Dov was wracking his brain trying to come up with a significant kabbalah for the upcoming year, a small but tangible resolution that could upgrade his daily avodas Hashem. On this holy day, he wanted to show the Ribbono Shel Olam that he was serious about his ruchniyus and motivated to grow. After a while, he decided to commit to washing his hands before each tefillah. He was hopeful that this small but real action would elevate his daily tefillah.

True to his word, R' Dov began washing his hands before the very next tefillah. Soon this minor change in his daily routine began to impact his davening experience as he prepared to talk to the King.

About ten months later on a sunny summer day, R' Dov's wife took the day off to travel to the separate beach in Tel Aviv and R' Dov offered to accompany her. R' Dov dropped his wife off at the beach and then decided to head to Park Hayarkon to jog along one of the many scenic paths that follow the Yarkon River. As R' Dov was

jogging, he heard someone calling, "Minchah... Minchah." Indeed, it was a group of Yidden seeking to assemble a Minchah minyan.

R' Dov thought. I was wondering where I would be able to catch a Minchah today. He gladly approached the group. It took but a few minutes to gather the minyan, but as they were about to start Ashrei, R' Dov suddenly realized that he had not washed his hands!

Initially, he began to reason with himself, I only accepted upon myself to wash if there is easily accessible water, but here in the middle of a park, my kabbalah certainly would not apply. But then he caught himself. Certainly, these are the words of the yetzer hara trying to get me to break my resolution. I will stay strong!- He turned to the others and said, "Chevrah, does anyone happen to have a cup? I really try to wash my hands before davening."

Immediately, one fellow reached into his rucksack and pulled out a plastic cup. R'Dov asked them to wait for a minute, and he dashed down to the Yarkon River to fill the cup and wash his hands. He got to the river and climbed down to the riverbank. He took cup and dipped it into the water, but as he did so, he quickly recoiled. Right next to the cup was a child's hand!

Instinctively, he lowered himself into the river, and to his horror he saw a little girl floating unconscious in the water. Being a trained Hatzolah EMT, he pulled her out of the water and administered emergency care. With Hashem's help, she responded quickly and began to sputter and cough. Then she weakly cried out, "Ima."

Just a few minutes later, a frantic mother came looking for her missing daughter and a very moved R' Dov was able to share that her daughter was baruch Hashem okay!

While we may not always be zocheh to save a life by keeping to our kabbalos and commitments, one thing is certain: We will certainly upgrade our lives!

בס"ד

למודי משה



The Minhag of Eating Simanim on The Night of Rosh Hashanah

There is a widespread *minhag* throughout Klal Yisrael to eat *simanim* on the night of Rosh Hashanah.

The *Kaf HaChaim* (583:6) writes: One who is unable to eat the *simanim*, i.e. he is unwell, or he is worried about bugs, and for such a person looking at them is enough. He adds, that even if one is missing one of the *simanim* he may still recite the **יהי רצון** without seeing it, as it is not a *berachah,* it is merely a **בקשת רחמים** – request for mercy.

Many have the *minhag* to recite the "*Yehi Ratzon's*" without mentioning the name of Hashem. Some have the *minhag* to mention the name of Hashem just on the "*Yehi Ratzon*" recited when dipping the apple in honey. R' Shlomah Zalman Auerbach *zt"l* would recite the first "*Yehi Ratzon*" with the name of Hashem, and the rest of them he would recite without.

According to R' Shlomah Kluger (*Chochmas Shlomah*) when *Chazal* instructed us to eat pleasant and sweet things, it is not only because of the *tefillos* that we say that they are beneficial, as when eating them it is not possible to *daven*, rather, eating the *simanim* shows

emunah and *bitachan*, that we believe the new year will be good. Especially after that which I write in my *droshas*, that on Rosh Hashanah one must be happy and say that all that Hashem does is for the good, and through this it will in fact be good. For this reason, it was established that we eat pleasant, sweet foods and say positive statements when eating them, so that if *chas vesholam* a bad year was decreed for us, it will be turned around for the good by eating and saying these statements.

The *Mechaber* (583:2) mentions the *minhag* of eating the head of a sheep and to recite, **נהיה לראש ולא לזנב**, he adds that this also serves a reminder of Akeidas Yitzchak.

Dorshei reshumos say that the word **לראש** of the statement **נהיה לראש**, stands for **לעשות רצון אבינו שבשמים** – "to do the will of our Father in Heaven."

In *Shiurei HaGrish* (pg. 454), R' Ben Tzion Kook brings that R' Elyashiv was very particular not to eat dates on Rosh Hashanah. Since in Yiddish dates are known as '**טייט**', which can also mean "death". Once when a *talmid* of the *Chofetz Chaim* ate at his table and asked him about this *minhag*, he answered, "because of the name" and he didn't even want to mention the word '**טייט**', as he was very careful not to mention anything about death on Rosh Hashanah.

The *Ben Yehoyada* is *medayak* from the *lashon* of the Gemara **לעולם יהא רגיל** – "a person should be accustomed", that one should eat the *simanim* by all the meals on Rosh Hashanah, since generally the word **רגיל** means at least three times. The *Sha'arei Teshuvah* (583:1) brings from the *Eliyah Rabbah* to eat the *simanim* also on the second night of Rosh Hashanah.

The *minhag* in the house of R' Shlomah Zalman Auerbach (*Halichos Shlomah*, *Orchos Halachah* 70) was to eat the *simanim* on both nights of Rosh Hashanah, however, on the second night it wasn't as big of a deal as the first night.

In *Koveitz Ohr Yisrael* (*Gilyon* 13, pg. 123) they bring a big *arichus* [lengthy discussion] of all the various different *minhogim* regarding the eating of *simanim* on Rosh Hashanah. They bring that some eat the *simanim* the entire Aseres Yemei Teshuvah as the inyan of **ריש שתא** – beginning of the year, mentioned by the Gemara refers to Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, and some have the *minhag* to eat *simanim* on *erev* Yom Kippur and Hoshanah Rabbah as well.

On Which Days Do We Dip *Challah* Into Honey?



The *minhag* to dip *challah* into honey is only mentioned by Rosh Hashanah, however, the *Mateh Ephraim* (*siman* 601, *sif* 18) writes, that by the meal of *erev* Yom Kippur, the *minhag* is to dip *challah* into honey.

The *Sefer Darkei Chaim VeSholam* (*siman* 707) brings that the *Minchas Elozor* had the *minhag* to dip his piece of *hamotzi* into honey by all his meals from Rosh Hashanah until after Shemini Atzeres. It's also brought in *Orchos Rabbeinu* (Vol. 2, pg. 173) that this was the *minhag* of the Steipler.

It is known that the Brisker Rav had the *minhag* to dip his *challah* into honey from Rosh Hashanah until Hoshanah Rabbah, however, only in the middle of the meal, as he was worried about the *hefsek* [interruption] between the *berachah* and eating, since dipping is not required *meikar hadin*.

The "Mitzvah" of Opening Up the *Aron HaKodesh* for *Piyutim* During *Chazoras HaShatz*

The *Maharil* (*Tefillas* Rosh Hashanah, *ois* 5, pg. 282) writes that the *minhag* is to open the *aron hakodesh* when the *chazon* starts

chazoras hashatz. The reason for doing this writes the *Shu"t Tzemach Tzedek* (*HaKodmon*, *siman* 50) is because it helps arouse *kavonah* [concentration], and the *tefillos* are more pleasing and more easily accepted because of the *Sifrei* Torah inside the *aron hakodesh*.

The *Eleph HaMagen* on the *Mateh Ephraim* (592:1) brings from *seforim*, that: "It helps arouse Heavenly mercy, and to serve as a merit that the gates of Heaven should be open to our *tefillos*".

Praying for the *Shechinah* – the Greatest Source of *Berachah* on the Yom HaDin

R' Yitzchak Meltzen, in his *Siddur HaGra* (*Pesicha L'Tefillas* Rosh Hashanah), poses a question that is very fundamental to understanding the objective of our *tefillos* on Rosh Hashanah. On the Day of Judgment, why is our entire *tefillah* focused only on being *mispallel* for the *Kavod HaShechinah*? Shouldn't we be imploring Hashem for *banei, chayei, u'mezonei,* children, life and sustenance? Shouldn't we be begging for *selichah* and *mechilah*?

Furthermore, asks Rav Meltzen, shouldn't we specifically mention our sins instead of ignoring them; as we know, *modeh b'knas patur,* one who admits to guilt warrants exemption. Would it not improve the Heavenly judgement if we confessed, admitted our sins, and asked for forgiveness? When our lives and our entire future hang in the balance, shouldn't we be begging for what is certainly foremost in our minds? Why do we seem to be ignoring our own needs on the *Yom HaDin*?

Pray for Hashem … and He Will Provide

Rav Meltzen answers that on Rosh Hashanah we definitely would want to *daven* for our needs, for our *parnassah,* and for our children. However, there is something that transcends our own personal needs: the *Shechinah*. The *Shechinah* is in pain. The *Shechinah* is in exile. Hashem is, so to speak, without a home, disrespected and

disgraced throughout the world. How can we bring ourselves to ask for our physical and worldly needs when Hashem is not afforded the proper *kavod* and *yirah* to which He is entitled!?

Therefore, *Chazal* instructed us to focus first and foremost on restoring *Kavod Shomayim,* making sure that Hashem's needs, so to speak, are addressed. We ask for only the bare minimum of our own needs on Rosh Hashanah; we ask only for life – *Zachreinu L'Chaim* – and even then, our *tefillah* is framed by our intention to bring more *kavod* to Hashem with the life He would grant us. We say, *"L'maancha Elokim chaim"'* we ask for life only so that we can serve You better.

We focus our *tefillos* on Rosh Hashanah on asking Hashem to make His Name and honor revealed and manifest throughout the entire world. When we put our own needs on the back burner and focus on asking for the *kavod Shomayim* to be magnified, the prosecuting angels are silenced, since they see that our concerns are first and foremost those of the Ribbono Shel Olam. And then, the *pasuk,* **אני לדודי ודודי לי**, is applicable in its truest sense. We are for our Beloved: We are using out *tefillos* and requests on the *Yom HaDin* for the sake of the honor of our Beloved – and then our Beloved will be for us, and will provide for our needs.

Furthermore, says Rav Meltzen, we can apply *Chazal's* principle that "*kol hamispallel b'ad chaveiro v'hu tzoreich l'oso davar, hu yaaneh techilah,* one who *davens* for a friend, while simultaneously having similar unmet needs of his own, will be answered first." By *davening* for the "needs" of Hashem, while we ourselves have significant needs, we ensure that our needs will be answered first.

When we strive to become better than we are, everything around us becomes better too.



לשנה טובה ומתוקה "A sweet new year" The custom mentioned in the Gemara and Shulchan Aruch to eat various foods and offer a small prayer with them is quite well-known. Apple in honey is probably the most famous and is meant to enable us to pray for a sweet new year.

"Why the apple? Because Rosh HaShana is in the fall, and apples are in season." It sounds humorous, but it's an important concept as well. Apples are in season. We are happy with the things we have and ask HaShem to enable us to taste the sweetness of what He has given us without looking for more.

The gemara lists certain items to eat, and the machzor has many more items. People constantly invent their own such as eating peas for Peace on Earth. You can eat meat (basar) so that we might have besuros tovos, good tidings, or chicken, so "Zol der Aibershter shicken der Moshiach," (may HaShem send the Messiah.)

The main thing, says the Mishna Berura, is not to get angry on Rosh HaShana (not a good idea any time) and to enter the new year with a happy heart, trust in HaShem, and Teshuva. It would appear from the Mishna Berura that it's not eating the foods that brings the bracha, it's the bitachon and Teshuva.

The Laws of Rosh Hashana by Rabbi Michael Levy

The custom is to do **התרת נדרים**- annulling or vows the morning before Rosh Hashanah. The annulment should be done before minimum of three Hachamim.

We do not say **וידוי ונפילת אפים** the morning before Rosh Hashanah. Therefore, the Selihot should be said before sunrise.

Some righteous people fast the day of Erev Rosh Hashanah. Nevertheless, even one who normally fasts may eat at a Brit Milah or Pidyon and does not have to fast that day.

One should take a haircut before Rosh Hashanah and dress in fine clean clothes in order to show that we trust that Hashem will judge us favourably with a healthy and successful year.

It is proper for men to immerse in a Mikveh before Rosh Hashanah.

Some have a custom to visit a graveyard and pray to Hashem by their deceased relatives. It is forbidden for kohanim to visit a graveyard.

We light candles in honour of Rosh Hashanah and prior to lighting we recite the brocho **להדליק נר של יום טוב.** The brocho of **שהחיינו** is said with Kiddush.

We eat special fruits and vegetables as sign for a good year. Dates, black-eyed peas, leek and Swiss chard must be checked for bugs. If you are a guest and are unsure if they were checked, you can say the special prayer without eating.

It is customary not to eat spicy or sour foods on Rosh Hashanah.

On Rosh Hashanah we are commanded from the Torah to blow the shofar. Therefore, one must have in mind to fulfil the mitzvah through the blowing of the Chazzan.

There are three sets of blowing. All sets begin and end with a tekiah, a long blow at least two seconds. Then there are shevarim which are

three short blows each one less than a second. Then there is teruah which consists of a minimum of nine consecutive beats.

Women are not obligated to hear the shofar, nevertheless it is a mitzvah for them to hear it.

Rabbi Dovid Greenberg - Pledge of Loyalty



Rosh Hashanah is the day that Hashem judges us and determines our sustenance for the coming year. One would naturally assume that we would spend the day focused on repentance and requesting our needs. However, careful contemplation of the words of Shemoneh Esreh reveal that such concepts are noticeably absent. Rather, the focal point of our tefilos is the realization and the proclamation that Hashem is our King.

Why is this so? Aren't we missing a prime opportunity to ask for our needs? The answer is that recognizing Hashem's sovereignty and pledging our loyalty is really our best hope to merit a year filled with all the berachos we hope for. After all, a King will provide for His servants even though they make a lot of mistakes.

On the other hand, coming before Hashem and asking for our needs based on our own merits is much riskier for we might be found sorely lacking. Therefore, it is certainly appropriate to dedicate the day to pledging our loyalty to Hashem, our King.

Short And Sweet



The **בן איש חי** says that the individual blowing the Shofar should hold the Shofar so that it is visible from both ends. The lesson being that one should repent for sins on both sides of the spectrum: sins between man and his Creator, alluded to in the wide opening of the Shofar, as well as sins between man and his fellow man, alluded to in the narrow opening of the Shofar.

Peninim On The Torah - Give The Best To Hashem

I just came across an inspiring *dvar Torah* from ***Horav Mordechai Gifter, zl***,

We read in the *Haftorah* for the first day of *Rosh Hashanah* about Chanah and her supplications for a child. Chanah's pleas for a child were not unusual; every woman wants to be a mother.

While the reasons behind their maternal passion may vary – every woman wants to have a child to love, to establish a legacy, a bond with the future. Human nature dictates that someone who has waited a long time for the blessing of a child to be realised will want to smother her child with extraordinary love and never let him/her out of her sight. This is natural, and the rationale is obvious.

Concerning Chanah, we notice an anomaly. She asserts that if Hashem were to bless her with a child, she will give him up to Hashem! Chanah did not want a child simply to satisfy her maternal

instinct. She desired a child so that she could honour Hashem! She wanted to glorify the Almighty, to elevate His Name in the world.

Rosh Hashanah is the day that we coronate Hashem as *Melech Malchei ha'Melachim*, King of Kings. How fitting is the *Haftorah* that tells us about the woman who wanted a child just so that she could better serve Hashem.

Incidentally, Chanah's prayer was answered on *Rosh Hashanah*. Something to think about.

הלכות החג Rabbi Akiva Niehaus

Sleeping on Rosh Hashanah



The Rama (583:2) writes that it is appropriate to refrain from sleeping on Rosh Hashanah because doing so can cause a year of "sleepy" mazel.

The Mishnah Berurah (583:9) notes that the day should be used for Torah study; wasting time unproductively is the equivalent of sleep and should be avoided. What should one do if he feels tired and exhausted?

The Arizal is of the opinion that one may sleep after chatzos (ibid.); additionally, some Poskim limit the prohibition to the first day – not the second day (Aruch Hashulchan 597:2). Further, if one is tired and feels that sleeping is important to allow one to daven properly, he is allowed to take a nap as needed, preferably after chatzos (Halichos Shlomo 1:24).

As an aside, after going to sleep at night, the common custom is to remain sleeping in the morning as usual and there is no obligation to awaken before dawn (ibid. 1:23; see, also, Kaf HaChaim 583:39).

Bowing Customs



Many communities have the custom that the entire congregation bows down on the ground at various points during chazaras hashatz of Mussaf on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

In order to avoid transgressing the prohibition of prostrating on a stone floor (Vayikra 26:1), it is customary to place a separation (such as a mat) on the floor prior to bowing (Rama 131:8). The correct place for the separation is by the face (Rambam Hil' Akum 6:7, Mateh Ephraim 621:14) but it appears that many people put a mat by their knees.

In defence of this custom, some Poskim explain that our method of bowing (i.e., bowing on one's knees and lowering the face to the floor) may not be considered "prostration" and is actually permissible on a non-stone floor (such as carpeting or wood) (Kovetz Halachos 18:12). Therefore, since the separation is only done as a stringency, placing it by the knees is sufficient (ibid).

Hataras Nedarim for Women

On Erev Rosh Hashanah, the common custom is to perform Hataras Nedarim – a process to nullify certain types of vows – in front of three judges. This process is customarily done by men – not women. However, the reason for this is unclear. After all, women have the

same concerns regarding vows as men and they should seek annulment just like men.

In order to partially rectify this conundrum, some married men do Hataras Nedarim on behalf of their wives (Kovetz Halachos 5:9). For this to be effective, some Poskim rule that it is necessary for the wife to appoint her husband as her agent (Teshuvos V'hanhagos 1:338). (It should be noted that this solution of appointing an agent only works for one's wife – not a daughter – see Shulchan Aruch YD 234:56.) Other Poskim write that women may rely on the Kol Nidrei which they recite in shul as a declaration as a form of Hataras Nedarim (Halichos Shlomo 1:10). Additionally, the final portion of Hataras Nedarim, where one declares that, henceforth, all vows should be null and void ("moda'ah") can be said without the presence of three judges and this is an appropriate approach for women (Harav Dovid Zucker shlita).

The common custom is that children under Bar/Bas Mitzvah do not perform Hataras Nedarim , and as mentioned, this appears to be the common custom amongst women as well.

The Shofar Beracha

Although women are not obligated to hear Shofar on Rosh Hashanah, many women specifically try to fulfil this mitzvah. According to Ashkenazic custom, these women should recite the beracha prior to fulfilling the mitzvah (Rama 589:6). If a man who has not yet fulfilled his own obligation of hearing shofar blows the shofar on behalf of women, he may recite the beracha on behalf of himself and the listeners. However, if the blower has already fulfilled the mitzvah, he may not recite the beracha on behalf of the women (ibid.). In such a scenario, the women should recite their own beracha prior to the blowing, or one woman may recite the beracha on behalf of the rest.

The Pri Tzadik informs us that we are judged on Rosh Hashana for **בני, חיי, מזוני**; children, life and sustenance. **בני** - Sarah, Rachel and Chana were remembered to have children on Rosh Hashana. Parenthetically, a hint to this is that the Gematria of **וידגו לרב בקרב הארץ**; proliferate abundantly like fish within the land, is 861- is identical to the sum of **ראש השנה**.

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We say ...**כמה יעברון וכמה יבראון**; on Rosh Hashana will be inscribed and on Yom Kippur will be sealed how many will pass from the earth and how many will be created.

In the name of the **Tiferes Shlomo** it is interpreted as how many will become pregnant this year, as **יעברון** is related to **עובר** and how many will be healed from their sickness, as **יבראון** is related to **בריאות**; health.

Just do it !

It is brought down in the Sefer 'Otzer Pisgamim V'Sichos' that a man once came to **Rebbe Yisroel of Ruzhin,zt"l**, and confessed to him that he had sinned and he wanted to do Teshuvah.

Rebbe Yisroel told him: "Just do it!" But the man claimed: "Rebbe, I don't know how to do Teshuvah." The Rebbe asked him: "And how do you know about sinning?" To which the man replied: "First I sinned, and then I was informed that I had sinned."

The Rebbe replied: "Teshuvah is the same way. First do it, regret that you sinned, be bothered about the sin, and Teshuvah will come by itself." (Umatok HaOhr)
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Rabbi Moshe Willner - With the Mouth I Gave You

Why do we have Rosh Hashanah before Yom Kippur? Shouldn't we first be given the opportunity to do teshuva and then be judged? We can answer this with a story.



A man once came to a dentist in need of a tremendous amount of dental work. After examining what needed to be done, the dentist explained that all the work would entail a hefty bill. After some negotiations, the fee was lowered by twenty percent, and the patient accepted the responsibility of paying up. The work was done, appointment after appointment, until all the fillings, root canals, and extractions were done. The office sent the man many bills but none of them were paid.

Finally, after phone calls and reminders were ignored, the dentist decided to go to the patient's house. He was met with tremendous shouts and insults and was kicked out of the house without receiving a dime. "But do you know what hurts the most?" asked the good doctor. "He was screaming and insulting me with my teeth! With the mouth I put back together."

R' Yaakov Galinsky says that this is the point of Malchiyos. On Rosh Hashanah we acknowledge and accept that we are Hashem's creations. When one realizes this first and then comes to do teshuva on Yom Kippur, it is not just teshuva on the aveiros. We now realize that we are sinning to Hashem with the very body He gave to us! It leads to a whole different perspective. With this we understand why

we need Rosh Hashanah before Yom Kippur so that we can fully appreciate the importance of doing teshuvah properly.

Rabbi Yisroel Langer - Grab the Moment!

The passuk says, **ומל ה' אלקיך** –We ask Hashem throughout the days of selichos to circumcise our hearts. The many sins that we do throughout the year have created barriers between ourselves and Hashem, and we request that He help us come close to Him by removing those barriers.

There are certain times during the year that Hashem is more receptive to these pleas, when Hashem Himself calls upon us to come closer to Him. These are the days of Elul and Aseres Yemei Teshuvah. As the passuk says, "Seek out Hashem when He is found, call upon Him when He is close" – Chazal teach us that this refers to the days of Aseres Yemei Teshuvah.



The following is a true story related by **R' Yitzchok Zilberstein** that brings out this point. Dovid Gellis, a boy of only ten years old, was a child prodigy. He lived in Eretz Yisroel and did nothing but learn Torah. He was a tremendous masmid and was more learned than most boys his age. Then, one day, Dovid was informed that his mother was going to have to leave to America. Mr. Gellis explained to Dovid that his mother wasn't feeling well and the doctors in America were more suited to deal with her illness. Dovid's mother said good-bye to Dovid and told him not to worry as everything will be alright. Sadly, that was the

last time Dovid saw his mother. Dovid had a hard time coping with his mother's petirah, and his interest in learning waned. Mr. Gellis didn't handle the situation well, and he scolded Dovid and hit him in an attempt to motivate his little Dovid who was quickly slipping away. Things went from bad to worse, and Mr. Gellis eventually threw Dovid out of the house.

Dovid moved to America and became a very successful businessman. Years went by and Mr. Gellis became very ill. As he was lying in his hospital bed with minutes left to live, he remembered his little Dovid and what had become of him. He now confessed that he was to blame because he didn't handle the situation after his wife passed away in the proper way.

He summoned the chaplain of the hospital, R' Boruch Meden, to help contact his son because he wanted to apologize and talk to his son one last time after all these years. It was 3 minutes before midnight as Mr. Gellis tried to contact his son in America. Dovid was too busy to answer the phone, as he was in middle of negotiating to buy a beautiful new diamond for his wife's birthday. He tried a second time, but to no avail. Mr. Gellis then passed away at midnight.

Shortly after, R' Boruch was able to get through to Dovid and told him that his father had wanted to contact him but had now passed away. When Dovid heard this, he threw the diamond on to the floor and cried bitterly. He shouted, "Father, Father, if I would have known that it was you calling I would have stopped everything. If only I could hear your voice, your Kiddush, your Shabbos zemiros one more time." At this time of the year, our Father in heaven is calling upon us. He too is trying to contact us. Let us make sure we pick up the phone!

Rabbi Yehoshua Alt [לע"נ שמואל אביגדר בן יצחק מאיר ע"ה]

It is written ובחרת בחיים; choose life. Who would choose death? Continues the Pasuk- **למען תחיה**; so that you will live. These words seem to be unnecessary.

Authentic life is that which contains spirituality. Just as we need food to satiate our physical body, we need spirituality to satiate our soul. The Shofar awakens us to this reality as the Rambam writes **עורו ישינים משינתכם**... ; awaken those who are sleeping. In fact, the word **שופר** is related to **שפיר**; improve, beautify.



It therefore comes as no surprise that the first letters of the words **שׁרש פּרה ראשׁ ולענה**; a root flourishing with gall and wormwood, spell **שופר** because the Shofar helps us rid ourselves of impurity. Indeed, the initials of **אין שׂטן ואין פּגע רע**; no adversary and no misfortune, form the word **שופר**.

Rosh Hashana is called **יום תרועה**; the day of the Shofar. **תרועה** is a term that means friendship - **ריעות**. This is because the purpose of the Shofar is to improve our relationship with Hashem who is called **ריע**; friend. In fact, if we break up the word **תרועה** we get **רעות ה'**.

The Pasuk states **וקול שופר הריעו לפני המלך ה'**; with the Shofar, call out before Hashem. This can be understood to mean the blowing of the Shofar is to get us close to Hashem. In fact, the initials of **שׂערים ראשׁיכם והנשׂאו פּתחי** ; raise up your heads…so that the King of

Glory may enter, spell **שופר**. After the Shofar is sounded at Shacharis we recite **לדוד ה' אורי** What does it speak of? Closeness to Hashem.

The **תרועה** is a broken sound. The Sefer Hachinuch tells us this alludes to breaking the Yetzer Hara. Rosh Hashana is referred to as **יום תרועה** a day to break the Yetzer Hara, Satan. The Malach of the Satan is known as the **ס-ם**. Adding up these two letters we arrive at a total of 100. On Rosh Hashana we blow 100 Shofar blasts. These are to overcome the power of Satan. In this light we can grasp **כדי לערבב השטן**; in order to confuse Satan.

The purpose of the 100 Shofar blasts is to get us closer to Hashem, to live a more spiritual life. The Gematria of **שופר** is 586. Tallying another 100 to this (for the 100 Shofar blasts), we arrive at 686, the precise sum of **ובחרת בחיים** !

Through the Shofar, we are empowered to choose real life-spirituality. In this light we can grasp the continuation of the Pasuk-**למען תחיה**, in order to live a true existence.



Why is it that on Rosh Hashana we are judged for the entire year? when a child is being conceived, his entire genetic make-up is being put in place. After this point he is locked into his physical genetic coding. Similarly, in a court case, it is easier to be exonerated during the case rather than having the verdict changed afterwards.

Rosh Hashana is the conception of the year and as the Gemara states one's sustenance is set from Rosh Hashana. So, on Rosh Hashana we are judged for the entire year, since it is the point of conception. With this we can explain **טוב אחרית דבר מראשיתו**- a good end is dependent on its beginning.

To what can this be compared? To one who has a cut in his foot while another has a cut in his head. It is obviously more severe in the head.

This is why people are very careful with how they behave on **ראש השנה** as it is the head.

The Pasuk says **מרשית השנה ועד אחרית שנה** *from the beginning of the year until year's end*. **מרשית** is composed of the same letters as **מתשרי** , meaning from Rosh Hashana which is the beginning of the year, as everything until **אחרית שנה** is from there.

The Pasuk states מרשית השנה ועד אחרית שנה - *"From the beginning of the year to year's end."*

The Satmar Rebbe is bothered by the inconsistency as first it says **השנה** with a **ה** whereas the second time it mentions **שנה** without the **ה**? Furthermore, why is **מרשית** missing an **א** as it should be spelled **מראשית**?

When there is a new beginning, we get excited. However, with time that initial excitement fades. This applies to new foods, new relationships, places we have never been and so on. A new year brings along new excitement. That original excitement fades as the year progresses.

In this way we can explain why it first says **השנה** followed by **שנה**. In the beginning of the year, we say 'this will be the year' (**השנה**)- I'll learn better, Daven with more Kavana, acquire better character traits etc. Sadly, for many it turns out to be just another year (**שנה**).

This also explains why **מרשית** is spelled without the **א**. The letters of **מרשית** also spell **מתשרי** which is when Rosh Hashana is. Additionally, without the **א**, it now forms the root **רש** ; impoverished, because it became another impoverished year (of spirituality).

However, we are supposed to utilize that initial excitement by bringing it with us throughout the year. In this manner we can understand **אחרית כראשית** …- to be excited and accomplish in the

end just as in the beginning. We must carry that original excitement constantly with us.

We blow the Shofar during the month of Elul- which consists of 29 days- as well as the two days of Rosh Hashana. This gives us a total of 31. However, the Shofar is not blown on Shabbos and Erev Rosh Hashana. Subtracting these five days (the four Shabbosim in Elul and Erev Rosh Hashana), we have 26 days where it is blown. 26 is the numerical value of **י-ה-ו-ה**, the name of Hashem that represents **רחמים**; mercy.



This is what we especially desire during this time of year. Blowing the Shofar arouses Hashem's mercy. This is shown in the beginning of the Torah. Counting 26 letters from the **ש** of **השמים** in the first Pasuk in the Torah we have a **ו** (of **ובהו**). 26 letters later is a **פ** (of **מרחפת**) followed by a **ר** (of **אור**) in another 26 letters. These letters comprise the word **שופר** .

The Panim Yafos tells us that during these days we say **לדוד ה' אורי** because it says Hashem's name in it 13 times, corresponding to the 13 attributes of mercy. During these days, we want **רחמים** as a result, we say **י-ה-ו-ה** , the name of Hashem that represents **רחמים** in, **לדוד ה' אורי** 13 times. Being that we recite it twice daily, we mention the name **י-ה-ו-ה** – 26 times! the sum of **י-ה-ו-ה**.

Rabbi Yaniv Meirov -How to Earn a Favourable Judgment



Rav Yisroel Salanter shared the following story . Berel had a splitting headache, the likes of which he had never experienced before. He felt that it would likely help him were he to spend a few minutes relaxing at the nearby coffee shop with a warm cup of coffee and a freshly baked danish.

Berel didn't generally like eating out, but given how he felt, he saw no other option. He walked over to the local hotel which housed the coffee shop, and asked the waiter for a cup of coffee. The waiter replied that it would cost $99.99. Berel couldn't believe his ears. "What did you say?" he asked. "That's impossible!" "Sir, you're in a very high-end and expensive hotel here; you pay for not only the cup of coffee, but the luxury of sitting here. If you'd like a cup of coffee, then it's going to cost exactly that –$99.99." "Okay, okay," said Berel. "How about I take it to go, and you give me fifty percent off?" But the waiter wouldn't budge. "Sir, these are our prices and rules. It's either you pay for the full amount or nothing."

By this point, Berel was no longer interested in a cup of coffee. How much are the danishes here?" "The danishes are $150." "150?" exclaimed Berel. "Are you serious? $150 for a piece of cake!" "Sir, those are our prices."

Berel's headache was only getting worse, and whatever it was now, it was still certainly better than throwing away hundreds of dollars for just a morsel of food. As Berel began walking away, he noticed a number of waiters standing off to the side drinking cups of coffee

and holding plates full of danishes. Perturbed, Berel made his way over. "Excuse me sir, but please explain. How is it that all of you waiters are so freely drinking coffee and eating danishes that are so expensive? If you are so wealthy, then why are you working as a waiter? And if, in the contrary, you are not so wealthy, then how are you able to afford all this coffee and cake?"

The waiter, without hesitating, replied, "We work for the boss. When you work for the boss and take care of his guests, then all of these supremely expensive cups of coffee and cake are free. We can take whatever we want, whenever we want."

As we enter the new year, we have an opportunity ahead of us. If we choose to take upon ourselves to work for the boss, for Hashem, then He will in kind shower us with limitless blessing. When we sign ourselves up to become His ambassadors and enrol ourselves as part of his employee team, then He gives us much to benefit from in our life, well above and beyond all expectations. Hashem grants us pleasure in this world and provides us with profound blessing because they help us further our work for Him and His children. All we must do is sign up and tell Him we are ready to become individuals who are ready to work on behalf of the Jewish people and do our utmost to look after His children.

This is a powerful way of earning a favourable judgment on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. When we attach and align ourselves to the mission of the Jewish people at large, we become subsumed within their umbrella and become an inextricable and vital part of their system. Our judgement is then no longer merely a verdict in relation to us as a yachid, a single, lone individual, but rather in relation to a tzibbur, an entire nation. If Hashem would choose to grant us a difficult year, it would thereby affect hundreds of other people. Hashem therefore measures and calculates our judgment with even more sensitivity and care, for it involves a multitude.

This then is a supremely powerful segula which we can take upon ourselves. Ask yourself: what can I do to help the Jewish people? What can I do to benefit my community? The answer to this shifts your judgment to an entirely new plateau and serves as a wonderful merit for you earning a happy, healthy and prosperous new year.

Torah Tavlin - R' Chaim Yosef Kofman zt"l



Years ago, on the night of Rosh Hashana, we did the basic simanim - the apple in the honey, the carrots, the head of the fish. Before each siman, we said the appropriate "Yehi Ratzon." Today, though, we have come up with many new simanim and interesting Yehi Ratzons! Nowadays, our pre-seuda "checklist" on Rosh Hashana is almost as long as the Pesach seder! It is almost as if we eat so many simanim that we have no room or time to enjoy the meal and honour the women who worked so hard to prepare the delectable Yom Tov seuda! We spend so much time in shul davening and asking all types of requests. Why is it even necessary to come home and eat unusual foods, requesting many of the same bakashos in the form of the Yehi Ratzons?

My machshava here is that the tefillos we daven in shul on Rosh Hashana have little to do with our personal needs. Every tefilla on this day is to help us realize that Hashem is our eternal King, the eternal Master over the entire world! uninterrupted blast of the shofar signifies our pure soul that is ready now to make Hashem the King of Kings.

This is the transformative power of the shofar on Rosh Hashana. May we utilize this great and holy day to recreate ourselves and fix the damage that was caused by the first man on the very first Rosh Hashana in history. One of the greatest things that we can do on Rosh Hashana is to not get angry! When we get upset or angry because things don't go our way, we are making a loud statement that we are the King and not Hashem!

On Rosh Hashana,we must accept that everything is part of His royal plan. May we be zoche to see the true revelation of Malchus Hashem with the coming of Moshiach Tzidkeinu amen! As the Yimei Hadin commence and we are looking for zechusim to be zoche badin, let us bear this concept in mind. Through our efforts in helping to guide our children - or for that matter, any of Hashem's children - no matter if they're young or old, or by just lending a helping hand to a fellow Yid in need, we stand a much better chance of finding chein (grace) in the eyes of Hashem. May we all be zocheh to a k'siva v'chasima tova, and a shenas geulah v'yeshua.

It is no wonder then why we spend so much time and effort creating new simanim and making many Yehi Ratzons once we arrive back home. In shul, our focus is to coronate the King of all Kings. In our homes, on the other hand, our focus is to beseech our crowned King for all our needs and requests. Perhaps this is why we read from the Torah on the first day of Rosh Hashana from Parshas Vayeira, where Sara Imeinu was blessed with a son, Yitzchok.

What does this have to do with the Yom Hadin? Well, the last word in the kriah is "**מעכה**" which stands for "**מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָעוֹלָם**"!

May Hashem, our King, answer all our tefillos and bakashos, all our simanim and Yehi Ratzons, and inscribe us for a year of yeshuos, refuos and nechamos along with the coming of Moshiach.

Mrs. Liba Eckstein survived the horrors of the Holocaust as a prisoner in Auschwitz. Eventually, she married and settled in Manchester, England. During her ordeal, Liba begged Hashem for three things. First, that she should survive Auschwitz and tell her story to the world. Second, that she should marry a ben Torah. Finally, she prayed that if she ever merits having children, all her offspring should remain Shomer Shabbos and marry before her death.



Seven months after her last brush with death, the Russian army liberated the camp. The Russians offered citizenship to anyone who was willing to accept, and Liba was sorely tempted by the promise of safety, plentiful food, and security.

Many others accepted this proposal, in spite of the spiritual dangers of living in atheist Russia. But Liba joined a small group of girls who were returning to their old homes with the hope of finding some surviving family members.

Liba spent a few days in the local train station, waiting and hoping for news. As time passed and nobody stepped forward, she arrived at the dreadful understanding that she was the only survivor of her family. This realization was more painful than all the suffering she had endured. Eventually, she made her way across the English Channel where she met and married her ben Torah and merited to raise a family of Torah-observant Jews. As she saw her prayers answered, she became consumed with a burning desire to exact some

form of vengeance for her murdered family. What could be better, she reasoned, than to say to Kaddish at the very site of the Auschwitz crematoria, the place where the Germans tried to liquidate the Jewish Nation? - This desire became an obsession, and she continually asked her son to arrange the trip. At first, he was unsure as their family Rav steadfastly refused to give them permission to go.

When she turned 73, Mrs. Eckstein learned about a tour to Poland that would include a visit to Auschwitz and this time she was not to be denied. She took her son and they arrived at the gates with the famous inscription "Arbeit Macht Frei" (work brings freedom). Mrs. Eckstein hesitated at the gates, trying to find her bearings.

"Sruly, this is not Auschwitz; I was never in this place." She became very agitated, and the tour guide rushed to her aid. "Tell me, when were you here?" he said. "In 1944." "In that case, you were in Birkenau. They used to be called Auschwitz I and Auschwitz II."

Liba and her son hailed a taxi and were driven to the camp that she remembered so well. The driver dropped them off near the crematoria and as the pair solemnly entered the valley of death, Mrs. Eckstein finally got her bearings. "This is it! This is where I was! That building there was my barracks." Taking her son by the arm, she guided him to the entrance of the forbidding structure. "Look at the sign! It's C13." - "There are two rooms here. The other one was for the kapos, and I slept right here, on this very spot. Five agonizing months of my life were lost to these evil men."

She stomped on the floor. "Hitler, where are you? I'm here with my son. I have children. I have grandchildren. You have nothing. Nothing is left from you. No remembrance ... Yimach shemo." Then she raised her head and announced, "Hodu l'Hashem ki tov ki l'olam chasdo."

Her son turned to his mother. "It's getting late. There's no minyan here to say Kaddish, but at least you can light a candle." Liba lit a

yahrtzeit candle and recited the names of her lost family members. But she was upset. "All I want is to say Kaddish for my family. That is why I came here. Why won't Hashem allow me to do this?"

She started to sob loudly. Her son felt terrible and tried to comfort his mother. Suddenly, he said. "Mummy, you won't believe this, but I see nine Jews walking toward us!" Turning to the group, he asked, "tell me, where are you from? Why are you here?" "We are here for a business conference. The hotel accommodations are not very pleasant, so we decided to take a drive. Our boss told us to avoid Auschwitz because he didn't want us to be distracted. But he never said anything about Birkenau, so we came here. We heard a woman crying, so we came over to investigate."

"My parents who died al kiddush Hashem, must have sent you so we can say Kaddish. Sruly, please say Kaddish." Slowly and carefully, her son Sruly intoned the holy words. The emotion was palpable, and everyone was moved.

Afterward, Mrs. Eckstein addressed the men. "Do you think that we merely recited Kaddish for my family? I want to tell you that we have just now buried my parents, brothers, and sisters. Now is their burial. And now I have peace, knowing that I have buried them. Thank you, everyone."

This was a pivotal moment for Liba Eckstein. At last, she found herself at peace. She merited seeing all her requests fulfilled. She survived the war, married a ben Torah, and proudly raised a frum family. All her children were married, and she derived tremendous nachas from her grandchildren.

As she lay ill in bed right before her passing, her son whispered into her ear, "Remember the Kaddish in Birkenau." "I will never forget that." She passed away later that day.

As in many chassidic courts all over the world, Belzer Chassidim would stream to the southern Galician city of Belz by the thousands, to be in the presence of their holy **Rebbe, R' Shalom Rokeach zt"l (Sar Shalom)** for the uplifting High Holy Day prayers. For weeks in advance of the Yamim Noraim, a buzz would fill the air as wealthy, scholarly, famous, pious and even simple chassidim would arrive by the wagonloads and take their usual places in the great Belzer Synagogue, a building unparalleled in its size and grandeur anywhere in the Jewish world.



Unquestionably, one of the highlights of the Belzer avodah on Rosh Hashana was when the Tzaddik himself would lift his personal Shofar to his lips and blow the Tekios, Shevarim and Teruos - the required mitzvah of the day. A hush would descend on the massive crowd and the Rebbe would pause until he felt it was just the right moment before emitting a sound that rent the heavens in its purity, clarity and powerful submissiveness to the One Above. Nary a dry eye could be seen amongst the holiday worshippers as the Belzer Rebbe blew the shofar blasts, ushering in the gravity and solemnity of the judgment of the day.

One year, as the Rebbe took his place at the bima in the middle of the Beis Medrash to begin blowing, he casually wiped his lips with his fingers to remove any moisture. Suddenly, he recoiled in shock and fear when he saw a strand of hair, presumably from his beard, on his hand. He groaned in pain - the pain of committing the sin of ripping out a hair on the holy day of Rosh Hashana! R' Shalom became

inconsolable. Immediately, he put his shofar back in its sheath and sat down in his place just to catch his breath and regain his composure. His face had turned pale and he was trembling all over.

Reb Yitzchok Aizik, the elderly "Makri" (individual who prompts the blower which blast to sound) of Belz, hurried to the Rebbe's side to inquire as to what happened. He thought he had done something wrong and the Rebbe was displeased with him. But the Sar Shalom simply looked up at him with tears in his eyes and pointed to the strand of hair that was still attached to his finger. Reb Yitzchok Aizik nodded and understood what the Rebbe was feeling. But the avodah must go on and Reb Yitzchok Aizik turned to his Rebbe and said, "I don't know what the Admor is so worried about. If this tiny hair is all the Satan chaps him on during this awesome Day of Judgment, then let the Satan take this hair and choke on it!"

A moment passed and the Sar Shalom looked back at his chasid. "Hechiyasani .... you have revived my spirit," he said softly, with the slightest hint of a smile.

Dipping The Challa In Honey: The Bnei Yissochar

דבש has an equivalent of 306, the same as **אב הרחמים**. Satan is unable to prosecute, as he is confounded, when he hears how we hold Hashem's Mitzvos so beloved.

R' Akiva Eiger asks that just because the Mitzvos are beloved to us, that is why he doesn't reckon our sins? The Gemara teaches that **זדונות נעשו כזכיות**; through Teshuva out of love, wilful sins are counted as merits. This is what Rashi means- once the Satan will see that the Mitzvos are beloved by us, as we do it in a loving way, so he is scared to relate our sins since for each sin he says, it will increase our merits and Mitzvos.



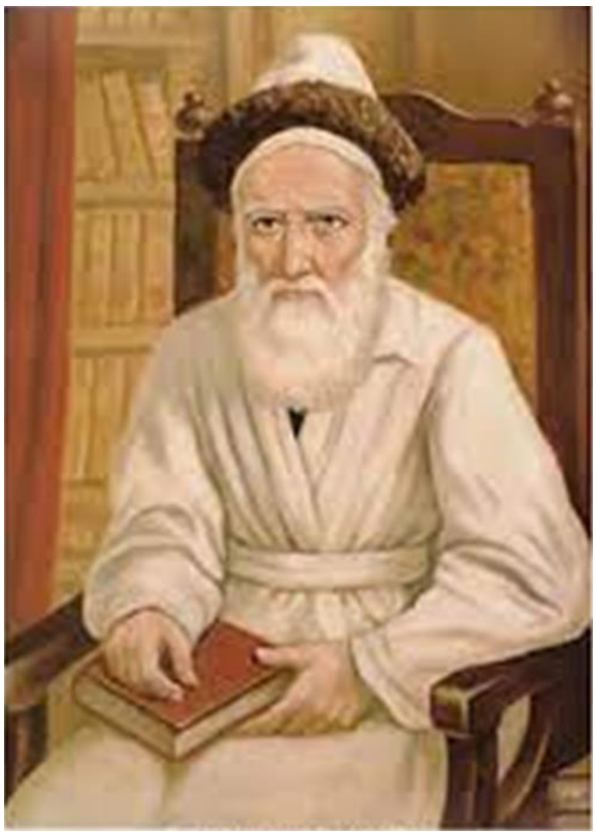
When the Rav in Amsterdam, R' Elazar Rokeach zt"l, decided to emigrate to Eretz Yisroel in his later years, he underwent a long and dangerous trip by boat. He and his attendant set out on the journey shortly before Rosh Hashana. During the voyage, on the first night of Rosh Hashana, a fierce storm broke out at sea, with high winds whipping the water into mountainous waves, threatening to capsize the ship. The passengers, white with terror, were desperately trying to keep themselves upright while they prayed for their lives.

When the captain declared that it would not be long before the end came, the gabbai had no choice but to interrupt R' Elazar's intense study, which had not ceased since the storm had begun, and inform him of the grave danger, to which he had been oblivious. Upon hearing of the captain's grim prediction, R' Elazar told his attendant, "Bring my shofar, and tell me the moment dawn breaks, so that I can blow it." As soon as the sun rose in the sky, R' Elazar began to blow his shofar, and to the relief and amazement of all those on board, the storm gradually ceased.

R' Simcha Bunim of P'shischa zt"l commented and said, "R' Elazar thought he had only a short time left to live, and he wished to 'grab' the mitzvah of shofar blowing at the first possible moment! He did not mean for the blowing of the shofar to stop the storm; it was his dedication to the mitzvah which saved them all!"

Tehillim or Chassidus

The activities of a person on Rosh Hashana impact his entire year, since Rosh Hashana is the head of the year. Therefore, one should use one's time wisely on Rosh Hashana. (Alter Rebbe's Shulchan Aruch)



One Rosh Hashanah, the sons of the **Tzemach Tzedek** and some other prominent chassidim asked him to deliver an additional maamar for them. He answered, "The people at large are saying Tehillim, and you are requesting Chassidus?! It is better to say Tehillim."

The Tzemach Tzedek himself was seen saying Tehillim throughout the second night, his eyes flowing with tears. Even as he waited to say the maamar on the second day of Yom-Tov, he murmured words of Tehillim.

When the Bolshevik Revolution overtook the Russian landscape, one of the primary objectives of the ruling Communist party was to dismantle the practice of religion, particularly the Jewish religion. To that end, many decrees were issued against the practice and observance of Judaism, and many Jews were forced to flee their homes or professional practice in secret.

Moscow, which had recently become the capital city of the U.S.S.R., forbade Jews to reside within its limits and only certain worker permits were issued to Jews in special cases. The Chief Rabbi of Moscow for many years had been the renowned **R' Chaim Berlin zt"l**.

Life in Moscow for a Jew became untenable. The Chief Rabbi felt it was his duty to remain behind determined to see that every last Jew found a place to resettle.



As Rosh Hashana approached, only a few dozen Jews were left in the entire city. One of the remaining members produced a shofar, the only one left in the city of Moscow, and was preparing to blow it on the holy day. To his horror and dismay, however, he noticed a long crack along the length of the shofar which invalidated it. Yom Tov would soon be upon them and there was no time to procure a second shofar.

R' Chaim and the remaining Jews of Moscow realized that this would likely be the first time in their lives that they would be unable to perform the mitzvah of Tekias Shofar on Rosh Hashana. No amount of halachic ingenuity could procure a heter. With a heavy heart, R' Chaim resigned himself to his situation. "Well," he thought sadly, "If I cannot hear the sound of the shofar, at least let me study the halachos of shofar. Maybe in that merit, it will allow me to somewhat make up for the loss of the mitzvah."

On the first night of Rosh Hashana, R' Chaim stayed up all night in the Beis Medrash, studying all the halachos pertaining to the mitzvah of shofar. At the crack of dawn, he left the Beis Medrash and headed towards the large shul for the early morning prayers. But as he looked up, he could not believe his eyes; driving down the empty street right in front of him was a horse-drawn wagon adorned on all sides with unusual crafts, historical artifacts and an assortment of musical instruments.

Hanging off the side of the wagon was a ram's horn which looked exactly like a .... shofar! The stunned Rav hastily ran over to the coachman and asked, "Where did you get this horn from?" The coachman had been enjoying the peaceful stillness of the early Moscow morning and jumped out of his seat startled. Perspiring heavily, the poor man looked directly at the imposing figure of the rabbi and began sputtering incoherently, until he finally blurted out, "Honoured Rabbi, I didn't know it was yours. I would have never taken it had I known it was yours. Here, take it back. I have no need for it anyway!"

Slowly, the story came out. The gentile coachman had a hobby of collecting all sorts of horns, trumpets and wind instruments. When the Jews of Moscow began leaving the city en masse, this prospecting thief went rummaging through the old deserted synagogues looking for anything of value.

All the silver and expensive items were gone but it was there that he came across this ram's horn and it became one of his valued collectibles. "But rabbi," the gentile pleaded, hoping the rabbi would not report his theft, "take it. It's yours. It's the only one I found in the synagogue, but I want you to have it."

Hashem had heard his call and R' Chaim's joy knew no bounds. That final year, for the synagogue went out of operation soon after, the Jews of Moscow merited the fulfilment of the mitzvah of Tekias Shofar in true fashion and it would be quite some time before such a sound could be heard again in the city.

The selfless act of staying up all night studying the laws of shofar, was the merit that allowed R' Chaim to obtain and fulfil the mitzvah of shofar.

The Maggid of Kozhnitz, R' Yisroel Hofstein zt"l (Avodas Yisroel) would say: "How should we direct our tefillos on Rosh Hashana? The first day of Yom Tov, we should daven for Ruchniyus (spiritual needs), and the second day, we should daven for Gashmiyus (physical needs).

We see this alluded to in the first posuk of the Torah **בראשית ברא אלקים** - The two days of Rosh Hashana - **ב" ראשית** - are days of prayer created by the Almighty, **את השמים** - the first day is for Heavenly requests and needs of a spiritual nature, **ואת הארץ** - while the second day is meant to beseech Him for our physical necessities."

A number of years ago, a young man took leave of his family and began a long journey that brought him back to religion. He became a baal teshuvah even as his family could not understand what it was all about. A short while later, this same young man was involved in a terrible road accident, and he died from his injuries.



His family members, who were not religious, were distraught beyond belief. They were full of questions and accusations. How could this happen to their son now, when he had just started living a Torah lifestyle? Is this not proof that the whole thing was a waste of time and totally unnecessary in the grand scheme of things?

The local rabbi was trying to counsel the family but he did not know what to say. He travelled to **R' Chaim Kanievsky shlit'a** and asked,

"I am going back to the family, and they have so many questions of which I don't know the answer. They want to know how such a thing like this could happen. What shall I tell them?"

In his short and inimitable manner, R' Chaim said, "Tell them, he was supposed to die two years ago." The rabbi was confused at the answer, but he went to talk to the family. They began to ask the expected questions and challenges, and at first he tried to lecture them about how man cannot fathom Hashem's ways. When he saw that they could not accept his answers, he said, somewhat nervously, "I'll tell you the truth. I went to the Tzaddik, Hagaon Rav Chaim Kanievsky, and he said I should tell you that your son was supposed to have died two years ago."

The family members sat back in shock. "He is correct!" they exclaimed with great admiration. "Two years ago, our son faced a life-threatening illness. Doctors had no cure, and he was literally at death's doorstep when, at the last moment, he miraculously recovered. Clearly, he was granted another two years of life to allow him to do teshuvah and begin keeping the mitzvos!"

During Nesaneh Tokef, we recite the powerful words, "*Who will die at his predestined time and who before his time.*" We cannot fathom the ways of the Almighty and when a tragedy occurs, we are quick to point fingers. But in truth, we have no idea what the correct reckoning is up in Heaven. Only Hashem does. All we can do, is do teshuvah and daven that Hashem shall accept our pleas and grant us a life of happiness and health. More than that, we cannot do!

R' Meir Horowitz of Dzikov ZT"L (Imrei Noam) would say: "Dipping the apple in honey is a segula for children since תפוח (apple) and פרו רבו have the same gematria (494)."

The role of a hospital chaplain is to listen to patient concerns, help them in matters of faith, and assist them in processing the experience of illness and hospitalization and seek peace, strength or meaning in what they are going through. Hospital chaplains help with all sorts of religious requests and all faiths are represented, whether its a priest, rabbi, imam or Buddhist monk. At times the request is for something less concrete, such as prayer support or simply to speak with a chaplain.

On September 13, 2016, all New York city public schools were closed in celebration of a Muslim holiday called Eid al-Adha. On that day, the Staten Island University Hospital was more crowded than usual and the hospital chaplain, **Rabbi Avi Feinstein (grandson of R' Moshe Feinstein zt"l)** was determined to find out why. He inquired about and learned that it was a Muslim holiday which celebrates the event whereby Abraham was prepared to submit to the will of G-d and sacrifice his son on an altar before G-d intervened sending an angel to inform Abraham that he need not sacrifice his son.



Rabbi Feinstein was surprised and more than a bit confused. Why would the Muslim religion celebrate "Akeidas Yitzchok" he wondered? The Akeidah is one of Judaism's most sacred acts of devotion to Hashem, it is the singular trial and tribulation that we, the descendants of Avraham Avinu, still rely on till this very day to insure a positive judgment for the New Year. It seems unreasonable that the Muslim religion would consider this act worthy of celebrating, as historically Muslims are not favourably disposed to Jews or the Jewish religion. Furthermore,

wondered Rabbi Feinstein, Akeidas Yitzchok famously occurred on the day of Rosh Hashana - the first day of Tishrei. Knowing that the Muslim calendar follows the moon just as the Jewish calendar does, he could not understand why the holiday of Eid al-Adha was held three weeks before Rosh Hashana!

Well, not one to let things slide, Rabbi Feinstein decided to ask his colleague, the local Muslim Imam who serviced the Staten Island hospital he worked in. He approached the cleric in the hall and posed these very questions to him explaining that he could not understand why the Muslim religion would celebrate the Akeidah of Yitzchok - when the Jewish Patriarch Isaac was bound on the altar by his father Abraham.

"Isaac?" asked the Imam, his voice rising with irritation. "Who said anything about Isaac? The Quran teaches us that on the day G-d called to Abraham, and told him to take his son, his only one, his most beloved, Abraham saddled his donkey and took Ishmael (Yishmael) up to the top of the mountain, where he bound him and prepared to perform the will of G-d.

Eid al-Adha, also called the 'Festival of the Sacrifice' is the second of two Muslim holidays celebrated worldwide each year, and considered the holier of the two."

Now Rabbi Feinstein showed his incredulity. "Ishmael? How can you believe that it was Ishmael? Of course, it was Isaac who went up with his father. That is why it is called 'Akeidas Yitzchok' - the binding of Isaac!" The Imam did not like to hear this at all. "You Jews distort history," he shouted. "Our holy book is very clear that one of the main trials of Abraham's life was to face the command of G-d to sacrifice his dearest possession, his son. The son is not named in the Quran, but Muslims believe it to be Ishmael, since G-d told him to sacrifice 'his only son, his most beloved.' Since Ishmael was Abraham's only son for thirteen years, our scholars determined that he must be the beloved one too."

The Imam shot Rabbi Feinstein an accusatory glare and asked, "Where do you Jews derive your ridiculous notion that it was Isaac, not Ishmael?" Rabbi Avi Feinstein stood his ground. "You know something? Abraham was thinking this very same question himself. Which son? Isaac or Ishmael? Well, the Bible gives us G-d's answer. Open up any Bible - Jewish or otherwise - and read the passage where it states in clear and no uncertain terms that G-d told Abraham, 'Please take your son, your only one, whom you love - ISAAC - and go to the land of Moriah and bring him up there for an offering.' We don't need your 'scholars' to determine false truths when it says it black and white in the Torah!" The Imam walked away red-faced, presumably to find a Bible and see for himself!



For those who are zoche, B"H they have a Zaida and Bubba, Saba and Savta, Grandpa and Grandma, Opa and Oma - whichever expression suits you - who remember the days of yore and how people used to serve Hashem. These are the kinds of individuals who have the ability to transfer the correct Mesorah to their children.

It is told that a person was once a guest at the table of the **Chofetz Chaim zt"l** and when it came time to make Kiddush, the Choftez Chaim used a small becher that had a minimum shiur. All the guests who were with him looked surprised. After Kiddush, someone asked

the Tzaddik about his small cup wondering about the psak he himself had written in the Mishna Berura.

He answered them, "The Mishna Berura I wrote for Klal Yisroel, but for myself, the shiur I use for Kiddush is the same shiur my father used all the years."

Let us cap this off with a gematria. The words **כבד את אביך ואת אמך** equal 928, which is the exact same total as the words, " **כתיבה וחתימה טובה**". Following the instructions of parents and grandparents is not just a mitzvah requirement; it is an actual beracha that we can employ to secure a happy and sweet New Year, for ourselves and our families!

Over centuries, the Jewish community in Spain had flourished and grown in numbers and influence, though anti-Semitism had surfaced from time to time. During the reign of Henry III (1390–1406), Jews faced increased persecution and were pressured to convert to Christianity. Many Jews were killed, and those who adopted Christian beliefs - the conversos (Spanish: "converted") - faced continued suspicion and prejudice. In addition, there remained a significant population of Jews who had professed conversion but continued to practice their faith in secret.

Known as Marranos, those nominal converts from Judaism were perceived to be an even greater threat to the social order than those who had rejected forced conversion. After Aragon and Castile were united by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella (1469), the Marranos were denounced as a danger to the existence of Christian Spain and a formal Inquisition was established to deal with them.

A grand inquisitor was appointed by the name of Tomás de Torquemada. He used torture and confiscation to terrorize his victims, and his methods were cruel by design. The sentencing of the accused took place at the auto-da-fé ("act of faith"), an elaborate

public expression of the Inquisition's power. The condemned were presented before a large crowd that often included royalty and burned at the stake. The number of burnings during Torquemada's tenure was said to have been about 2,000.

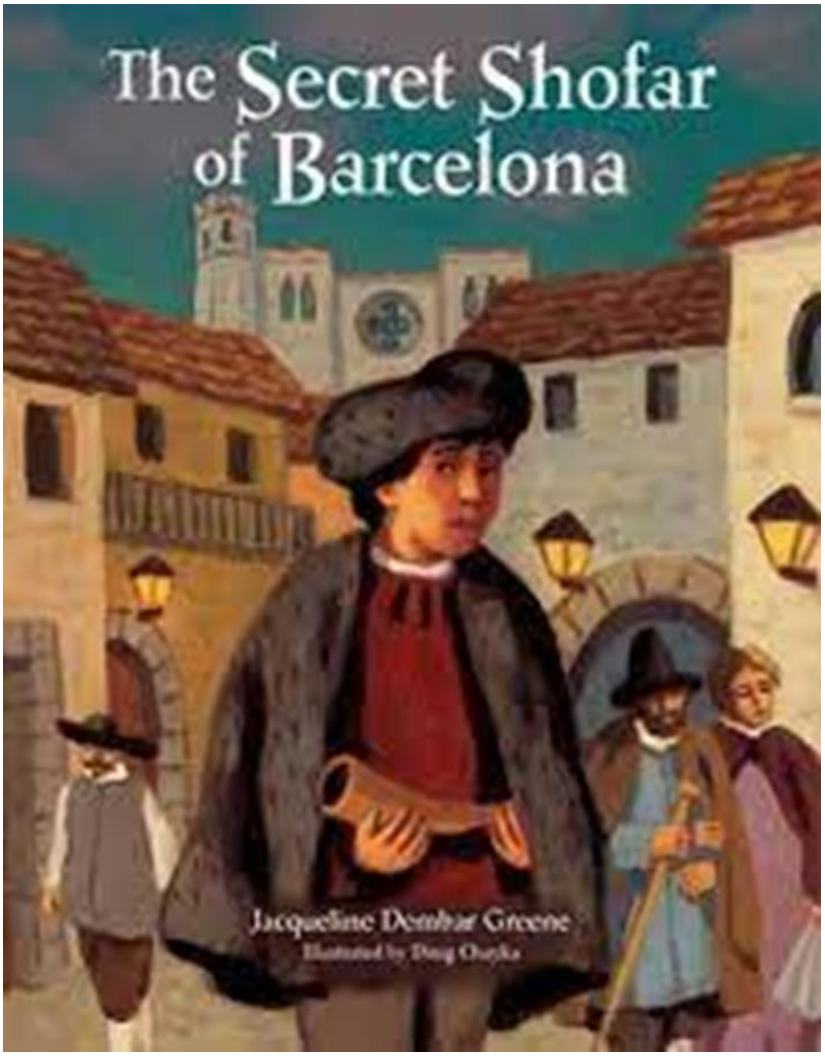
At Torquemada's urging, Ferdinand and Isabella issued an edict on March 31, 1492, giving Spanish Jews the choice of exile or baptism; as a result, according to **Rabbeinu Don Yitzchok Abarbanel ZT"L**, more than 300,000 Jews were expelled from Spain. The deadline to leave was on August 2, 1492, which was also Tisha B'av, the saddest day of the Jewish calendar year.

Not all of Spain's Jews had fled when the fateful edict was pronounced. It was possible to remain in Spain but the conditions for doing so were dire: any Jew who hoped to remain in his home had to publicly embrace Christianity and renounce all Jewish observance. Many did so. But even those who had ostensibly embraced Christianity, the secret Jews of Spain, were never trusted; neighbours and priests realized they continued to practice Judaism, and many "real" Christians eagerly looked for any sign of Jewish practice so they could turn them over to the Inquisition.

Don Fernando Aguilar was a prominent Barcelona Jew. Conductor of the prestigious Royal Orchestra in that city, he was a man of distinction and enjoyed great wealth and prestige. When the edict banishing him and his coreligionists from Spain came, Don Aguilar decided to remain. He publicly embraced Christianity, but at the same time made a daring decision: in private, Don Aguilar, like so many Spanish Jews, would never give up his faith. Even though it meant he could be arrested at any moment, Don Aguilar continued to live as a Jew. He kissed a mezuzah that he kept hidden in his floorboards and was careful to eat only kosher food and observe the Jewish holidays. There was no synagogue in his city anymore, but groups of Jews would meet in private, under pain of death, to

whisper prayers. There were no Jewish schools in Spain any longer, but families did their best to give their children a Jewish education.

Year after grinding year, the secret Jewish community continued, holding on to as many of the mitzvos as possible. Some rituals, however, were nearly impossible to observe. It took five long years after the expulsion of Spanish Jewry, five years of practicing Judaism in secret, of living a double life, before Don Aguilar saw an opportunity to do something for his fellow Jewish brethren.



In 1497, he made a public announcement: on Sunday, the 5th of September, he would personally lead the Royal Orchestra of Barcelona in a brand-new concert of his own composition. The pieces he'd written were unlike anything ever heard in Spain before. It was, he declared, to be a celebration of native peoples and their cultures. Every instrument ever invented around the world, no matter how far away, would be represented.

Excitement filled the air and anticipation for this great event was at an all-time high. On concert day, the orchestra hall was filled. The "who's who" of Barcelona was in attendance. Many of those were Marranos, like Don Aguilar, but the fact that so many of these

people came to the concert apparently didn't arouse anyone's suspicions.

Don Aguilar's music was inspiring. True to his word, the audience heard from a wide range of instruments. There were bells and horns, stringed instruments and an array of different drums. Then, in the middle of the concert, a musician with the orchestra stepped forward and took the stage. He was holding an unusual instrument: a ram's horn.

The musician, a secret Jew handpicked for this task by none other than Don Aguilar himself, put the ram's horn to his lips, and began to blow. He blew long blasts, followed by intermediate notes and then short staccato bursts. In fact, they were Tekiah, Shevarim, Teruah. Each note of the shofar service rang out throughout the hall, one hundred notes in all.

Most of the audience applauded it as a virtuoso performance of an unfamiliar instrument. But to the secret Jews in the audience, Don Aguilar's "music" gave them their first chance in years to fulfil the mitzvah of hearing the shofar. Because September 5, 1497, was the first of Tishrei, 5258 - the first day of Rosh Hashana.

Little is known of Don Aguilar. Some say he was arrested soon after the concert and executed in secret, so that news of his exploits would not become public. Others maintain he lived to an old age, continuing to live a Jewish life. All that is known is his amazing actions on Rosh Hashana, over 500 years ago, when for one evening he allowed an entire secret Jewish community to fulfil the mitzvah of hearing the shofar. (R' Eliyahu Ki-Tov)

"The prayers of one Jew bring Hashem more joy than all the praises of the angels combined." ~ Chofetz Chaim.

Heileige Grocer



In the shtetl, a grocer, by definition, was a G-d-fearing man who was knowledgeable in many areas of Torah, and also provided the daily food needs of his town, with honesty and integrity.

Many Gedolei Hador were also "grocers" in the sense that they owned or managed a store while their heads, and their minds, were usually buried deep in the seforim they were learning or the Tehillim they were constantly reciting. Unlike the large supermarkets of today, with their impersonal aisles and massive checkout lines, the old-time groceries were small shops, where the proprietor knew every person and his family's needs and necessities individually.

In the early days of American Jewry, many of the small groceries that existed were similar to their European counterparts, and the "grocers" were truly heileige yidden. In Boro Park, was just such a grocery and the proprietor was just such a grocer. His name was Mr.

Kerpel, and many people will remember him for his kindness, his pleasant countenance and disposition, and the jokes he would playfully tell the children on their way to school.

It was well-known that Mr. Kerpel would open his shop early in the morning, put the newly baked bread out on display and make sure the fresh milk was available. Then, he would leave his store - unguarded and unattended - to daven in a nearby shul and learn Torah for a few hours. When customers would go into his grocery to buy food, they would write their names on a small black board inside the shop, detailing how many loaves of bread they took and how many bottles of milk. At some later time, when Mr. Kerpel would come back into his store, the people would pay him for what they took. His honesty and good cheer was unmatched, and in this manner, he made a living to support his own family.

Mr. Kerpel was also a chazzan, with a beautiful voice that he used to sing out the praises of Hashem. As he sat in his shop and recited Tehillim daily, he would chant these songs and the customers would not just shop, but also be entertained by his musical melodies.

When the Yamim Noraim came, he would daven for the amud each year in a shul on the West Side of Manhattan. The heart and soul that he put into his tefillos were legendary and many people would come special to the West Side just to hear his davening.

There was a man who lived in Manhattan, who was married for quite a few years and was unfortunately not blessed with children. Hours upon hours of prayer were spent, berachos from Gedolim and appointments with doctors were conducted but after many years of marriage, the couple was still bereft. The man had heard of the holy grocer from Boro Park and knew that he davened on Rosh Hashanah in a shul close to his home. He decided to daven there one year and ask Mr. Kerpel to have him in mind during his tefillos and perhaps he will merit a yeshua.

He approached Mr. Kerpel early in the morning on Rosh Hashanah and told him of his difficulty. He requested that as the Shaliach Tzibbur, he should keep him and his wife in mind, so that they merit to have children in the future.

Mr. Kerpel, a man with a heart as expansive as a canyon, nodded silently in assent. After a moment, he looked at the distraught man and said, "I will have you in mind during my prayers. But do me this one favour. When I get up to the piyut of 'Vechol Maaminim' please come up and stand by my side." The man agreed to do as he was asked. During Mussaf, Mr. Kerpel held the congregation spell-bound with the force of his prayers. It seemed that he put a "little extra" into the davening this year.

As he reached the piyut of "Vechol Maaminim," he noticed that the man had come up to stand by his side. Slowly, line by line, Mr. Kerpel sang out the words in the machzor. When he came to the words **שֶׁהוּא וְכֹל מַאֲמִינִים יוֹצְרָם בַּבָּטֶן** – 'And everyone believes that Hashem creates children in the womb', he gave out an unearthly cry, a groan that emanated from the inner purity of his soul, and in one motion he collapsed into a dead faint!

Volunteers rushed to his side, using smelling salts and other means to awaken him, and in due time, Mr. Kerpel came to. Without even uttering a word, he stood right back up, and continued davening from the exact spot where he had left off! It appeared as if he hadn't even realized that he had fainted!

To the joy and astonishment of the childless couple, within that very same year, a beautiful set of twins was born - a bundle of joy that came down to this earth due to the heartfelt tefillos of the "simple" grocer from Boro Park!

How does one go about fashioning a shofar and blowing it on Rosh Hashanah in a concentration camp? Where does one even find a shofar in the depths of Gehinnom?



The year was 1943. Rosh Hashanah was rapidly approaching and the holy **Rebbe of Radoschitz, R' Yitzchok'l Finkler ZT"L HY"D** had decided that he would definitely fulfil he mitzvah of blowing the shofar even under the horrible conditions in the Skarszysko Concentration Camp, on Rosh Hashanah. When he told this to his fellow inmates, they looked at him incredulously. "Blow the shofar? Here, in a concentration camp? It can't be done. Besides, Rebbe, we don't have a shofar!" The Rebbe replied calmly, "It can be done, and it will be done! I ask only for your help and cooperation."

The men who were close to R' Yitzchok'l and revered him as a tzaddik, agreed to gather a small sum of money. With this, they bribed a Polish worker who lived outside the camp, to bring them the head of a horned animal. To their great distress, however, he brought the head of an ox, whose horns may not be used for a shofar. The inmates were crushed. They had used up most of their resources and had nothing to show for it. But the Rebbe, was undaunted. Disregarding their strong protests due to the dangers involved, he encouraged them to try again.

This time, for a second fee, the Polish worker smuggled in the head of a ram. The Rebbe was overjoyed. But who would know how to make a shofar from the ram's horns? And who would undertake such a

dangerous assignment? And where would he get the necessary tools? The task seemed impossible in the slave labour camp. The Rebbe remembered a former chasid of his, who used to daven in his shtiebel and who now worked in the metal workshop of the camp. When the Rebbe spoke to Moshe and outlined his plan, Moshe began to tremble and tears came to his eyes, for he knew it would be filled with grave peril. Nor did he have the faintest idea of how to fashion a ram's horn into a shofar. But when he saw R' Yitzchok'l standing in front of him, with tears in his eyes, begging him to enable the poor Jews to fulfil this holy mitzvah, how could he possibly refuse?

The Rebbe promised him that if he accepted this perilous assignment, he would survive the war. Somehow, Moshe was indeed successful. Shortly before Rosh Hashanah, he presented R' Yitzchok'l with a finished, completely kosher shofar. The Rebbe's joy knew no bounds.

On the morning of Rosh Hashanah, 5704, the Rebbe's barrack was filled with Jews who wanted to join with him in his minyan, to daven with him, and to hear him blow shofar. The Rebbe recited "Min Hameitzar" in a choking voice, and then sounded his precious shofar.

One of those present in the barracks at that time, R' Avraham Altman, later gave his impression of these events. "What shall I say? For me it was like the assembly at Mt. Sinai at the time of Matan Torah. This is how I felt then and this is how many people felt who participated in that holy gathering."

Moshe Naichatchitsky did indeed survive the war. He moved to Israel, where he married the Rebbe's youngest daughter, the only member of that great tzaddik's family to survive the Holocaust. After a tireless search, he located his precious shofar which had been lost for many years. The shofar today resides in the Yad Vashem Archives in Jerusalem.

On the night of Rosh Hashanah there is a well-known custom to dip a piece of apple into honey.

The beracha of "**בורא פרי העץ**" is recited and we add a prayer for a "**שנה טובה ומתוקה**" "A good and sweet year."



One might think that the entire exercise is performed in order to stress upon us the "sweetness" of the new year, however, we do not make a beracha on the honey at all. Instead, we make a beracha on the apple and the honey is added. Why?

Because the apple is a symbol of life itself ("**עץ חיים היא**"), and while we may wish for a life filled with sweetness and happiness, the main object of our prayer is life itself! The beracha **בורא פרי העץ** that is recited indicates the main ingredient.

A student once came to the great founder of the Volozhiner Yeshivah, **R' Chaim Volozhiner ZT"L**, to ask his advice about a shidduch. He told the Rosh Yeshivah that a certain man had become extremely wealthy almost overnight and now desired the best yeshivah student to marry his daughter. He promised the young man that he would support him and his bride in the very best lifestyle and would generously take care of all their needs. The only problem, explained the student, was that the man was extremely coarse and vulgar, despite his great wealth. What should he do?

R' Chaim replied with a story: "In Lithuania, there is a dish that is very popular - cucumbers fried in honey. And do you have any idea

how this dish came about?" asked R' Chaim. The boy shook his head and R' Chaim smiled and said, "Well, I'll tell you. The cucumber very much desired to 'marry' the honey, so he sent a shadchan to propose the 'match.' The honey was very indignant and replied, 'How can you dare to even suggest such a match? The cucumber and I are complete opposites! I am so light, and he is so dark; I am so soft, and he is so hard; he is bitter, and I am sweet. How can there be any thought of a union between the two of us?'

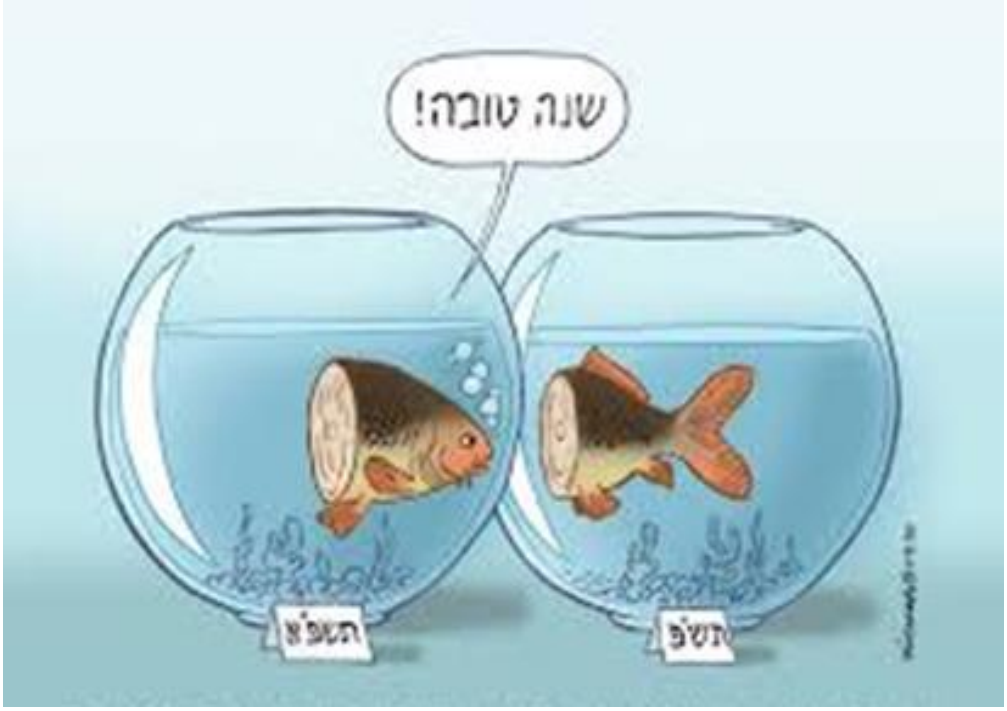
"But the cucumber was very persistent. He promised to change his entire character to please the honey. "'You say I am dark,' said the cucumber, 'I will peel off my dark skin. You say I am hard; I will let myself be chopped up into small pieces. And to rid myself of my bitterness, I will let you fry me in honey!' "In the end, the honey consented, and they were joined together - in the frying pan.

After the 'wedding,' the question arose as to what blessing was to be made over the dish. Was it to be " **בורא פרי האדמה** " in which case the cucumber would take precedent? Or would it be " **שהכל נהיה בדברו**" for the honey. The majority opinion was that the cucumber was to be considered the main ingredient, and therefore, its blessing would be the only one recited.

"And so you see," remarked R' Chaim to the yeshivah student, "even though the cucumber attempted to humble himself to please the honey, in the end he remained the dominant partner and his qualities are given precedence!"

From this, the young man drew his own conclusion, and he decided to refuse the rich man's proposal. Thus, we see it is the beracha that reveals and determines which is primary and which is secondary. We are first to petition for life itself **עץ חיים היא** and only then for the "sugar coating"- **שנה טובה ומתוקה**. (R' Yitzchok Sender)

R' Zalman Sorotzkin ZT"L (HaDaeh V'Hadibur) would say:



"The reason why we say: **שנהיה לראש ולא לזנב** - 'May we be a head and not a tail' is based on the mishna in Avos (4:20): 'Rather be a tail to (mighty) lions than a head to (lowly) foxes.'

On Rosh Hashana, we ask Hashem to make us even greater than the 'tail of a lion,' by, in fact, making us the 'head of a lion.' If so, then why don't we just say it clearly: - '*May we be the head of a mighty lion*'?

Because this is already a measure of arrogance and on this holy Day of Judgment, we must remove ourselves from any vestige of haughtiness."

R' Shlomo Zalman Lifshitz ZT"L (Chemdas Shlomo) would say: "Chazal tell us that on Rosh Hashana, '*Books of the living and books of the dead are open before Him.*' Why is it necessary to open the 'books of the dead' - those who have already passed on?

Because when a person gets judged, everything is taken into account, including who his ancestors were and in what way did they affect him. Perhaps if the root of his sin comes from previous generations, his punishment will not be as severe."

R' Mordechai Twerski ZT"L (Rebbe of Kuzmir) said:



"Our sages tell us: - 'The Heavenly Kingdom is (conducted) like the earthly kingdoms.' It is customary that when a new king is crowned, many wonderful things occur: Prisoners are reprieved, benefits are increased, gifts and assistance are distributed to the masses - 'He granted amnesty and gave out gifts worthy of the king'.

On this holy day of Rosh Hashana, when our entire purpose is to crown our King, the King of all Kings, we too, ask for His Royal gifts. We too, need a general amnesty and reprieve from our sins. We need gifts, both material assistance, mental capacity and spiritual rejuvenation. We beg of You, Hashem, for - children, good life and sustenance, for on this day we coronate You as our King!"

The great Rav of Yerushalayim, R' Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld ZT"L, once hosted guests for the final Shabbos of the year, a few days before Rosh Hashana. On Motzei Shabbos, the guests thanked the Rav for his warm hospitality and parted ways saying, "A Gut Voch." In response, R' Yosef Chaim replied with conviction, "And to you, a Gut Yur!"

The people exited the Rav's house and were half-way down the block, when they heard someone running behind them in hot pursuit. Turning, they were shocked to see R' Yosef Chaim himself waving them down. Immediately, they stopped. "Is everything alright? Did we forget something?"

Shaking his head vigorously, R' Yosef Chaim answered, "No, not at all. You didn't forget anything. But as soon as you left, I recalled the words of Chazal, that one should always pay back a favour in greater measure than it was given."

"Since there are only a few days left in this year, when I said, 'Gut Yur,' it was less of a response than your refrain, 'Gut Voch.' Therefore, I came back to offer a proper response: 'Gut Yur' twice - one for this year and one for next year!"



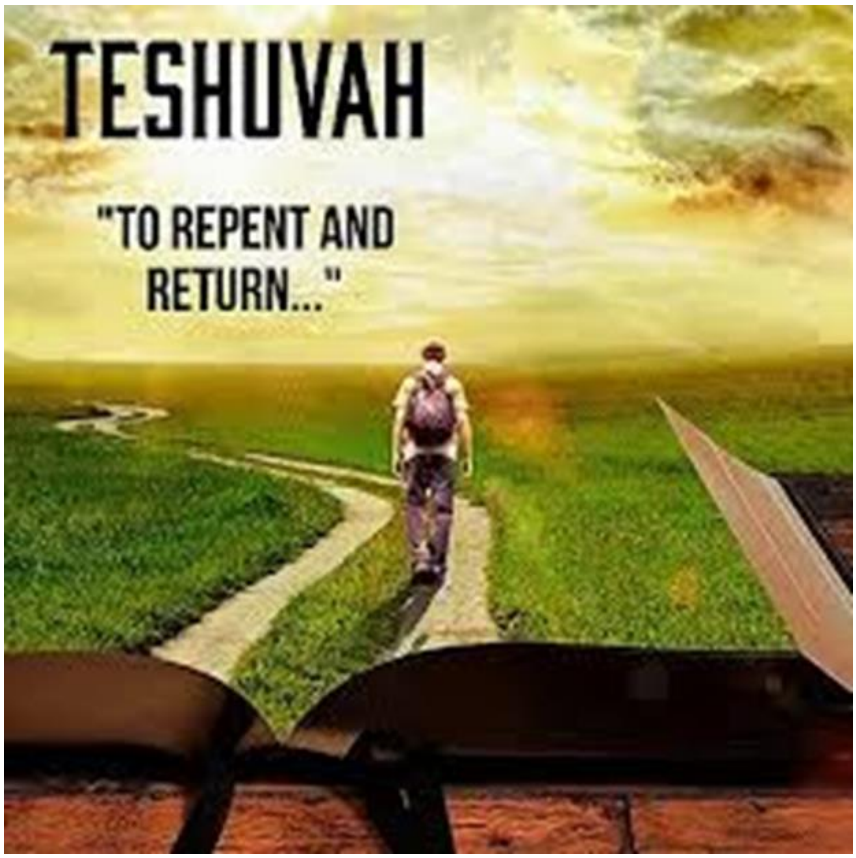
In the mid-1930's, as the Nazi threat in Germany became more pronounced and real, R' Shimon Schwab ZT"L made contact with the American Orthodox leader Rabbi Dr. Leo Jung, and informed him of his wish to emigrate to that country. Rabbi Jung, in turn, got in touch with a community called Shearith Yisrael in Baltimore, who was looking for a spiritual leader.

R' Schwab travelled to the United States, and after a trial period the community elected him as their rabbi. Thus, the entire Schwab family was able to apply for visas and escape the Holocaust.

In Baltimore, R' Schwab became a local leader of Orthodoxy, hosting the annual conference of Agudath Israel several years after his arrival and helping to create one of the first Jewish school for girls, the Bais Yaakov in Baltimore.

As part of his rabbinic duties, R' Schwab was often called upon by terminally ill patients, to tend to their bedside and listen to their final confessions. He recalled one incident when he was called to visit a Jewish man who was in a hospital, dying of tuberculosis. The first thing he said when R' Schwab came into his room was, "Rabbi, how much do you charge?" The Rabbi smiled and patiently answered, "Not to worry. I never charge anything." "Oh. That's good," said the dying man, "because I have no money." Again, R' Schwab assured him, "Don't even think about that. It costs nothing." Then, the man turned to

the nurse and said, "Please leave us. I have to talk to the rabbi alone." At that moment, he started to cough violently, and the nurse stayed to help him. But then he asked her again to leave.



When he was alone with R' Schwab, he began telling over his life story. In a voice full of melancholy, he recalled how he had come from a religious family back in Vienna. Nevertheless, he gave up all his religious ties and lived a life without any restraints. He was fine with this until his son married a non-Jewish woman, and it was then that he realized that he had done wrong. Now, here he was, dying, and he wanted to say Viduy, to confess his sins. Suddenly, he began to scream. He shouted out the name of Hashem. And then he spoke directly to Hashem: "I was the greatest sinner! I wasted my life! How can I appear before You?"

It was so heart-rending. R' Schwab would say that whenever he remembered it, he would tremble. Then the man started to cough violently again, and the nurse came in. R' Schwab tried to comfort him. "Please, please. Don't get too excited. I'll come again. You don't have to tell me everything today. I'll see you again tomorrow."

In fact, R' Schwab did see him the next day, but not in the hospital. In the middle of the night the phone rang. "Can you come to a funeral? A man died and he was all alone, and there's no one to take care of things on his behalf." It was this man; he had died that night.

There was barely a minyan for his funeral and none of those who came knew him. But R' Schwab insisted on delivering a eulogy.

"I knew this man for only a day," R' Schwab said. "Whatever his life was like, I do not know entirely. But I know one thing: I know for a fact that he did a real teshuvah. I never saw a man do teshuvah with such sincerity." Through this man, one could see what is meant by the power of teshuvah. - "You (Hashem) will wait until the day of his death." Hashem waits for man to do teshuvah, and then He accepts it. Then, it is as if the man has done nothing wrong.



There was once a man who was well regarded as a most proficient Baal Tokeah, a professional who blew the shofar flawlessly in his synagogue for many years. Unfortunately, he began to develop doubts about his religion and with the help of his non-Jewish friends and business associates, he eventually converted out of the faith of his forefathers. He was a musical individual, and he would often get together with other musicians to play music and discuss new developments in that industry.

Once, as they were sitting around discussing instruments, he mentioned that he could play an instrument that no one else had ever seen before: A ram's horn! The others asked how does one play a ram's horn and by way of answer, he produced his old trusty shofar.

Excitedly, he began blowing beautiful long blasts and indeed, his cohorts were impressed. First, he blew one long blast - a tekiah - then a series of three shorter sounds - a shvarim - but when he attempted to do a teruah - nine quick staccato-like blows, nothing came out! He tried and tried but as well as he could produce the other sounds, he was totally incapable of sounding out the call of the teruah. Something was amiss, and he knew that the only one he could turn to was the old Chacham, **Rabbeinu Avraham Yachini ZT"L**.

Eyes downcast, he made his way to the great man's home and asked, "Tell me, Chacham, why am I unable to produce the sound of the teruah?" Rabbeinu Avraham knew this man and how he had turned his back on his faith. He answered sharply, "Why, Dovid Hamelech clearly answers this in the posuk, - '*Praiseworthy is the nation that knows (how to) sound the teruah; Hashem, in the light of Your presence they walk.*' When you decided not to walk in the light of Hashem and His presence, you immediately lost the ability to 'know the sound of the teruah.'"

The heretic was troubled by this. "But I am able to blow the tekiah and shvarim. Why are they different from the teruah?" The Chacham sighed heavily. Then he said, "Our great Sages have taught us that the three sounds of the shofar correspond to the three Avos - Avraham, Yitzchok and Yaakov. The tekiah alludes to Avraham Avinu; the shvarim to Yitzchok Avinu; the teruah to Yaakov Avinu. Now, the nations of the world have the ability to harness the power of the tekiah, since Avraham had two sons, one of which - Yishmael - created a large and indigenous nation of his own. The shvarim, too, is within the grasp of non-Jewish people, since Yitzchok Avinu fathered Esav, the progenitor and predecessor of many nations. It is only Yaakov Avinu who is described as **מטה שלימה** - '*His bed is complete*'; in other words, all of his children followed in the ways of their holy father, and these twelve sons, the twelve tribes of Israel, brought forth our great nation. Thus, the teruah sound, which

corresponds to Yaakov Avinu, is a sound that can only resonate within the realm of his children, the Bnei Yisroel!"

Tears welled up in the converted Jew's eyes. He now understood what he had not before: That the religion that he had been born into was the true and authentic one, and that he had been sorely mistaken and misled. He was forced to leave the country for it was against the law of the land, to convert out of the Islamic faith once one had been inducted into it.

Fearing for his life, he fled to a distant place and repented his sins. He became a Baal Teshuvah and this time, when he picked up his shofar to blow, he produced a teruah so perfect in content that he knew that he had come back to his people.

The Maharil writes that on the first night of Rosh Hashanah, we shouldn't make Kiddush early, when it is still daytime, because why should we want to bring in the judgment early?

In other words, the awesome day of judgment is not something we want to bring before we absolutely must.

The custom in most communities is to say לדוד ה' אורי during Elul (and until Shmini Atzeres).

The Arizal's siddur writes that if one does so, "He is guaranteed that he will live that year with goodness and pleasure. If there is a *gezeirah* (harsh decree) from heaven, it will be annulled. All prosecuting malachim are removed… and he will receive a good judgment."

The renowned Yeshiva Ohr Someach in Jerusalem is comprised of students from all over the globe. Young men and women who wish to understand more about Judaism come from many countries to the hallowed halls of the yeshiva and learn to grow spiritually. But only two students have ever been known to come from an unlikely land .... Thailand!



The story begins a few weeks before Rosh Hashanah, when the famed Rosh Kollel, **R' Shachne Zohn Shlit'a**, came to America to collect money for his kollel. He planned to stay for a short time and leave on a flight two days before Yom Tov. All went as planned and R' Shachne made his flight on time, however, when the flight made its scheduled stop-over in Vienna and all the Israel-bound passengers disembarked in order to catch their connecting flight to Tel Aviv, R' Shachne, who doesn't hear well in the first place, was deeply immersed in a sefer and had no idea that the plane had even landed. Not even the flight attendants realized that he had failed to get off the plane. R' Shachne just sat in his seat and continued learning while the plane refuelled and prepared to take off for its next destination: Beirut International Airport!

It was only once the plane had already taken off that a stewardess realized what had happened and just as quickly grasped the dire implications. When she managed to rouse the white-bearded Jewish man from his studies and he finally looked up, she explained where

they were headed and how impossible it would be for a man like him to get off in a place like that. After further consultation with the captain, it was decided that R' Shachne would remain on board - concealed to be sure - until they made their third and final stop in the distinctly un-Jewish city of Bangkok, Thailand.

Many hours later, R' Shachne disembarked into the balmy Bangkok air. It was Erev Rosh Hashanah and there was no chance of getting to Israel on time for Yom Tov. R' Shachne, in his Yerushalmi hat and garb stood there for a moment unsure of his next move.

Then, he hailed a cab and told the driver to take him to the local Jewish synagogue. There was one, a Reform Jewish Temple not far from the city centre, and the amused driver headed there straight away. R' Shachne walked into the Temple and shuddered. Like all Reform Temples, it had no mechitza and the seating was mixed. How could he daven in a synagogue like this - on Rosh Hashanah no less!

He decided that he would remain outside during the prayer services and would only venture near the windows to hear the Shofar being blown. A number of congregants arrived before the evening prayers and were surprised to find this authentic-looking Jewish rabbi from Israel standing outside their Temple. They invited him in, but he refused mightily stating that he could not walk into a sanctuary that contained mixed seating.

The locals were a sympathetic bunch and were eager to show their hospitality to their dignified guest. But all their convincing and cajoling had no effect. He absolutely refused to enter! After consulting amongst themselves, they decided that if it meant so much to this rabbi to have separate seating, they would accommodate him and create a partition. However, the Reform rabbi objected vehemently and told the people that he was the leader of this congregation and for all he cared, the black-hatted rabbi could stand outside or leave altogether. They were not going to change

their style of prayer for some old-fashioned, antiquated and uncivilized custom!

Amazingly, the Reform rabbi's words had the exact opposite effect! The people were outraged at his insensitivity and kicked him out of the Temple! They then partitioned themselves - men on one side and women on the other - and asked the esteemed rabbi from Israel to not only join them, but in fact, to lead them in prayer!

A grateful R' Shachne led the davening and even delivered an impassioned speech about the meaning of Rosh Hashanah and the Yom Hadin. Two medical students, local boys on leave from their studies in London for the High Holidays, had come to the Temple for the prayers. After hearing R' Shachne daven and speak, they felt a spark of religion ignite inside and begin to burn bright. Soon after, they left Bangkok and travelled to Ohr Someach where they flourished in their new-found religious lifestyle.

Yom Hadin



A number of days before Rosh Hashana, the tzaddik **R' Yitzchok Gutfarb ZT"L** was seen sitting in the waiting room of the Badat"z Eidah Charedis (Beis Din Tzedek) in Yerushalayim for hours on end. He was not involved in any Din Torah, nor was he called upon to testify in any of that day's cases. So why was he there? "I'm doing a little research," said R' Yitzchok with a conspiratorial smile. "I am

observing how people react before their court case. Some people pace nervously to and fro rehearsing their pleas and/or their testimony. Others sit uncomfortably in their place chain smoking. There's a man who is literally pulling the hairs of his beard out. And there sits a lady reciting Tehillim, tears coursing down her cheeks."

R' Yitzchok looked about. "But what are they so scared about? A mere court case? Some money gained, some money lost? What's the big deal? Yet in just a few days, I will be sitting in a court case. A court case to determine my very existence; whether I live or I die this year. If these people are so nervous about simple stuff, should I not be terrified about what I am about to face on my Yom Hadin?"

The Imrei Emes - R' Avrohom Mordechai Alter ZT"L

"The gemara states 'If the first day at the head of the year is hot, the entire year will be hot. If the first day is cold, the entire year will be cold.' To the extent that an individual generates warmth in his Divine service on Rosh Hashana, to that extent will he be ardent throughout the year in his yearning for Hashem.

It is Rosh Hashana that enables us to accept the yoke of the Kingship of Heaven throughout all the days of the year."

"Shehechayanu"

When one says the "Shehechayanu" beracha in the first night's kiddush, he should keep in mind the following deep **כוונה**:

One has just entered the new year and knows now for absolute certainty that a year ago on this day, Hashem wrote him in for a FULL year of life. That is what he is giving thanks for in this special beracha.

The Fireman By Nissan Mindel

Many, many years ago, before there were any fire engines or fire brigades, or electric fire alarms, and most houses were built of wood, a fire was a terrible thing. A whole town, or a good part of it, could go up in flames and smoke. And so, when fire broke out, everyone left his business or work, and rushed to help put out the fire.

There used to be a watchtower that was taller than the other buildings, where a watchman kept a lookout all the time. As soon as he saw smoke or fire, he would sound the alarm. The townspeople would then form a human chain between the fire and the nearest well and pass on to each other pails of water with which to put out the fire.



Once it happened that a lad from a small village came to town for the first time. He stopped at an inn, on the outskirts of the town. Suddenly he heard the sound of a bugle. He asked the innkeeper what it meant. "Whenever we have a fire," the innkeeper explained to the lad, "we sound the bugle, and the fire is quickly put out." "How wonderful!" thought the village lad. "What a surprise and sensation I will bring to my village!" Thereupon, the village lad went and bought himself a bugle.

When he returned to his village, he was full of excitement. He called all the villagers together. "Listen, good people," he exclaimed. "No need to be afraid of fire anymore. Just watch me and see how quickly I will put out a fire!

"Saying this, he ran to the nearest hut and set fire to its straw roof. The fire began to spread very quickly. "Don't be alarmed!" cried the lad. "Now watch me. "The lad began to blow the bugle with all his might, interrupting it only to catch his breath, and to say, "Wait, this will put out the fire in no time!" But the fire did not seem to care much for the music, and merely hopped from one roof to another, until the entire village was in flames.

The villagers now began to scold and curse the lad. "You fool," they cried. "Did you think that the mere blowing of the trumpet will put the fire out? It is only the call of an alarm, to wake up the people, if they are asleep, or to break them away from their business and work and send them to the well to draw water and put out the fire!" We are reminded of this story when we think of the *shofar* that is sounded many times on *Rosh Hashanah*. Some people think like that village lad, that the sound of the *shofar* itself will do everything for them. They think that they may continue to "sleep," or go about their business, there being no need to change their way of life and daily conduct; the *shofar* sounded in the synagogue will surely bring them a happy New Year. But, like the bugle in the story, the *shofar* is but the sound of an "alarm." It has a message: "Wake up, you sleepers, think about your ways, return to G-d, put out the 'fire' that is threatening to destroy your Jewish homes. Go to the Well, the Well of Living Waters, the Torah and *mitzvot*. Hurry, before it is too late!

"That is why, immediately after the *shofar* is sounded, we proclaim: "Happy are the people who understand the meaning of the sound of the *shofar*; they walk in Your light, O' G-d."

One of the primary reasons why we use an apple is because of its sweetness. Coupled with the added sweetness of the honey, it is symbolic of the ultra-sweet year we hope G-d will grant us. I suppose, however, that you are asking why the apple was specifically chosen from all other fruits that are also sweet—why not, say, a peach or a mango dipped in honey?



The apple symbolizes Gan Eden, which according to the Midrash has the scent of an apple orchard, and in Kabbalah is called "the holy apple orchard." When Isaac commented regarding his son Jacob (Genesis 27:27): "Behold, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a field, which the L-rd has blessed!"

Rashi explains that this refers to the scent of an apple orchard; the scent of Gan Eden. Furthermore, when Solomon depicts the love G-d harbors for His nation, he writes (Song of Songs 8:5): "Beneath the apple tree I aroused you[r love]." Eating an apple on Rosh Hashanah is an attempt to remind G-d of our age-old love.

R' Yehudah Zev Segal ZT"L (Manchester Rosh Yeshiva)

"Hashem does not expect us to become tzaddikim and tzidkonios overnight. What He does expect of us is that we seriously ponder our conduct and that we sincerely strive to better ourselves in the varied areas of mitzvah observance. This is Teshuvah!"

במקום שיש בו דגים – אליה רבה



The Minhag is to go to Tashlich at "a place that has fish." One of the reasons for this is because a fish does not have eyelids, and its eyes are always open.

This is to remind us that the Ribbono Shel Olam is always watching over us; He never slumbers.

R' Yoseph Pearlman (Pninei Ohr) would say:

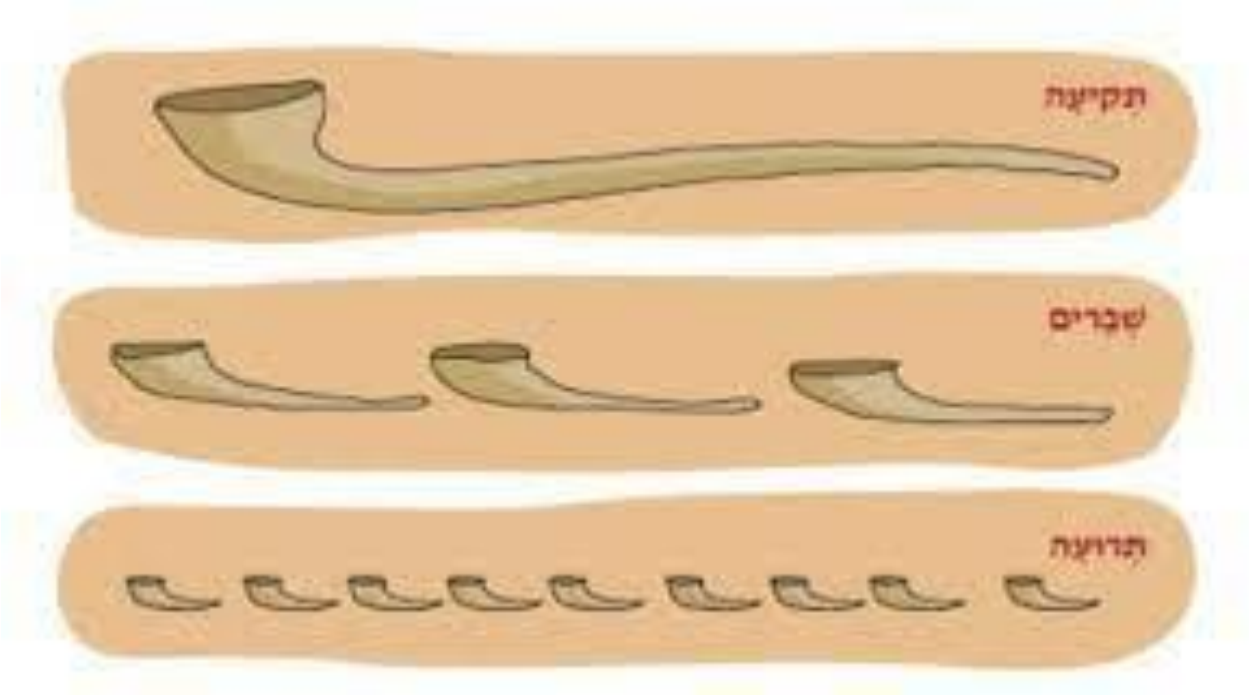
"The Zohar learns from the posuk, "For the Tree of Knowledge good and evil, you may not eat," that on Rosh Hashana, one should not eat an **אגוז** (nut) which has the numerical value of **חט(א)** as well as the word **טוב** (17).

It is true that **אגוז** has two gematria allusions, the primary one good and the secondary one bad. But on Rosh Hashana, we dare not take any risks at all. Our aims must be 100 percent pure. Something which is part good and part bad is avoided, and to be shunned entirely. On Rosh Hashana, we show Hashem that compromises of this sort are not acceptable!"

Every Rosh Hashanah, we are created anew, and the world is new. Therefore, Rosh Hashanah is an ideal time to change one's behaviours and ways, and to act like an entirely new person. Someone told me the following:

"One Rosh Hashanah I was hospitalized, and someone was blowing the shofar for us. There was a non-religious yid in the room who was intrigued by the shofar, and asked us a lot of questions, because he wanted to understand what it was all about. Then he told us his story:

"I served in the Israeli Navy," he said, "in a submarine. Under the water, the means of communication is with the Morse code. (Morse code is a signal system comprised of sounds. Two sharp beeps represent one letter, two long beeps is another letter. One long beep and one short one is a third letter, and so on.)



I was an expert in the Morse code. I could send and decipher messages very quickly. "A couple of years after serving in the navy (and after spending a long time in India) I saw an advertisement: The army was looking for a Morse code expert to be in charge of several submarines. To apply for the job, we had to be at a certain office between 10:00 and 12:00 in the morning. I arrived at 11:50. I saw a

packed room with applicants, but no one was being called inside. There was music was playing in the background and I sat down for a few moments and listened. Then I got up, brazenly opened the door to the office and said, 'I came for the interview." "There are many people waiting in line ahead of you," the secretary said. "And you just came. Wait your turn." "But I didn't listen to her. I walked into the room and talked with the person who was in charge. After speaking for a few moments, I was hired for the job." The interviewer went out to the waiting room and told everyone that they can go home. "Thank you all for coming and I'm sorry about the delay. We've already chosen someone. You can all go home." "It isn't fair. This man came in last. Why did you interview him before us?" "Did you pay attention to the music that's playing? Listen carefully. Don't you get it? It is in Morse code and it's saying, 'If you've come for the interview, just open the door and come inside.' This man heard the message. You didn't hear, so you're obviously not fluent enough in the language."

That's how the irreligious man in the hospital understood the meaning of shofar. - The shofar is speaking a language. It's telling us, "Just open the door and come inside. Change your ways and improve your connection with Hashem." We only need to understand the language of the shofar and understand what it's telling us.

טור –ישראל אינן כשאר בני אדם

Klal Yisroel are not like other people." When one is being judged to live or not – he dresses in black and is worried about the outcome of the case. Klal Yisroel wear white clothes, and are festive and merry, for they have Bitachon in Hashem that they will be victorious in judgment.

בן איש חי



If you take the letters before the word **שופר** - you will have the letters, "**עקרה**" – "barren." If you take the letters after **שופר** –you will get **תשצז** which is the same Gematria as the words, "**שכרך מאוד הרבה**" – "Your reward is great."

This alludes to the fact that before a person does Teshuva (represented by the Shofar), his Neshama is like an **עקרה** – barren without any children; the Mitzvos and Ma'asim Tovim a person does are his spiritual children. However, after a person does Teshuva from love of Hakodosh Boruch Hu, all of his sins turn to Zechuyos, and then, **הרבה שכרך מאוד** – "His reward is exceedingly great."

The place where Ba'alei Teshuva stand, even great Tzaddikim cannot stand. This is also alluded to in the Halacha that the minimum size that a Shofar must be is that when one is holding it in his hand, it sticks out from both sides.

When one grasps the Shofar, or sees the one blowing the Shofar holding it, he should contemplate what is on both sides of the Shofar, and this will bring him to recognize the great power of Teshuva and will inspire him to do a complete Teshuva.

"Everyone has inside them a piece of good news. The good news is you don't know how great you can be! How much you can love! What you can accomplish! And what your potential is."

A Jewish Pope?

There are a number of legends about a Jewish pope. One is connected with a poem incorporated in many Machzorim into the morning prayers on the second day of Rosh HaShanah: Melech Amon Ma'amar'cha.

Legend has it that one afternoon his youngest son, Elchanan, was kidnapped by a servant and taken to a seminary where he trained for the Church. Eventually, after a brilliant career, he was chosen to be the pope. Aware of his origins and wishing to see his father again, he commanded the Bishop of Mayence to order the Jews of the city to cease their observances. He knew that such a decree would send his father to him at the head of a deputation of protest. Rabbi Shimon duly came to Rome and was received by the pope.



After some conversation, the pope and the rabbi began a game of chess. R' Shimon recognized his son when the latter defeated R' Shimon at chess using the precise moves that he himself had perfected and taught his children. Escaping from Rome, Elchanan lived again as a Jew in his father's house. Rabbi Shimon, in gratitude, composed his poem which became part of the Machzor which includes an acrostic, Elchanan b'ni – "Elchanan my son".

The Jewish pope Elchanan may be a myth although the father is a well-known figure in Jewish literary history. At least one pope is

known to have been of Jewish ancestry. Anacletus II was elected in 1130 and while this may have given rise to the legend of Elchanan.

Chazal teach that the blowing of the shofar helps to confuse the Satan so that he is no longer able to hurl accusations at us, and we then have a better chance for a favourable judgment.



There is a halachah that if the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls out on Shabbos, we do not blow the shofar on that day. Rather, we blow the shofar only on the second day. The gemara explains that there was concern that someone may mistakenly carry the shofar in a public domain and inadvertently violate the Shabbos. Thus, chazal decreed that we would not blow the shofar when Rosh Hashanah falls out on Shabbos. But does this make sense? In order to avoid a possible unintentional error, we are putting the entire nation in great danger! Without the shofar to stop the Satan, we are defenceless against his accusations!

R' Yitzhak Blazer ZT"L answers that the earlier generations had a much better understanding of the severity of sins, even accidental sins. They understood that the risk of even one person committing a sin was far too great a risk. In their complete comprehension of the benefits of the shofar blowing versus the possible violation of Shabbos, they determined that the risk was not worth the gain. Our

message is clear. If this is the effect of a sin performed by mistake, how much more severe is a sin done with intention!

Now is the time to return to Hashem with humility and beg forgiveness for our past misdeeds. With this, we will merit a good year filled with blessing.

Every year on Rosh Hashanah, hundreds of Jews in the Old City of Yerushalayim would flock to the shul of **R' Yoel Chaim Weissfinger ZT"L** for the unique experience of hearing him sound the shofar.



When R' Yoel Chaim passed away a few days after Yom Kippur 5674 (1913), he left behind two sons, Shimon and Leibel. But which one should inherit their father's prized shofar, and along with it, the honour of blowing it in shul? In the end, Leibel, the younger brother who was a respected Torah scholar, inherited the prized shofar, while Shimon, the eldest son, inherited the small grocery store his father had owned. Shimon eventually sold the store, moved to America and became a wealthy man.

A few years later, war broke out between the English and the Ottoman Turks in the Holy Land. Leibel unfortunately was arrested by Turkish soldiers, thrown into jail, and deported to Egypt. When Shimon learned what had happened to his brother, he immediately set sail for Egypt, located him and had him freed. He then gave Shimon a large sum of money, which enabled him to return home and get back on his feet.

On the day Shimon was to return to America, Leibel, overcome by emotion, presented his older brother with their father's shofar as a token of his gratitude. Shimon was very touched, and the whole way home he guarded the treasured object and never let it out of his sight. But when he went to show it to his friends and family, he almost fainted: it was not there! The ancient shofar had somehow disappeared. Years passed, and due to financial constraints Leibel and his family emigrated to Poland, where he found a position as Rabbi in a small village. Perhaps, he hoped and prayed, his worries were over. But such was not to be, as the Second World War soon erupted. Over the next few years Leibel endured the tortures of the Holocaust but miraculously survived.

When the War ended, he spent several years wandering from one D.P. camp to the next, hoping to eventually return to Israel. One Rosh Hashanah eve the group of Jewish refugees with whom he was traveling found themselves at the home of a kindly Italian farmer who agreed to let the group stay over Yom Tov. The refugees were saddened by the fact that they had no shofar, but then something unusual happened: the old Italian farmer had something important to tell them.

"Many years ago I was a crew member on a ship that sailed from Palestine to America. One of the passengers was a wealthy American Jew, who held on to a small package the whole time as if guarding a great treasure. When the ship docked in America it was a tumultuous scene, and I'm ashamed to say that I seized the opportunity to steal it. But I was very disappointed when I opened it up because all it contained was this strange-looking thing ..." The farmer then withdrew a very old shofar from its case. "I know that this is some kind of Jewish object, and for years I've been hoping to meet some Jews so I could give it back. Please take it."

Leibel Weissfinger paled. Indeed, he was white as a ghost - for it was none other than his father's shofar! Leibel eventually was

reunited with his brother Shimon and together they cried tears of joy as they shared the long-lost shofar. Such are the mysterious ways of Divine Providence.



The Bobover Rebbe, R' Shloime Halberstam ZT"L (Ateres Shloime) would say:

"Rosh Hashana is a day when - showing our affection for mitzvos, plays a large role. When Hashem commanded Avraham to take his son Yitzchok to the Akeidah, he spoke to him in a gentle, drawn-out manner.

Rashi tells us why: 'In order to make the commandment beloved (to Avraham) and thereby reward him for every single spoken word.' Similarly, when Jews buy (honours) and aliyos on Yom Tov, they spend money for the 'honour' to do a mitzvah. What greater way to come before Hashem then with our love for His Torah and mitzvos?"



As the terrors of war crept into the tiny village, many people realized that it was time to escape. Inquiries were made and a seasoned guide who knew how to cross the heavily guarded border was located. He informed the escapees that he would meet them at a border village late the following night, and they were to meet him there with their money. When all were assembled, the group headed out.

Trembling with fear and uncertainty, the men, women and children struggled to keep up with the guide, who, unlike them, appeared calm, cool and totally unconcerned about the danger. The more they travelled, the more frightened they became, while he remained totally unfazed sitting tall atop his horse. The moment they reached the actual border crossing, however, even the guide became serious. He took every precaution and nervously glanced back and forth until

the entire group managed to cross. Only the horses remained unconcerned and unaware.

Says R' Chaim Brisker ZT"L, some people begin to feel the terror of the Yom Hadin from the onset of Elul. Others gradually come to feel the spirit of teshuva during the next few weeks, and by the time Rosh Hashanah actually arrives, there is almost no one left who is not trembling with concern for himself and his family. Only the "horses" feel nothing .....!

On these days of teshuvah, Klal Yisrael have a custom to say (more) Tehillim.

There is a segulah to say the entire Tehillim twice on the night of Rosh Hashanah. I know people who've done so, and they talk about the yeshuous they had. But this is hard for most people. However, any amount of Tehillim one says on Rosh Hashanah is mesugal for yeshuous.

It is a very good idea to say (extra) Tehillim during the days of Selichos, Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, and on Yom Kippur (and on every day of the year) as well, each person, according to his abilities.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

The Shaar HaMelech writes that one should answer amen with kavanah to the brachah **לשמע קול שופר** because it's written in sefarim that this particular amen is mesugal for parnassah.

The Baal HaTanya zy'a taught that the letters after **עקרה** are **שופר**. This implies that shofar is mesugal for the barren to bear children. As the Gemara says, "On Rosh Hashanah, Sarah, Rachel, and Chanah were remembered," and were able to bear children.

Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter

וְגַם אֶת נֹחַ בְּאַהֲבָה זָכַרְתָּ וַתְּפְקְדֵהוּ בִּדְבַר יְשׁוּעָה וְרַחֲמִים בַּהֲבִיאֲךָ אֶת מֵי הַמַּבּוּל לְשַׁחֵת כָּל בָּשָׂר מִפְּנֵי רֹעַ מַעַלְלֵיהֶם עַל כֵּן זִכְרוֹנוֹ בָּא לְפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ לְהַרְבּוֹת זַרְעוֹ כְּעַפְרוֹת תֵּבֵל וְצֶאֱצָאָיו כְּחוֹל הַיָּם כַּכָּתוּב בְּתוֹרָתֶךָ וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹקִים אֶת נֹחַ וְאֵת כָּל הַחַיָּה וְאֶת כָּל הַבְּהֵמָה אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ בַּתֵּבָה

"You also remembered Noah with love…when You brought the waters of the flood…because of the wickedness of their deeds." (Amidah of Musaf Rosh Hashanah)

Why do we base our plea on Noah? Can't we find any other Jewish Tzadikim?



Noah is referred to as a Tzadik bedorosav - righteous in his generation. Some explain that this means, in comparison to his contemporaries he was righteous, but had he lived in Abraham's generation he would be naught (Bereshis 6:9, Rashi).

In our prayer we are saying, "You remembered Noah with love when You brought the flood." Though he, too, should have drowned, You separated him because You took into consideration the "wickedness of their deeds," and when he is measured against them, the people of his generation, he is a Ztadik.

Likewise, measure us against the people of the world we live amongst, and regardless how we may have failed You, in comparison to them we are Ztadikim and are worthy to be lovingly remembered by You.

Two angels accompany a Yid Rosh Hashana by night

On the night of Rosh Hashanah, the custom is to go around the shul and wish your fellow congregants **לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם** ***"May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year."***

Let it be known that two angels accompany a Yid and they listen in as he wishes his friends warm hearted with friendship and they see unity among Klal Yisroel, this inspires them to ascend to Heaven and plead for a good and sweet year for Klal Yisroel.

This should prod one to have Ahavas Yisrael and wish all full hearted. By doing so it is a cinch to have a good and prosperous year. (**Tzemach Tzedek third Rebbe of Lubavitch**)

ביום השלישי וישא אברהם את עיניו וירא את המקום – מדרש תנחומא מרחק – ***"On the third day, Avrohom raised his eyes and perceived the place from afar."***

Avrohom travelled with his son Yitzchok to Shecht him, as he understood from the command of Hashem. The Satan saw that Avrohom was fully prepared to pass the test he was given. The Satan caused there to be a great river, which he hoped would deter Avrohom from continuing on in his mission. Avrohom went into the water until it reached his knees. He continued to walk until the water reached his neck. He then raised his eyes to the heavens and told the Ribbono Shel Olam that they are both "one". Hakodosh Boruch Hu is "One" and Avrohom Avinu was the "one" who was following Hashem. Avrohom Avinu said that it will be a disgrace to Hashem if he and his son Yitzchok die in the water. Instantly, Hakodosh Boruch Hu made the river dry, and Avrohom forged on to fulfil the mission of Hashem.

ומנהג ישראל תורה הוא במה שהולכין אל מים ואומרים תשליך – תורת העולה – *"Minhag Yisroel is Torah and it is proper that they go to the water to say Tashlich."*



From looking into the depths of the water, one can recognize the concept of the creation of the world. There is water that goes to depths of the world. Water covers all the land of the world, except for the parts specifically chosen by the Ribbono Shel Olam to be a place where mortals can live.

One goes to Tashlich to awaken him to the fact that there is continuously a new world. The Ribbono Shel Olam keeps the water off of the land for us. This should bring one to praise the Ribbono Shel Olam as the King of the world, to be Mamlich the Ribbono Shel Olam, and this will cause him to do a compete Teshuva. When one does this, Hakodosh Boruch Hu pardons him for all of his sins – his sins are thrown into the depths of the water, never to be seen again.

תשליך– בית מאיר

The source of the Minhag of Tashlich is from the Posuk in Shmuel 1:7:6 – "וישאבו מים וישפכו לפני ד" – ***"They drew water and poured it out before Hashem."***

Targum Yonason says that this means that they poured out their hearts in front of Hashem. Rashi says that this was done as a symbolic gesture of pouring out their hearts in "submission" to Hashem. The purpose of Tashlich is to humble ourselves before Hashem.

משנה ברורה – הנהר



We say Tashlich because it says in the Medrash that Avrohom Avinu went into the river until the water reached his neck in his quest to perform the Akeidas Yitzchok. Tashlich is a Zecher to the Akeida. It is preferable to say Tashlich near waters that have live fish for it is a Siman that Ayin Hara should not rule over us, and that we should multiply like fish. It is also preferable that the river or well be outside the city where one resides.

מהרי"ל - The Zohar Hakodosh says that Akeidas Yitzchok occurred on Rosh Hashanah, and we therefore Lain the Parshas Ha'akeidah on Rosh Hashanah. By the same token, Tashlich is done on Rosh Hashanah because it too is a Zecher of the Akeidas Yitzchok.

Shlah Hakodosh

There are those who say (when going to Tashlich) that they are going



to throw away all of their sins. They grab hold of the corner of their clothes and shake it out, and believe that by doing this, they have thrown away all of their Aveiros. Chas V'sholom for one to think this, as this is truly a great Chilul Hashem.

The main purpose in Tashlich is to Daven to Hashem and recognize that He is the King over the entire world. He runs the world constantly, down to the very last detail. When one does this, and says the Pesukim of Tashlich, this is what causes his sins to be thrown away.

במקום שיש בו דגים – אליה רבה

The Minhag is to go to Tashlich at "a place that has fish." One of the reasons for this is because a fish does not have eyelids, and its eyes are always open. This is to remind us that the Ribbono Shel Olam is always watching over us; He never slumbers.

A Moment with Rabbi Avigdor Miller, Zt"l

Learning From the Fish



What should we think when we see the fish during *Tashlich*?

You know what I think? When you pass a fish store and see the fish in the window, there's a good time to stop and look, don't wait for Tashlich. The fish in the window come from the ocean. That fish comes together without Shadchonim, they're Porim V'rovim Bayom, they get married in the ocean and they produce offspring, and it's for one purpose, to give us more fish to eat. It's a Nes, how fish meet each other in the depths of the ocean and they're able to copulate, and produce some more fish, it's a Niflaos Haborei, you have to marvel at it.

The Miracle of How Fish Breathe

The fish doesn't have any air and still it breathes with its lungs. It's able to take out from the water the dissolved oxygen, fish must have oxygen. They are so built that they can use oxygen dissolved in the water and it lives without lungs, except the lungfish. And so when you look at a fish, it's a special Briah, Chesed Hashem.

Fish of course is a Taanug, that's why all Jews eat fish on Shabbos, it's part of the happiness of Shabbos in order to learn the Chesed Hashem.

And so I say, you don't have to wait for Tashlich, when you pass a fish store and see big juicy fish lying there, a big carp, a big salmon, a big trout, take a half second and take a look. AAH; what a wonder it is that it happened in the middle of the ocean, they came together and produced such tasty tidbits for the people to enjoy and to appreciate the Chesed Hashem.

The Significance of Simanim On Rosh Hashana



We have the unusual custom of eating certain food items and reciting short prayers over these foods asking for various forms of good fortune for the coming year. We dip an apple in honey and consume various foods whose names, through alliteration, contain a symbolic allusion for good fortune. How do these acts have any efficacy?

On Rosh Hashana man is judged as to the events of his life for the forthcoming year. The notion that one's livelihood and longevity are subject to change from year to year appears to be directly contradicted by the Talmud.

The Talmud teaches that progeny, longevity, and livelihood are not dependent upon one's personal merits; rather, they are predetermined at one's birth by the alignment of the planets and constellations, by one's "Mazel". Although in another Tractate, the Talmud states that the Jewish people are not bound by Mazel. The Baalei HaTosfos explain this means that Jews generally are bound by Mazel, but sometimes they can change it. Are Jews bound by Mazel or not?

The Jewish calendar is cyclical. At different times of the year, specific propensities exist which is reflected by events which occurred in previous times. Rosh Hashana is the day when the world first came into existence.

This means that every Rosh Hashana the world is renewed, as is expressed by the liturgist, "Today is the birth of the world." Although certain aspects of a Jew's life are predetermined by the alignment of the constellations which were present at the time of his birth, on Rosh Hashana the world returns to its origin and a person is able to change his Mazel. In this manner a person can remove any limitations that were present because of his original mazal.

The "simanim", those foods that we eat for good fortune, are the means by which we express our desire to change our mazal. We are able to "reboot" our Mazel, at this time of year when the world is going through a rebirth and new Mazel is being set. This is why we read the story of Sarah giving birth to Isaac on Rosh Hashana. This is highly unusual because on the Yomim Tovim we always read the portion in the Torah relating to the laws and sacrifices pertaining to

that particular day, why do we change from this practice on Rosh Hashana?

The Talmud teaches us that Sarah was born physically incapable of ever having children. On Rosh Hashana her Mazel changed and she became capable of bearing children. The remembering of Sarah encapsulates the essence of Rosh Hashana. Hashem gives us the opportunity to realign our mazalos, thereby broadening our potential and removing our limitations.

The Mother of Sisera and the Shofar

What does the mother of Sisera have to do with our commandment to blow the Shofar on Rosh HaShana?



The Gemara (Rosh HaShana 33b) tells us that Onkelos translates the sound of Teruah as a Yevava - "to cry" - . This word is found in the verses in Shoftim 5:28/29 regarding the cries of the mother of Sisera when she realizes that her son has died. Through her window peered Sisera's mother. She "Yevava" - wailed through the lattice "Why does his chariot delay? Why do the sounds of his chariot tarry?" The wisest of her ladies reply. "She too, answers herself."

We are told that there are 101 letters in these two verses and that is why we blow 100 sounds. We cannot blow 101 sounds like the cries of the mother of Sisera because our sorrow of repentance cannot match the sorrow of a grieving mother.

Why do these verses regarding the mother of Sisera have any meaning to us on Rosh HaShana when we stand before Hashem and blow the Shofar? Especially since Sisera was one of the children of Israel's greatest enemies! Why should we remember Sisera or his mother on Rosh HaShana?

Verse 28 says that the mother of Sisera peered through a window, and she wailed through the lattice. Did the mother of Sisera look through a window or through a lattice when she saw the vision of her dead son?

The Malbim tells us that the mother of Sisera used witchcraft to change her regular window into a window with wisdom, which is a lattice. It was through her newly enchanted lattice that she was able to watch from far away as her son Sisera died.

Why use the mother of the wicked Sisera to move us to do repentance, wouldn't we rather use a story from a great Jewish female personality such as Sarah our mother?

In Chapter 32 of Pirkei DiRebbi Eliezer we are told a story regarding when Sarah our mother died after she cried 3 sounds like the Shevarim and also after she cried 3 additional sounds like the Teruah.

On the Haftorah for Parshas Beshalach, Dr. Mendel Hirsch explains that it was the repentance of the children of Israel at the time of this battle against Sisera that made it possible for to be victorious over Sisera. It was only because of their repentance that G-d helped the children of Israel to defeat this enemy and make the mother of Sisera cry these 101 cries. When we blow 100 sounds on the Shofar

on Rosh HaShana we are remembering that the victory over Sisera's army was only possible because of their repentance.

We hope that just as the children of Israel did repentance at that time, and with G-d's help were able to defeat their enemy, so too on Rosh HaShana we come before G-d while fulfilling the commandment of Shofar asking G-d to help us too.

Thus the word Teruah is a "Yevava" to convey the message of repentance from the cries of the mother of Sisera. When Sisra's mother cried for her son, her heartrending cries were so deeply felt that they were able to arouse Din (strict justice) against Yisrael throughout the generations. This Din can only by counteracted by the 100 Shofar blasts, which arouse us to repent yearly from the very depths of our hearts.

It could also be that the Aruch simply means to prove from the mother of Sisera that it is common for a person to wail 100 times when the life of someone very dear to them is at stake. We, too, arouse ourselves to wail 100 times for our own and our family's well-being so that we should pray with the utmost of concentration.

Or the Aruch means that Sisra's mother wailed only *99* times. Had she wailed 100 times, perhaps her prayers would have been answered and Sisera would not have been killed. This would be more consistent with the other Medrash about the mother who gives birth. (The Medrash says that only upon the birthing mother's 100th cry is she saved and granted life.)

We want to blow 100 blasts in order to correspond to the 100th, life-redeeming wail, that Sisra's mother *could* have wailed but did not.

The verse says that Sisra's mother wailed as she peered "Be'ad ha'Chalon." The Gematria of the word **החלון** is exactly 99.

Sleeping on Rosh HaShana



Many poskim say that one should not sleep on Rosh Hashanah by day because doing so may make one's mazel weak. The common expression "One who sleeps on Rosh Hashanah will have a sleepy year" has no source in halacha. Some do say that a person who sleeps on Rosh Hashanah by day will not then have the defence attorney at his side. Additionally, when one sleeps his neshama is by HaShem, and on the Day of Judgment it is not good for one to have his neshama upstairs by HaShem.

Some poskim suggest that one should be careful not eat too much food so he will not get too tired and fall asleep. While it is certainly commendable to arise early on the Day of Judgment (and engage in Torah study or Tehillim), the practice of being careful to arise specifically by sunrise may not be consistent with the thrust of the Yerushalmi's advice.

However, the **Arizal** is quoted as not having been concerned with this matter and he did sleep on Rosh Hashanah, as Hashem's mercy has by then been aroused. The Ari's objection to morning sleep was because that is the time of Din.

Others cite the custom of the **Maharam from Rothenberg** to sleep by day. Many poskim say that after chatzos one can be lenient and go to sleep. Others say that the second day of Rosh Hashanah is more lenient than the first. Certainly, it is better for one to go to sleep than to sit around talking and not learning.

Horav Shlomo Zalman Aurbach zt"l says one who feels a need to go to sleep in order to daven better is permitted to sleep. There is no established minhag to remain awake all night on Rosh Hashanah; the Yerushalmi's words refer to sleeping on Rosh Hashanah only during the day.

Although sleeping on Shabbos is an enjoyment, some say if Rosh Hashanah falls out on Shabbos one still should not sleep. According to all poskim, if one sits on a chair and dozes off, it is not considered sleeping on Rosh Hashanah. One may sleep at night on Rosh Hashanah since the whole concept is not to sleep by day.

Bottom line is that every moment of Rosh Hashanah is precious, so you want to use them all to the fullest. Spend any extra time in prayer—especially reciting psalms. This time is so special that we even try to minimize our sleep and avoid frivolous talk and activity.

Rabbi Yechiel Spero

One of the well-known Russian refuseniks in the era after World War II was Rav Yitzchak Zilber. He was taught Torah by his father at a very young age, and soon after he began to teach his fellow Russian Jews, right under the eyes of the KGB, the brutal Russian police force. Numerous times, they tried to catch him and throw him in prison, but he managed to escape the authorities and always seemed to have an explanation for his activities.

He was a mathematics professor, and the KGB authorities were convinced that he would not teach his class on Shabbos. However, he would walk to his classes, teach them, and walk back home.

This is just one example of how, for many years, Rav Yitzchak managed to keep the Mitzvos without compromise, and how he drove the KGB crazy by not falling into their trap. In fact, they only

managed to imprison him when someone planted evidence that Rav Yitzchak was an enemy of the state.

Rav Yitzchak had a son named Bentzion Chaim. Following in his father's footsteps, he too, wanted nothing more than to learn Torah and to lead the life of an observant Jew. But he was not as savvy as his father, and the authorities caught him and threw him into prison. Yet, he still possessed his father's trait of defiance, and he continued to observe Torah and Mitzvos despite the difficult conditions. Life in prison was very challenging.

As Rosh Hashanah approached, Benzion Chaim began to wonder if he was going to be able to fulfill the Mitzvah of Shofar. He did everything in his power to obtain a ram's horn. Though it seemed that this Mitzvah would be impossible to fulfil, Benzion Chaim would not give up. His fellow inmates mocked him and told him that he was delusional, that it was never going to happen, but he was not that easily convinced. He knew that if you believe, anything could happen.

Finally, the first night of Rosh Hashanah arrived, and the other inmates laughed. Yes, they had been right. Although he had hoped for a miracle, there was none. And so, for the first time since he could remember, Benzion Chaim realized that he would not be hearing the sounds of the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah. That night, Benzion Chaim Davened for the salvation to come. He cried bitterly, not only for his own personal redemption, but for Heavenly assistance in obtaining a Shofar. As he prepared to go to sleep, his roommate would not let him forget the fact that he would not have a Shofar the next morning. Although he knew that the salvation can come at any minute, he was embarrassed that he had assured his fellow inmates that he would have a Shofar, which in the end had not materialized. But he also understood that he wasn't running the show. He was only a player in Hashem's world. If this is the way Hashem wanted it to happen, then so be it.

Little did Benzion Chaim know that at that time, his father, Rav Yitzchak, who was a free man at that point, was doing everything in his power to make Shofar blowing happen in the jail. The prison compound where his son was being held was heavily guarded on three of its four sides. However, on the fourth side, there were miles and miles of thick forest. The only way one could get to the prison would be by travelling for many hours through the thick forest.

With the below-freezing temperatures and piles of snow on the ground, it was highly unlikely that someone could survive the intolerable conditions if they chose to visit by way of that route. But that didn't prevent Rav Yitzchak Zilber from setting out to accomplish the impossible. From the moment he heard that his son was being held captive, he began to devise a plan to arrange for a Shofar to be blown in the compound.



He knew his son would also try to gain access to a Shofar, and yet he knew how difficult that would be. So he decided to take matters into his own hands.

It was Rosh Hashanah morning and Benzion Chaim lay in his bed. He had barely slept the night before. How could he, knowing that he would not hear the Shofar? Suddenly, at the crack of dawn, he heard a sound, and then another. They were the unmistakable blasts of the Shofar piercing the morning dawn. As he listened, he noticed that his roommate had also heard the blasts. There were 30 of them. Then, just as suddenly as the sounds had come, the blowing stopped, and it was quiet.

Benzion Chaim tried to peek out the window, but he was unable to see anything. It must have been a miracle! Somehow, someway, a

Malach had appeared out of nowhere and blown the Shofar for him! The other Jewish inmates had heard it as well.

Later that morning, he watched as the guards huddled together, trying to figure out what had happened. But there was no trace of anyone.

A number of months later, Benzion Chaim was released. He ran into his father's arms and hugged him tightly. As he let go, he asked his father an interesting Shailah. Does one fulfil the Mitzvah of hearing the Shofar if the one blowing it is a Malach? Then he proceeded to tell his father the entire story.

His father could not help but smile in return. Benzion Chaim asked his father why he was smiling. Rav Yitzchak replied, "Suffice it to say that it was not a Malach whose Shofar you heard, and don't worry, you fulfilled your Mitzvah!"

Realizing the tremendous Mesirus Nefesh, the self-sacrifice of his father, Benzion Chaim hugged his father again and thanked him for his dedication, love, and commitment, and Rav Benzion Chaim continued to carry on his father's magnificent legacy!

"How did you survive?"

This is the question Dr. Moshe Kerstein, a cardiopulmonary specialist, always asked a patient when he saw they had a number on their arm. On one occasion, an elderly man replied with two words, ***"Atah nigleisa."***

Seeing the perplexed look on the doctor's face, he began to elaborate with a story.

"I was in Treblinka and there was only one month left till Rosh Hashana. All of us in the barracks desperately wanted to hold onto our Yiddeshkeit. But what could we possibly do? I then asked my

friends if anyone remembered anything from Rosh Hashanah davening.



"I seemed to be the only one to remember the tefilos and since I had neat handwriting, I was nominated to write them down. We somehow smuggled in a pen and paper and after a backbreaking day of labour, I managed to muster the energy to write everything down that I remembered. This went on night after night when everyone was already long asleep. I managed to finish the whole Shachris and most of Mussaf. "Finally on Erev Rosh Hoshana, I was putting down the finishing touches of Mussaf Shmoneh Esrei, 'Atah nigleisa ba'anan kevodecha – You were revealed in your cloud of glory' when suddenly, I felt a flashlight shining in my face.

"So what do we have here?' the German officer barked." "His sinister tone in his voice indicated where this was heading so I felt I had nothing to lose by telling him the truth. I told him I was writing a prayer book for the high holidays. " 'What are you writing in this prayer book of yours' " ' I'm writing the words Atah niglesia which means G-d was revealed in a cloud of His glory.' I answered, figuring I had nothing to lose.

"I should kill you for your audacity!" the German officer screamed. 'The only clouds I see here are the clouds of your brothers and sisters.'

"I assumed that within the next few moments he would announce my fate and I prepared for the worst. I was not prepared for what was coming next. " ' I should really kill you for audacity. But I can't help but notice your extraordinary beautiful handwriting. As I continue to climb the ladder of rank, my job requires me to write many letters to Berlin. Therefore, I am going to hire you as my personal scribe. They'll be very impressed with me in Nazi headquarters.'

The old man concluded his story. He then repeated to Dr. Kirstjen, ***"Atah Nigleisa ba'anan kevodecha…*"** "That is how I survived."

This Pasuk mentions Hashem being revealed in a cloud. Of all things! Not in a fire and not in a chariot. But in a murky cloud. Yes, clouds signify the concealment of light. But what do clouds produce? The earth biggest blessing.

Sometimes Hashem's glory is concealed in something which seems to block all good, all glory, all light, but like the cloud, it turns out to be our biggest blessing. Let us all look out for these times. *(Adapted from Touched by their Spirit by Rabbi Yechiel Spero)*



The Power of Women's Prayers and Tears on Rosh Hashanah

The Tefilos of a woman are particularly effective and dear to Hashem. A woman in Tanach, Chanah, is held up as an example of how we Daven. In fact, the Gemara in Brachos (31a) deduces many essential Halachos of Tefilah from Chanah's heartfelt prayer to Hashem that she should merit a child, a prayer that was answered with the birth of Shmuel HaNavi.

On Rosh Hashanah, we read the Perek describing Chanah's Tefilah in the Haftorah, teaching us that in the merit of the Jewish women's Tefilos we can merit a favourable judgment. The Sefer Eish Das asks why the Laining for the first day of Rosh Hashanah focuses on the

merits of the Imahos, and the Laining for the second day focuses on the merits of the Avos?

He explains that when a child falls, a father picks him up, dusts him off, and helps him get back on his feet. A mother, with her Tefilos and actions, prevents the child from even falling in the first place.

On Rosh Hashanah, the great merits of the Imahos are recalled even before those of the Avos, so that we merit to not even stumble in the coming year, but we mention the Avos in case we do stumble and need to be lifted up.

In the Ponovezh Yeshivah, it gets particularly crowded on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, since both current students and alumni flock back to the Yeshivah to Daven with their great Roshei Yeshivah and Rebbeim.

One year, the expected crowd was going to be too large for the Bais Medrash, and those in charge of the seating suggested that they open the women's section and use it for additional men's seating.

When they went to the Rosh Yeshivah, **Rav Shach**, to ask his opinion, he refused. He said, "You may not take away the women's section. We need the tears and Tefilos of the women davening there!" (Orchos HaBayis p. 396).

Tekiyas Shofar

The Ateres Yehoshua zt'l taught that **תקעו** is gematriya **עושר** wealth, because the mitzvah of shofar brings wealth.

The Ateres Yehoshua teaches that shofar is also mesugal for a long life, as the Mishnah (Rosh Hashanah 26:) states **שופר מאריך**.

The Bee's Honey by Rabbi Yisroel Reisman

May it be Your will… that You renew for us a good and a sweet year



One of the most widespread customs associated with the night of Rosh Hashanah is that of consuming various food items – e.g. carrots, leeks, beets, dates, pomegranates, head of a fish – for a good omen. Intending to serve as a source of merit for our upcoming year, we hope that we will be blessed with a new year filled with prosperity, success and productivity. Of the many foods eaten, arguably so, the apple and honey serve as one of the main highlights.

Taking an apple and dipping it into honey, we wish that the year we are about to embark upon be full of sweetness. Yet, this is not the only instance in which honey plays a significant role in Judaism. In praise of the Land of Israel, the Torah tells us that it is a "Land flowing with milk and honey" (Shemot 13:5). Nevertheless, there is a clear distinction between the nature of honey mentioned in this verse and that which we use on the night of Rosh Hashanah. As explained by Chazal (Ketubot 111b), the honey referred to in this Pasuk is that of date's honey. And as common custom has it, the honey used to dip our apple in on the night of Rosh Hashanah is that of a bee. Yet why is that so?

Why in fact do we not use date's honey and instead resort to bee's honey? As any keen observer would quite quickly notice, the manner in which honey is obtained from a date and a bee are strikingly different. When a date is crushed, its honey easily and

smoothly flows straight out. Little more is necessary to attain the desired honey from within the date. It is in this respect that Eretz Yisrael is praised as a land flowing with honey.

When the Jewish people abide by the Torah, the Land produces an overabundance of blessings, including sweet honey, which is easily obtainable and accessible by all. But such is not the case with bee's honey. Aside from the arduous process which the bee undergoes in producing the honey, the concerted effort needed to procure the honey subsequently is not so simple and easy a task. Needing to contend with the bees and circumvent their stinging efforts used to protect themselves and their honey, only after much labor can one anticipate returning with anything. Yet that is the very point.

Our definition of a sweet new year is a year of effort and accomplishment, of labour and fulfillment. We are not simply looking to enjoy an easy year where we do not work and feel any sense of achievement. Quite to the contrary, we recognize that by exerting ourselves to confront challenging situations and overcome them, we will attain the sweetest life possible.

Such is the message of the bee's honey. A sweet year is a year of fulfillment, of attainment and of satisfaction. Yet we understand that such sweet feelings are only a by-product of hard work and much effort. And that is best represented by the bee's honey. If we wish to enjoy such sweetness, there is no better place to look for it than the beehive.

"On our Day of Judgment, the one thing to remember is that the purpose of life is to lead a life of purpose."



Rabbi Elimelech Biderman

The Tur, (581 quoting a Midrash) writes, "Which nation can compare to this nation…? The way of the world is that when someone is on trial, he dresses in dark clothing, lets his beard grow, and doesn't cut his nails, because he doesn't know what the outcome will be.

But the Jewish nation is different. They wear white clothing, they shave their beards, they cut their nails; they eat and drink, and are happy on Rosh Hashanah, because they know that Hakadosh Baruch Hu will do miracles for them. Therefore, it is customary to take a haircut and to wash one's clothing on erev Rosh Hashanah, and on Rosh Hashanah one should enjoy good meals.



Similarly, the **Mishnah Berurah** (597:1) writes, "We eat and drink, and are happy [on Rosh Hashanah]. It's a day of judgment, but the mitzvah of, 'You shall rejoice with your holiday,' applies… And it states [about Rosh Hashanah], 'Eat fatty foods and drink sweet drinks… because it is a holy day for our

Master. Do not be sad, because your joy with Hashem is your strength' (Nechemyah 8:10)."

The Seforno (Vayikra 23:25) writes, "[On Rosh Hashanah] Hashem sits on his chair of judgment… and we should rejoice immensely, because He is our King, and He will do kindness with us and judge us with kindness…"

The Smak says that we are happy because we have the privilege to anoint Hashem King over the entire world. (The Smak adds that people have a custom to wear a white kittel on Rosh Hashanah, to remember the tachrichim, burial shrouds, so the simchah will remain in the proper proportions.)

The Mishnah (Rosh Hashanah ch.4) states **יום טוב של ראש השנה**. **The Chasam Sofer zt'l** proves from these words that Rosh Hashanah is a Yom Tov, a day of happiness.

Reb Moshe Chaim of Slonim zt'l would say to those who were excessively afraid, "It's not a band of thieves who are seated in the court, up in heaven. It's our Father in heaven, and we can trust that He will judge us favourably."

Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz zt'l taught that the reason we don't eat sour foods on Rosh Hashanah is because when one eats sour foods he makes a sour face, and that isn't a good omen on Rosh Hashanah.

This demonstrates the joy of Rosh Hashanah and the trust we should have that Hashem will certainly give us a good judgment. As the navi write "*our joy on Rosh Hashanah gives us strength*".

It is a good omen for the upcoming year. Therefore, one should have positive thoughts on Rosh Hashanah and feel certain that Hashem will give us a good year.

On Rosh Hashanah we have two opposing emotions. We are joyous, because we are certain that Hashem will give us a good year, and we

are frightened, by the awesome judgment that takes place. In the merit of our fear, we will receive a good judgment.

This concept is seen by Yitzchak Avinu. His primary attribute was fear of heaven, and therefore he is called *Pachad Yitzchak*. Yet his name was Yitzchak, which implies laughter and joy.

The Sfas Emes zt'l writes, "It is very possible that he was called Yitzchak because his face shone with happiness, as there is none happier than one who truly fears Hashem and has no other fears."

The Chasam Sofer taught that we don't say Hallel. He says: We have a tradition that the neshamos of our ancestors join us in our tefillos on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It is written "*the dead don't say Hallel*" therefore we don't say Hallel on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

we are afraid on Rosh Hashanah, but this fear should be wrapped in a very powerful coating of joy, as we trust that Hashem, in His kindness, will certainly give us a good year.



Torah Anytime Rabbanit Amit Yaghoubi The Roller Coaster Ride

זָכְרֵנוּ לְחַיִּים... וְכָתְבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים

Yechiel, a young boy of eight years old, had Cancer discovered in his stomach. Overnight, this happy second grader exchanged his desk, books and friends for hospitals, needles and nurses. He now faced the drama of a terrible illness. The year

was fraught with difficultly as the doctors remained uncertain of what the outcome would be.

Yechiel was closely monitored throughout the many treatments he received, being granted permission to return home once in a while for a short period and then return to the hospital. Yechiel's treatments were finally completed. As the doctors administered a final body scan, to everyone's relief, the cancer appeared to be completely gone. The doctor at last called Yechiel's parents and said, "Your son is healthy and the cancer is in remission." The doctor, however, expressed a different concern. "Right now we are very worried about his emotional stability. Second grade is an important year for a child to create social connections and bonds, and he has not been with friends. We encourage you to enrol him in a camp where his friends will be." For his emotional well-being, however, we feel he should be put in an atmosphere with boys his age where he can learn to interact and socialize."

And so, Yechiel's parents accepted the advice and enrolled him in a regular camp after a long and complicated year. As the head of the camp was informed that Yechiel, who at this point had lost his hair, would be joining, he called together the counsellors. He briefed them regarding Yechiel's condition and explained how he had been through much trauma. "I am not sure how he is going to react," explained the head of the camp, "but we will hope for the best." "Everybody should be sensitive," clarified the counsellors. "He has just been through a very difficult past year, and no one should make fun of him."

Upon arriving at camp, Yechiel had a huge smile on his face. To everyone's delight, he was lovable and joyful. Quite quickly, Yechiel became one of the most popular kids in camp. He was not only well-liked by his peers, but as well by the counsellors. No one could get enough of this little boy's refreshing energy. Without question, the summer was a tremendous success.

Nearing the end of the summer, the camp prepared to take their big end-of-the-summer trip. The entire camp was overly excited that they would be going on an overnight trip to an amusement park with all sorts of activities. There would be a safari, roller coasters and waterslides. The camp planned on renting out the entire park just for the campers. They turned to Yechiel. "Where do you want to go?" "I only want to go on the roller coasters," Yechiel replied. "You only want to go on the roller coasters?" questioned his friends. "There are so many other things to do!" "I know, but I only want to go on the roller coasters," Yechiel repeated.

As the bus moved along, the other boys figured that Yechiel was exaggerating. He didn't really mean that he only wanted to go on the roller coasters. There were so many other attractions to visit; why would he want to miss out on everything else? But after going on a few roller coasters and seeing that Yechiel was not willing to do anything else, they realized he was serious. He literally only wanted to go on roller coasters.

And so, the day went by with Yechiel literally going on roller coaster after roller coaster after roller coaster. Of the many counsellors present, one sat down next to Yechiel. "Yechiel, did you have a good time?" Yechiel looked at him and said, "I was able to accomplish my goal."

"You had a goal in the amusement park? What was it?" asked the counsellor. "I wanted to go on every roller coaster, and I did just that. It is the only thing in the whole park which has any meaning."

Being told by an eight-year-old boy that roller coasters have meaning, the counsellor was unsure what exactly Yechiel meant. "What do you mean that roller coasters have meaning?" Yechiel went on to explain. "When you are on a roller coaster moving, falling, twirling and looping at such high speeds in so many directions, there is a tremendous thrill. On the other hand, if you were in a car and

experienced those same motions, what would you feel? You would be frightened for your life.

Similarly, if you were on an airplane and experienced those motions as you do on a roller coaster, you also would be terrified. With your stomach dropping and the wind blowing in your face as you travel faster than a speeding bullet, you would feel the fear of death. But when you are on a roller coaster, that fear is transformed into excitement. It is scary, but it is exciting. Nobody ever sits on a falling airplane and says, 'This is such an enjoyable ride!' But on a roller coaster, that same feeling elicits happiness and exhilaration."

And then Yechiel became very quiet. Turning to the counsellor with tears in his eyes he said, "Last year my life was like a roller coaster. I would go up and I would go down. This year I am scared of what is going to be. I am afraid of what my future holds in stock. I therefore wanted to remind myself that on a roller coaster you are not scared because you have the safety belt strapping you in. On a roller coaster it is fun because you know that you are safe. I wanted to tell myself that in the roller coaster of my life I am safe. G-d is holding onto me like a seatbelt. I can choose to be afraid for my life or I can choose to smile and enjoy the ride. And I would rather choose to enjoy the ride."

Throughout our lives we are to remind ourselves that we are riding on Hashem's roller coaster. Although we may be unsure of the future, we are to comfortably sit back and feel secure in the hands of our loving Father in Heaven. The roller coaster of life contains many ups and downs, but with Hashem guiding our course of travel, we most certainly can take solace when we face those bumps. He will always watch over us and protect us, safely securing us as we manoeuvre.

Torah Anytime Rabbi Bentzion Shafier- Breaking Limiting Beliefs

לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה תִּכָּתֵב וְתֵחָתֵם For a good year may you be inscribed and sealed

It was considered an unbeatable and unbreakable record for hundreds of years. Athlete after athlete tried, yet no one succeeded. The feat of running the mile in under four minutes seemed impossible.

By the turn of 20th century, Thomas Conneff held the record at 4:15. It decreased from there, and in 1923, Finnish runner Paavo Nurmi ran it in 4:10. By the end of the '30s, the record was set at 4:06, and in 1945, Gundar Hagg of Sweden lowered the record to just over four minutes (4:01). Australian runner John Landy had also gotten close to the four-minute mark, running 4:02 six times from 1952 to 1954.



That was as best as it seemed it could get. At one point, Landy remarked, "It's like a brick wall. I'm not going to attempt it again." It was considered fact that no human being could break the limit and shatter the myth.

Yet, on May 6, 1954, Englishman Roger Bannister broke the four-minute mark barrier, running the mile in 3:59. The impossible had been made possible. But that is not the most surprising part of all.

Forty-six days later, on June 21st, John Landy, who had previously called the four-minute record a "brick wall," ran the mile in 3:58. The four-minute mile and impossible were no longer synonymous. Bannister and now Landy had both broken it.

Yet it only gets more interesting. To date, since this sub-four record set by Bannister and Landy, 1,034 runners have run the mile under four minutes. What was once absolutely impossible and beyond human capacity is today doable and almost expected from any decent professional runner. What happened? How was something which for years had so unequivocally been understood to be impossible rendered possible?

The answer is simple. Once Roger Bannister showed the world that it could be done, he broke through an impenetrable mental barrier. He changed the perception of competing runners, and thereby the attitude which prevented so many of them from achieving what was within their grasp.

This phenomenon of breaking imaginative limits is not limited to competitive sports however. Consider another example. In 1977, a woman was preparing dinner in her house in Tallahassee, Florida. All of a sudden, she heard a scream. Frightened and wondering what the cause of such shrieking could be, she ran outside. And then she saw. Pinned underneath a wheel of her Buick car was a young boy's arm. Panicking at such a startling sight, the woman immediately rushed over to the car. And then she did something that was perhaps even more startling… She lifted up the car by its bumper, enabling the child to release his arm from underneath. The boy was then rushed to the hospital, where he healed to recovery.

At the time, this story became a media sensation. Almost every newspaper ran it as a headline story highlighting the unbelievable display of superhuman strength. Yet why was that so? What in specific caught the attention of the media? One simple reason. The

onlooker was not some burly firemen or trained medical technician. The onlooker was Laura Shultz, the boy's 63-year-old grandmother.

Many of us stay constricted to our beliefs. It is not normal for a person to run a mile in under four minutes, and it is not expected for a grandmother to lift a car and save her grandson. But then again, such standards are often the product of our own self-imposed limitations. we see that it can be done. When our motivation and mindset transcend these limits, we can discover that we have untapped inner reservoirs of strength and aptitude, and we can achieve the so-called impossible.

We all have dreams and aspirations. There are many things we wish to accomplish, yet we become discouraged and despondent. It seems too difficult and beyond our reach. But then again, ask yourself: is it really? Can you muster every ounce of strength you have and achieve that dream of yours?

Look at those who faced seeming insurmountable challenges and proved to themselves and everyone else that it wasn't quite impossible. Your dreams for this year are awaiting you. Stretch your mind and commit yourself to your goal, and before long, you will see, those dreams of yours will no longer remain dreams. They will become reality.



אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ כָּתְבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר חַיִּים טוֹבִים One who answers a long amen slowly , his days and years are lengthened with good. (Yerushalmi Brachos 8 8)

אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ סְתֹם פִּיּוֹת מְשַׂטִינֵנוּ וּמְקַטְרְגֵנוּ With the power of answering amen, a person wins over the prosecuting forces that blaspheme him. (Maharsha Nazir 63b)



Laws of Shofar



Several laws of shofar are derived from the cries of Sisro's mother. She was looking out the window, waiting for her son to return, and she cried, "Why is his chariot late? Why hasn't his chariot arrived?'" (Shoftim 5:28). She shed one hundred tears, and that's the reason we customarily blow one hundred tekiyos on Rosh Hashanah.

Sisro was a powerful warrior. He won every war he fought. So why was his mother worried that he didn't arrive when she expected him to? Apparently, she was thinking, "He won every war until now, but who knows what happened this time?" because things can change. The past doesn't guarantee that the future will be the same.

We must know that Rosh Hashanah is a time of change. Life isn't static. Things may become different. In sync with the joyous and optimistic atmosphere that we cultivate on Rosh Hashanah.

In the Yotzros of Rosh Hashanah we say, *"Hashem who sits in heaven remembered her, and exchanged the child of the womb of the sisters."* These words refer to Leah when she prayed, during her seventh pregnancy, that the child of her womb be switched for a girl. Leah already had six sons; Bilah and Zilpah each had two. Together they had ten sons. They knew that Yaakov Avinu must beget twelve sons to make up twelve tribes. Leah feared that if her seventh child will be a son, then Rachel could have only one son, and then she will have fewer tribes than the concubines. Therefore, Leah prayed that the child of her womb become a girl. Her prayers were answered, and Dinah was born. But why do we mention this in

the tefillah of Rosh Hashanah? To remind us that Rosh Hashanah is a time for changes.

The Avnei Nezer zt'l said that this is the reason we eat honey on Rosh Hashanah. Sweet honey comes from pesky bees that cause pain and discomfort. This indicates that on Rosh Hashanah, the hardships of the past can become sweet.

Similarly, the **Shem MiShmuel**, teaches that in Shulchan Aruch (Yorah Deiah 84) it states a situation when parts of an insect fall into honey it becomes permitted, because everything dissolves and turns into honey.

We therefore eat honey on Rosh Hashanah to remember that all the bad of the past can be turned around and leave us with a sweet future.

Chazal tell us that Yosef left prison on Rosh Hashanah. Likewise, everyone can be freed from their personal imprisonment on this day.

בני מרון



The Mishnah (Rosh Hashanah 18.) states, "On Rosh Hashanah, the entire world passes before Hashem **כבני מרון**, like sheep." Rashi explains, "[They pass before Hashem] like sheep being counted for maasar, they walk through a small gate, one by one…" Each person passes before Hashem when He judges them on Rosh Hashanah.

The Sfas Emes zt'l explains that although all people of the world pass before Hashem, what is special about the Jewish nation is that ***they want to*** pass before Hashem. They want to stand in His presence, because they know that Hashem will grant them blessings and goodness.

It is a wonderful time for us when we pass before Hashem on Rosh Hashanah. Being in Hashem's presence is a blessing in itself, and Hashem will certainly bless us and grant us a good year.

The Saintly Chofetz Chaim Z"L

Wanting to publish some of his works, he found that one had first to get the approval of an official censor. The censor for Hebrew books was a man named "Steinberg", so the Chofetz Chaim went to see him. (This Steinberg had studied Torah in his youth and was quite learned, but to achieve his position, he became an apostate.)

When the Chofetz Chaim entered his office, Steinberg looked up in surprise.. "Yisroel Meir! Do you recognise and remember me? We started studying Torah together in Cheder- Now look at you and look at me. I am rich, I have a position of importance, a magnificent home… And you, with all your Torah- what have you? You are poor, and you must ask me for approval to publish your books! Learn from me, live the way I do!"

The Chofetz Chaim replied, "As I was walking to your office, a man drew up in a coach and offered me a lift. Perhaps I should have accepted- but when I asked where he was going, he and I were headed in quite different directions, so I declined his offer.

But then; you and I are also going in different directions; therefore, I must equally decline your offer to take me along. You see- I am headed towards a different destination, and I intend to get there!"

Torah Anytime Rabbi Aron Lankry- The Judge in Our Dining Room

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ...שֶׁתְּחַדֵּשׁ עָלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה וּמְתוּקָה

Dip the apple in the honey, make a beracha loud and clear, shanah tova u'metukah, have a happy, sweet new year… We are all familiar with the long-standing tradition of taking a variety of different fruits and vegetables on the night of Rosh Hashanah and reciting various prayers portending a blessed and prosperous year to come. Yet what exactly is the meaning and depth behind this practice? What do we mean to accomplish by taking these special foods and saying an accompanying prayer?

There stood David, having just finished a day's work. Another gentleman appeared at his side. He carried himself with an air of class and professionalism, accentuated by his designer suit and briefcase. "Hi," David casually called out, "my name is David, what's your name?" The gentleman looked back at David, letting out a pleasant smile. "It's Jeff. Pleasure to meet you David." Having now grabbed the attention of a friendly stranger, David proceeded to make conversation. "Where are you heading?" "Oh, I'm on my way to my apartment a couple blocks down." David was too. "So am I. Would you mind if I join you for the walk?"

David and Jeff continued making their way down the sidewalk. When David reached his apartment, he looked Jeff in the eye and extended his hand. "Jeff, it's been a real pleasure. You know, if you have a few minutes, why don't you come up to my place and we'll have a few drinks." With some time to spare and having also enjoyed the company, Jeff happily complied.

Once inside, David wasted no time in bringing out some liquor set aside for special occasions. "By the way Jeff," David piped up as he slowly poured a glass, "what was your last name again?" "Feder," came

the reply. "Jeff Feder." David continued filling up two glasses as Jeff patiently looked on with a smile.

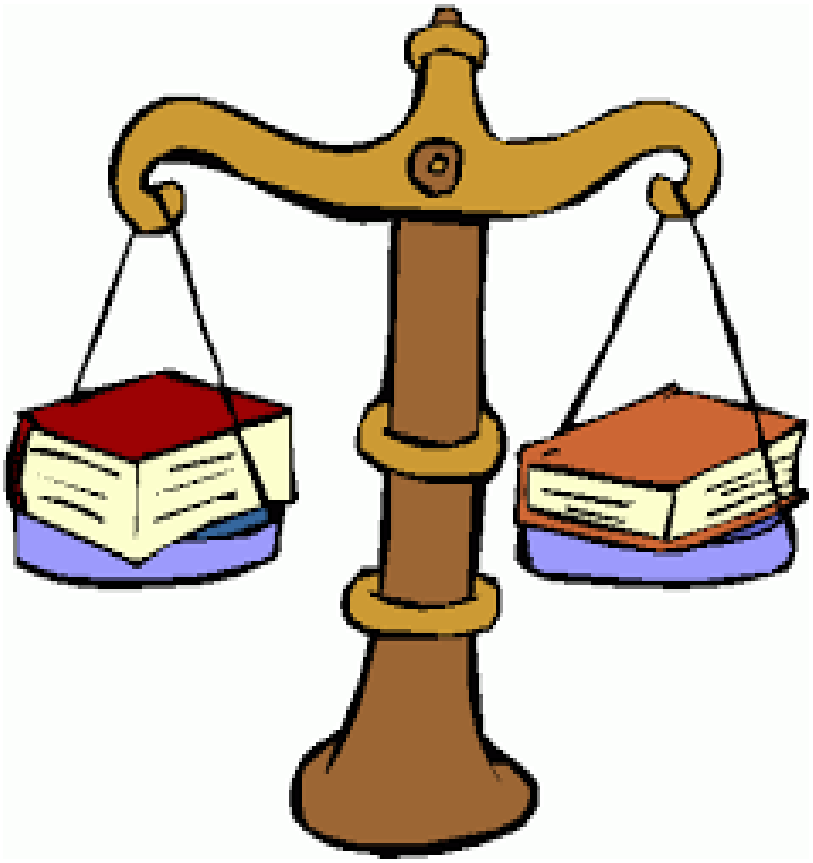
Ring! Ring! "Excuse me Jeff," David interrupted, putting down the glasses, "I'm expecting an important call. I'll be right back in a minute." David quickly headed into the kitchen, intent on returning to his guest as soon as possible. "Hello?" "David, this is your attorney, Mark." "Oh, hi Mark. How are you?" "I'm doing fine. I just wanted to remind you that you need to be in court tomorrow before ten o'clock. Make sure you're not late." "Oh, and one more thing. I found out who the judge is. His name is Jeff Feder. See you tomorrow." Click. David kept the phone to his ear for a few seconds, the dial tone still sounding. "Jeff Feder? Are you kidding? He's in my living room right now!" David, slightly jittery and tense, could not believe it. "What should I do?" he thought to himself. "Well I know what I should not do. I shouldn't march into the living room and say, 'Jeff, take care of me! You're my judge tomorrow!' That would be the worst thing to do. He'll probably jump out the window and run for his life, figuring that this was some type of set up. I better play it safe. You know, be classy and casual."

Straightening himself out, David sauntered back into the living room as if nothing had happened. Walking towards Jeff, David picked up his glass, looked straight at Jeff and said, "Jeff! I would like to propose a toast. We should both have a sweet, new year!" Jeff, following along, raised his glass as he exclaimed, "Amen to that!" Next, David raised his glass once again. "Here's another toast. All of our enemies should disappear!" "I'll drink to that one David," Jeff said, as he raised his glass and took another sip.

David and Jeff shared a couple more toasts, mentioning how they should both meet much success, enjoy a fabulous year and be on top and not bottom. To each toast, Jeff lifted his glass and gave his hearty affirmation. After finishing several toasts and enjoying each other's company for some time, David led Jeff to the door. "It's

been a pleasure Jeff. We'll have to cross paths sometime soon and get together again." And with that, Jeff went on his merry way.

Five minutes to ten the following day, David stood in the courtroom all ready. Looking at the judge from a distance, David noticed how he was calmly leafing through his paperwork. And then he paused. David figured that he must have realized just exactly who was standing before him. But no special eye contact or smiling gestures were made. The judge, who David recognized to be Jeff, heard out the case from beginning to end. But guess what? Jeff personally knew David, and that being the case, things changed. "Case dismissed," announced Jeff at the conclusion of the proceedings.



We are given a unique privilege and opportunity the night before the big day of judgement. Rosh Hashanah may be a day of awe, but it is also a day of joy and optimism, for we are confident that G-d will find us favourable in judgment and grant us a blessed new year. And why is that so? Because just the night before, we were honoured to host Hashem, the ultimate Judge, in our dining room. We took hold of various fruits and vegetables and proposed toasts. "We should be the head and not the tail; all of our merits should shine forth; and we should have a prosperous year." And to each one of these toasts, Hashem responded Amen. "You are My children," Hashem said, "and I will take care of you."

What would we pay to have even a few minutes with the judge the night before our big trial? Well guess what? Our rabbis arranged for it… We are in the best position we could possibly be for a happy, healthy, sweet new year.

Rabbi Yigal Haimoff - A Hearing Aid for Whom?

קוֹלִי שָׁמַעְתָּ אַל תַּעְלֵם אָזְנְךָ You have heard my voice; do not shut Your ear…



A husband struggling with his shalom bayit once approached his Rav for advice, who suggested that he surprise his wife by buying her a gift. As soon as the husband heard this, off he went to the store. As he continued walking, he began thinking what gift his wife would appreciate most. "We are having a communication problem," he said to himself. "When we speak, we do not understand each other. I think it would be nice if I purchase my wife a hearing aid." Approaching the storeowner, the husband mentioned that he was looking to buy a hearing aid, prompting the owner to ask if he could have a look at the man's ear. "No, no," said the man, "it is for my wife." Puzzled, the owner looked at the man. "If that is the case, I will need to look at your wife's ear." "You cannot do that," replied the husband. "You see, I want to buy my wife a hearing aid as a surprise present." "Okay," said the owner, "I'll tell you what we can do. When you go home, stand a distance away from your wife and call her name out. If she hears you and responds, then you know her hearing is

fine. If, however, she doesn't respond, then walk a little bit closer and keep on calling her name until she answers you. Then you can tell me how far away you were from her, and I will accordingly provide you with a suitable hearing aid."

Complying with the owner's orders, the husband quietly entered his home, and tiptoed to the living room, from where he spotted his wife in the kitchen. "Malka! How are you?" he called out. Silence. "Malka! How are you?" he called out again. No response. And so, he took a few steps closer. "Malka!" Yet again, no answer. "Something must be wrong," thought the husband. Walking all the way up to her, he leaned over and said loudly into her ear, "Malka! How are you?" Malka turned around. Facing her husband, she said, "Are you deaf? I already answered you three times!"

Sometimes we think that the problem we are facing is someone else's fault and doing. But then, sometimes rather quickly, we realize that just the opposite was the case. No one is perfect, including ourselves. But that is fine, because we are not meant to be perfect. What is asked of us, though, is the honest assessment of ourselves and others. If there is something we can improve about ourselves, it is only in our own best interest to readily and eagerly make that change. And without question, that is a life attitude which is music to all our ears.

A Jew is connected with Hashem, not only while he Davens or engages in a mitzvah, but during every moment of his life. The moment he opens his eyes in the morning and recites Modeh Ani, he declares that he is aware that he is in Hashem's presence. - When he retires at night, he does not go to sleep until he reaffirms his commitment to Hashem by reciting the Shema. ~ R' Shimshon Pincus z"tl

Rosh HaShanah Secrets

In Parashas Netzavim we read - **אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני ד' אלקיכם**.

The Sefer Mina'ayanot HaNetzach says that when the Torah says we are standing before Hashem it is referring to standing before Hashem for Judgment [as we already learned the word **היום** refers to Rosh Hashanah].

The Yesod HaAvodah asks why do we need to know that we are standing before Hashem? If the Pasuk already teaches us that we are standing for Judgment on Rosh HaShanah why do we need to know that it is before Hashem that we are standing?

He goes on to explain that just as on Pesach we read that it was Hashem and not a Shaliach [messenger] that freed us from bondage, so too on Rosh Hashanah it is Hashem and not a messenger that Judges us and determines our verdict. He continues that this is very important to know because had the ministers of the King [messengers of Hashem] been our judge then we would surely be in trouble. Messengers are bound by their rulers' laws to the letter of the law. If a person sinned, he would be punished. However, our judge is Hashem Himself. We appoint Him King on Rosh HaShanah and that is when our verdict is determined. Nevertheless, after we acknowledge Him as King we beg for forgiveness ten days later on Yom Kippur, therefore he can grant pardon because the King can give pardon on His own verdict. He can be Merciful beyond the letter of the Law.

This is why Rosh HaShanah [the day of Judgment] falls before Yom Kippur [the day of Forgiveness]. On Rosh HaShanah we declare Hashem King, only after we declare Him King can we come to Him and seek pardon for the inequities on our account on Yom Kippur.

Rav Gedaliah Sheinen, a Rosh Yeshivah in Yerushalayim, blew the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah for many years at the Minyan where **Rav Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, zt"l**, would Daven. After Davening, Rav Sheinen would go back with Rav Elyashiv to his apartment and blow the Shofar again according to the opinions of the Rishonim that are not written in the Shulchan Aruch.

One Rosh Hashanah, Rebbetzin Elyashiv was ill and was not able to go to Shul to hear the Shofar. After Davening, when Rav Sheinen finished blowing the extra Tekios for Rav Elyashiv, he asked the Gadol if he should blow the Shofar according to the basic Halachah for the Rebbetzin, since she wasn't in Shul to hear them and so that she could fulfil the Mitzvah.

To his surprise, Rav Elyashiv told him not to. He explained, "Today is Sunday, the second day of Rosh Hashanah, and the obligation to hear the Shofar is only M'D'Rabonon, a Mitzvah decreed by the Sages. Women are not obligated to hear the Shofar, but they have accepted this Mitzvah on themselves. Since it is a bother for you to blow the Shofar so much, it is better that you go home than blow the Shofar again."

Rav Sheinen knew better than to argue with Rav Elyashiv, so he started to leave the apartment and headed down the steps. Suddenly, he heard Rav Elyashiv coming after him, saying, "Please come back!" Rav Elyashiv explained, "It is true that the obligation to hear Shofar today is only a D'Rabonon, and for women it is an even lesser obligation, which is why I sent you home, however, my wife will be so happy to hear the Shofar. If you blow for her, you will be doing a Chesed, and Chesed is a Mitzvah M'D'Oraysa, a Mitzvah from the Torah. Therefore, I am asking you to come back. For a Mitzvah D'Oraysa, I can bother you!"

A Short Vort- Rabbi Moshe Kormornick

Our Greatest Merit to Succeed on Rosh HaShanah

The Pesikta Rabbasi says that when Avraham was instructed by Hashem to slaughter his son on Rosh HaShanah, Avraham could have questioned Him, saying that He had previously promised that Yitzchak would be a great nation, so how could He now be telling Avraham to slaughter his son!? Yet, Avraham did not respond to Hashem's instruction and attempted to carry it our wholeheartedly.

The Pesikta Rabbasi says that at this point, Avraham told Hashem that he remained as if he was a deaf mute — not responding to his questioning thoughts despite knowing that his arguments were correct. In the same way, said Avraham, when Yitzchak's children — the Jewish Nation — are judged before You on this day, even when there are many questioning angels demanding a harsh judgement, make Yourself like I did and do not respond to their claims.

There is no question that the Jewish People's survival rests on the merits of our forefathers who established an everlasting bond and relationship with Hashem; yet we see from here that the response that we can expect to receive from *Hashem* is based on how *we* act when facing challenges.

Specifically, the **Chofetz Chaim** writes that the greatest merit we can have on Rosh HaShanah is to judge other people favourably. For, when we look favourably at others — even in the most trying circumstances, Hashem will act this way towards us, and even our greatest misdeeds will be considered in a forgiving light. Whereas if we generally look negatively at others and judge them unfavourably, then even our greatest mitzvos will be heavily scrutinized by the Heavenly Court, leaving little room for merit.

Rosh HaShanah is the time to refocus our vision and bring Hashem into our lives. We determine our standing on this day and not as a result of our previous actions. Therefore, however we have

previously acted, if we determine to look positively at others from now on, then Hashem will surely look favourably upon us.

All for a pinch of snuff!



In Radin, at the time of the **Chofetz Chaim**, there was a young man called Avramela Tzentzig. He acquired his name because Avramela could not count past twenty (*tzvontzig* in Yiddish) and could only pronounce it *tzentzig*.

One day, Avramela approached two young men in the middle of an intense Torah discussion and asked for one of them to go and get him a pinch of snuff to enjoy. They turned to Avramela, apologized, and explaining that it was not a good time. But Avramela was offended and stormed away.

The following day Avramela was nowhere to be found and people started to worry. They searched the town but turned up no sign of Avramela. The next day, when there was still no sign of Avramela, they became even more worried and began to search further afield. By the third day, they had given up hope.

Five days after Avramela had disappeared without a trace the young men came into the Yeshiva and got the shock of their lives. Sitting

in the corner of the Beis Medrash was Avramela. Everyone ran to shake his hand and welcome him back. There was delight in the air, but also a lot of curiosity: where had Avramela been? But even more curious was that Avramela shook everyone's hand with only his bottom three fingers.

With everyone gathered around, Avramela answered their questions. "I've been to Warsaw" answered Avramela to the astonished crowd. "Why did you go to Warsaw?" they asked in unison. "I went to get myself pinch of snuff, and here it is" he said, finally releasing his finger and thumb after two days. Everyone present burst out laughing — Avramela went all the way to Warsaw for a pinch of snuff!

The story and the accompanying laughter reached everyone's ears in Radin, even the Chofetz Chaim. However, his reaction was not one of laughter. He gathered those around him and said to them, "Friends, let us make sure that we too do not go all the way to Warsaw for a pinch of snuff. For it is known that each of our souls comes down to this world from under the Heavenly Throne — a distance far greater than Radin to Warsaw! After we return to our Maker, what will we have to show? How many mitzvos will we be carrying back with us? Will we come back to Hashem with anything to show for our time in this world of opportunity?

The Chofetz Chaim's profound message is most meaningful at this time of year. Rosh Hashanah is the time where we should be reassessing our purpose in the world. A time of judgement, we should be asking ourselves, what am I living for? Am I making the most of my time here? After I die what eternal achievements will I have to show for my time here?

"No one is perfect - that's why pencils have erasers."

In the month of Elul, there are תרצו - 696 hours.

כי תצור על עיר ימים רבים when you besiege the city many days. These are the days if Elul where we take hold of our "city" (each person Is a city), to use it in the service of Hashem. With these **תרצו** hours we correct the **צרות** (same letters) troubles we have.



The apple is dipped in honey because the Hebrew word for honey is "devash" **דבש** (and its numerical value is three hundred and six, which is also the numerical value of "Av harachaman" (**אב הרחמן**" — merciful Father.") [Rebbe Moshe of Kobrin *zt'l*]

Relying on 'zos!' Written by D Fine

For a good month and ten days from rosh chodesh Ellul until Yom kippur we add 'ledavid HaShem ori' into our daily prayers twice a day. In it we say the words "bezos ani boteach" (in this I trust). What does bezos mean – in what are we trusting?

'Zos' has a gamatria of 408. On rosh hashanah we scream out the famous line 'uteshva utefillah utzedakka maavirin es roah hagzeirah' – teshuva, tefillah, and tzedakah remove the evil decree. Above the words Teshuva, tefillah, and tzedakka in the machzor, there appear 3 smaller words; Tzom (fasting) Kol (voice) and Mamon (money) respectively. Each of these 3 has a gematria of 136, and all the 3 add up to…408 (the gamatria of zos)!

Thus, in answer to the above question, on ledovid HaShem ori we are saying that we trust in 'zos,' ie the power of teshuva tefillah and tzeddakah that we have been promised will do away with bad decrees.

Dear Friends of Hashem Written by Benjamin A Rose



In Ezras Avoseinu, the Tefila in Shachris right before Shmoneh Esreh, we say "V'nasnu Yididim Zemiros V'shiros" - the beloved praised and exalted Hashem. The question can be asked – why do we use the word Yididim - beloved friends? Since when do we refer to ourselves as friends of the Ribbono Shel Olam? Sons, slaves, but friends?

The word before Yididim is V'nasnu, spelled Vov, Nun, Taf, Nun, Vov – either way you read it – backwards or forwards it is V'nasnu.

It says that "Yisrael Mifarnasim Avihem Sh'bashamayim", Yisrael sustains their Father in heaven. It also says "Hu Nosen Lechem L'chol Basar", Hashem gives nourishment to all flesh. So, Hashem gives us everything and return we give back to Hashem though our Avodah, through our Mitzvoth and through our Torah learning. And then Hashem gives us back Brachos and Refuos.

When it goes back and forth, from one to the other, then we can say Yididim. And we hope that it will be Yididim – that all of Klal Yisrael will get what they need. And if we do our part to sustain Hashem, He will do His part to sustain us. We say that a Tzaddik speaks and

Hashem listens, that is because when Hashem speaks the Tzaddik listens. If we make Hashem's will our priority, Hashem will make our needs a priority.

The Belzer Rebbe said that Teruah is an expression of friendship. Yom Teruah – Rosh Hashanah – is a day of friendship between Hashem and Bnei Yisrael. The word Shofar has the same gematria as the words V'nasnu Yididim. Together they equal 590. The word Shofar – Shin, Vov, Pey, Resh = 586 plus 1 for each of the four letters = 590.

So on this day of friendship, we are the beloved friends who blow the Shofar to remind the world of the greatness of Hashem.

What would you choose? Written by Benjamin A Rose

In the Shaar HaKavonos of the **Arizal** it says that when the Chazzan lingers on the word "Ayei" Mikom Kivodo in Kedusha of Musaf you can have in mind one of three wishes that will be granted. Either you can ask for Ruach HaKodesh, great wealth, or children who are tzaddikim.

The Arizal cautions that you can only ask for one and not all three so you must choose carefully.

Rav Shimshon Pincus gives advice to those who are stumped by the dilemma. First of all he says do not waste you precious request asking for Ruach HaKodesh. Even if you were granted Ruach HaKodesh since we are not worthy enough it would not settle on us much like if someone were to pour a gallon of Cola into a 5-ounce cup. It is pointless.

Children or Money? That is up to you. What did Rav Pincus choose? He used to tell his kids, "Please be good I gave up a fortune for you!

Why Honey? Written by Y Kormornick

On Rosh Hashanah we dip the sweet apple in the even sweeter honey, symbolising our desire for a sweet new year. The apple, like most other fruits is a naturally sweet fruit. But honey is not only made from a non-kosher insect but from a bee that stings. And what's more, it is the honey that tastes sweeter than the apple!



What is the message of the honey?

In life things come our way that are obviously good. Like the apple, they look good, and they taste good. But throughout life we also have many tests, many difficulties, many struggles…and they sting! They do not feel good. But what we have to remember is that even the things that sting us, that don't seem to be good are all for our very best and can push us to our greatest heights. And so, on Rosh Hashana we daven that we should have the clarity to be able to look past the sting of the bee to see and to taste the sweetness of the honey.

Details Count Written by Phillip Robinson

We recite the Onsane Tokef prayer in the Mussaf Repitition of the Amidah on the first day. Something most remarkable reads as follows:

וקול דממה דקה ישמה "and a still, thin sound will be heard"
This is a reference to a time when Elijah was told that Hashem would

appear to him. One might expect the unification of wind, noise and fire? These were all presented before Elijah, but Hashem was not present in any of them. Instead, he heard a "thin still sound" which signified Hashem's arrival. The previous 'great' phenomena were melachim (angels) but were not Hashem. We learn that miracles and divine intervention (hasgacha pratis) need not come in the form of great and mighty acts, but instead everyday happenings attributed to 'nature'.

To continually focus on praying and giving thanks for the smallest things shows the greatest dependence on Hakadosh Baruch Hu and brings awareness of his omnipresence into the world.

Rosh Hashanah; A day out? Written by D Fine

Rosh Hashanah is the day of judgment, and as such one would expect it to be the final day of the year – this way we can be judged for what we have done over the past year. However, as its name suggests, this is not so. Rosh Hashanah is the first day of the new year. How is that?

As **Rav Wolbe** highlights, the idea is that on Rosh Hashanah we are not judged for what we have done over the previous year – we are judged by who we are at the present moment. We are judged according to how much we can presently commit to reflecting HaShem's glory in this world and how prepared we are to live spiritual lives.

Rosh Hashanah is not about the past. It's about the present.

"Stop being afraid of what could go wrong, and start being excited about what could go right."

Prepare With a Little Kindness-Rabbi Yissocher Frand

I once heard the following incident from **Rabbi Kulefsky (zt"l)**, who personally observed it one Erev Rosh Hashanah in Yeshivas Torah V'Daas.



Rav Shlomo Heiman (the Rosh HaYeshiva of Torah V'Daas) asked two of the most outstanding students of the Yeshiva of that era (who were later well known as **Rav Simcha Schustel and Rav Moshe Shisgal**) for a favour. He requested that they write L'Shanah Tova cards for him and mail them to him. Rav Shlomo Heiman then told them, "and if you question – is there not anything better and more spiritual that we should be doing on the eve of Rosh HaShanah other than writing Shanah Tova cards – I have an answer for you.

It may in fact not be so appropriate for me to write my own Shanah Tova cards today. However, if you will write the cards for me, then you will be doing me a great favour (Chessed) and what could be more important to do on Erev Rosh Hashanah than an act of kindness for someone else?"

R' Mordechai of Densburg ZT"L would say:

"Some people spend time reviewing the machzor before Rosh Hashanah. The machzor won't change! Better one should review his deeds and correct them!"

Hashem's Children

Every Rosh Hashana we say "ha'yom haras olam" three times during musaf, and we declare "im ka'banim, im ka'avadim" - that we are either like Hashem's children, or like His servants - and if we are like children, then He should have mercy on us like a father has mercy on his children, and, if we are like servants, our eyes await His compassion.



On the surface, it would seem that there are two hanhagos here, that Hashem deals with us on two different realms. Just as we declare "Avinu Malkeinu", that Hashem is both our father and king, the Ribono shel Olam also relates to us in two independant ways. However, the Rabeinu Bachaya (in his sefer Kad Hakemach) understands our tefilah differently: Ultimately, he explains, we want to be judged as children, because a father always has mercy on his children. However, we may not be deserving of such judgement, and so we ask that if we are to be judged as servants, then we pray for the compassion of a master who treats his servants well.

HaRav Matisyahu Salomon shlit"a explains that there is a fundamental difference between these two relationships. A servant, no matter how devoted he is, is only interested in fulfilling the needs, demands, or wants of his master. He does what he is asked, and usually no more. A son however, wants a stronger bond with his father. He desires to understand him and appreciate his inner workings.

If we approach Torah and mitzvos as something which we must do, then we are servants, but if we desire to learn so we can getter a

better grasp and appreciation of Hashem's "mind", then we are relating to Him like children. So, it comes out that our din on Rosh Hashana is very much dependant on how we approach our relationship with the Ribono shel Olam.

If we strengthen our commitment to Torah study, then we can merit the final words of the posuk "racheim arachamenu, ne'um Hashem" - the mercy of Avinu sheh'ba'shomayim! Let us strengthen the relationship with our Creator by increasing our commitment to Torah, both quantitatively and qualitatively. When we want to connect to Hashem, not as a servant, but as a child, who enjoys the relationship with his father. Then, b'ezras Hashem, we will be zocheh to be judged as banim, with the mercy of a father who loves and enjoys his child.

Parsha Pshetel – Rabbi Yankie Shechter

וַה' פָּקַד אֶת-שָׂרָה, כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמָר וַיַּעַשׂ ה' לְשָׂרָה, כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֵּר -אמרי יוסף ***"And Hashem remembered Sarah as He said, and Hashem did for Sarah as He had spoken."*** 21:1

Sarah, at the age of ninety, was Zoche to have her first child. The name **שרה** is the Roshei Taivos for **שׁופר רַאש הַשנה** .

Rashi says that we learn from the incident with Sarah Imeinu, that one who is Mispalel on behalf of others, is answered first.

Everything is Decreed on Rosh Hashanah

A fly was once bothering the **Chazon Ish *zt'l***. Someone tried to shoo the fly away. The Chazon Ish said, "Leave it. It's a Rosh Hashanah fly." He intended that it was destined that on Rosh Hashanah, this fly should bother him, so there isn't anything that can be done.

How do the *simanim* help make the new year a good year?



The *Mishnah Berurah* writes, "**The Shlah** teaches that these signs remind the person to rouse himself to *teshuvah* and to pray for these matters." When he eats the apple with honey he is reminded that he wants a sweet year. When he eats the **כרתי** , he remembers that this year, he wants to see the destruction of the resha'im, that it should be **יכרתו שונאינו** .This rouses him to teshuvah and to pray for these matters. So, according to the Shlah, it is primarily the tefillah and the teshuvah that help. The siman is to help him remember what he wants to pray for.

Reb Shlomo Kluger's (*Chachmas Shlomo*) approach is that these foods show our *bitachon* that it will indeed be a sweet, good year. More than the foods, it's the *bitachon* in one's heart, combined with his words that proclaim that everything will be good that year, which makes it a good year.

He writes, "The idea isn't that eating these foods is a *tefillah*, because there is no such concept of eating as a *tefillah*. Rather, we eat these foods to illustrate our trust that Hashem will give us a good year… We eat these sweet, good foods, and we say on them [that it should be a good year] so if *chas veshalom* there was a harsh decree, it will be turned over for good by our words. Amen, so shall be His will." People in Yerushalayim would say, "If an apple dipped in honey is a sign for a sweet year, certainly if a person is a 'sweet Yid,'

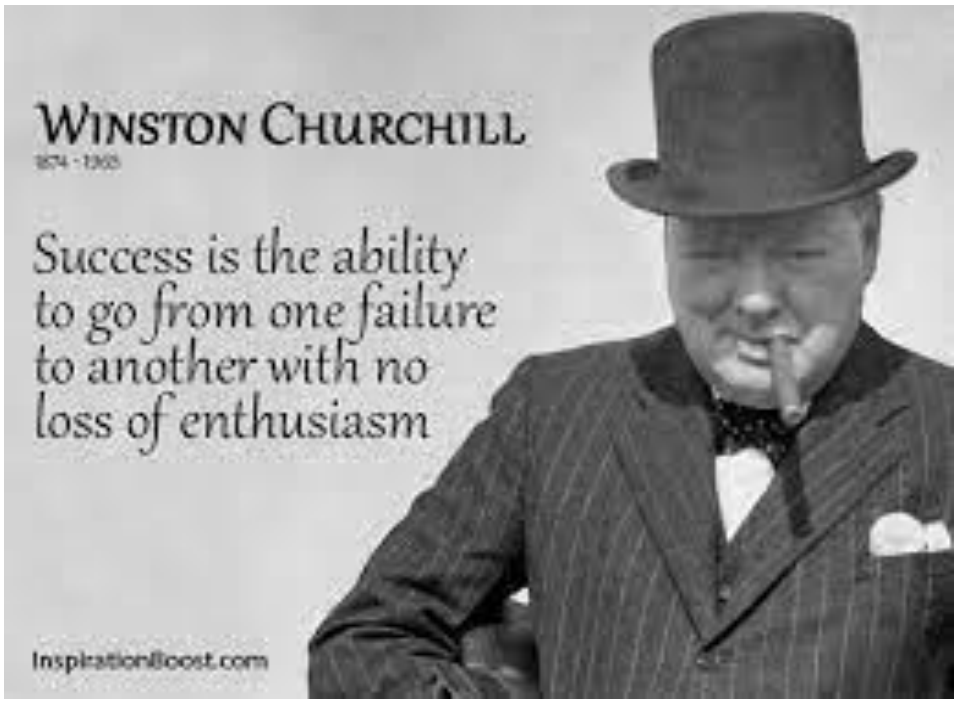
keeps a smile on his face, and by greeting others warmly, what better sign for the new year could there be?

דבש is roshei teivos for **דַּי בַּמה שֶׁיש** , things are good enough as it is. When one has this attitude, he will have a sweet and happy life.

Torah Anytime- Rabbi Ari Bergman -Twenty-Seven Successes

דלתיך דפקנו...נא אל תשיבנו ריקם מלפניך

At Your doors we knock…please do not turn us away from You empty-handed (Introduction to Selichot)



Having successfully established and run an electric company for a number of years, the owner eventually grew old and intended on retiring. Looking to sell the company, a friend of mine wished to buy it. He was relatively young yet was ambitious and determined to make a successful life for himself. But there was only one problem: where would he get the credit to make such a large purchase?

Applying to one bank after another, each one promptly rejected him. His hopes looked quite dismal, but he was not ready to give up. After spending tireless hours attempting to find a bank which would agree to lend him the money, he finally found the one. But that was only after twenty-seven banks had previously refused him. It was only on

the twenty-eighth attempt that a bank complied. Going through with buying the electric company, he went on to achieve tremendous success. Close to a billion dollars of revenue were brought in for the company.

While accomplishing such a feat was surely remarkable, there was something else that impressed me even more. As I one day entered his office, I was in for a surprise. His office walls were not simply graced with tasteful and elegant design; there was something more to them. Hanging behind his desk were the twenty-seven refusal letters he had received from all the banks he had applied to yet was rejected. "Let me tell you something," he said to me. "If I would have given up after the first few tries, I probably would be working for another person running this company. But my failures never deterred me. And in truth, the failures themselves brought me to achieve this success. After every fruitless attempt in applying to a bank, I learned what I could do to improve and be better equipped for my next try. And in that respect, those twenty-seven failures were in reality my greatest successes."

The wise words of this man speak for themselves. We should never be deterred by our past failures and let-downs. Quite to the contrary, they are what build us and prepare the way for our greatest and most treasured triumph.

שנה טובה ומתוקה What is the explanation of a "good and sweet" year?

Rabbi Zlotowitz zt"l explains that while we may be intellectually aware that all Hashem does for us is for the good, practically speaking, the sweetness of any given situation may not be obvious. Thus, we wish each other a year of goodness that we can easily understand and experience as sweet.

Head Of a Fish



Someone told **Reb Mordechai Chaim Slonimer *zt'l*** that he doesn't have enough money to buy a head of a fish, and he is worried how he will succeed that year without having this *siman*.

Reb Mordechai Chaim told him, "Buy a fish tail (which is called an **עק**, end, in Yiddish) and pray **יהי רצון** *'May it be Hashem's will that it should finally be the* **עק**, *end, of all our suffering.'"*

Akeidas Yitzchok

The Shlah explains from the Zohar – At the time of the Akeidah, the Neshama of Yitzchok left, and a new Neshama entered. It was the new Neshama that enabled Yitzchok to have children.

The Ohr Hachaim explains that this is why the birth of Rivkah is stated right after the Akeidah. Now that Yitzchok was able to father children, his future Rivkah was born.

We learn a very important lesson from this. One could have thought; how could Hashem ask Avrohom to Shecht Yitzchok. Hashem had said earlier that Klal Yisroel was going to come through Yitzchok. In fact, it was the Akeidah that caused Yitzchok to get a new Neshama that enabled him to have children.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman- Torah Wellsprings

The Imrei Emes *zt'l* gives an explanation why Rosh Hashanah is two days everywhere. In the Rosh Hashanah Shemonah Esrei we pray, **ויעשו כולם אגודה אחת לעשות רצונך בלבב שלם** , ***"Everyone should join as one to do Your will…"***

We want to serve Hashem as one, without any divisions. On the day that we pray for this ideal, everyone keeps Rosh Hashanah the same, so we can serve Hashem as one.

Daven with joy

When you daven, daven with joy, and trust that Hashem will answer your *tefillos*. On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, we read in the *haftarah* (*Shmuel* 1, ch.1) the story of Elkanah who was married to Chanah and Peninah. Peninah had children, while Chanah didn't.

The *Navi* tells us that one day Elkanah said, "Chanah, why do you cry…? I'm worth more than ten children to you." **ותקם חנה ותתפלל על ה'** , ***"Chanah stood up…and she prayed…"***

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* notes that she didn't pray beforehand. She began praying after her husband gave her encouragement and solace. She knew that *tefillos* said with sadness wouldn't be effective. Therefore, on Rosh Hashanah, pray with joy and trust in Hashem, and Hashem will answer your *tefillos*.

R' Menachem Mendel Morgenstern ZT"L (Kotzker Rebbe) would say:

"We don't eat nuts because **אגוז** (nut) is gematria **חט** (sin). But **חט** is also gematria **חט**"

Women and Tefillo

Reb Elyah Lopian *zt'l* said he received a *kabbalah* that on the *yomim nora'im* the women who stay home to take care of their children have their own, individual channel that elevates their *tefillos* before Hashem's throne. Although they pray less, and they don't have the benefit of davening with a congregation, their few words of *tefillah* can accomplish what an entire *kehillah* accomplishes with many hours of *tefillah*. Partially, this is because of the special quality of *tefillah* said with tears, which women excel in. These *tefillos* are always answered.



Tehillim

There is a *segulah* to say the entire *Tehillim*, twice, on the first night of Rosh Hashanah. I know people who have practiced this *segulah* and saw miracles. it is tough to keep this *segulah*, and therefore, it isn't advised for everyone. For example, if this custom will prevent you from being awake and alert by the tefillos, it is probably better to refrain. It is more important to daven with *kavanah*. Throughout Rosh Hashanah.

The Baal HaTanya *zy'a* was busy with either his *machzor* or with his *Tehillim*. **The Brisker Rav *zt'l*** also used every spare moment of Rosh Hashanah to say Tehillim. **The Noam Elimelech** writes that there is an **עולם הגדול הנקרא תהלה**, "*A great world called Tehillah…*" It is a world of immense compassion, and the Satan isn't able to say anything against him in that world.

The Noem Elimelech writes, "This is the reason Dovid HaMelech's songs are called **תהלים** because with them, one can accomplish everything [because one becomes attached to the world of compassion called **תהלה**]. The Satan isn't there and there are no problems **אין שטן ואין פגע רע "*There is no Satan and there are no***

problems" is roshei teivos **שופר** , because shofar also silences the Satan.

These amazing words give us a glimpse at the wonders of *Tehillim*. When we say *Tehillim*, we are being connected to the world where there is only compassion, where none of our bad deeds are mentioned. And through saying *Tehillim*, we can attain all our needs.

Rosh Hashanah is also a day of immense fear. Yet, the element of joy must always be there. **חדות ד' היא מעוזכם** , in the merit of the happiness, we will be judged for a good year.

The Navi (*I Shmuel* 1) tells that Chanah was sad because she didn't have children. Her husband, Elkanah, told her, "Why do you cry? Why aren't you eating? Why are you sad? I am better for you than ten children." This encouraged her somewhat, and the Navi tells us that she ate a little, but she was still very upset. She went to Mishkan Shilo to daven for children. After her *tefillos* the Navi writes, **ותאכל ופניה לא היו לה עוד**, ***"she ate, and she didn't have a sad face again."***



The Chasam Sofer teaches that she merited bearing children because of her happiness. She succeeded in finding happiness in her life despite her misery, and in this merit she had her salvation.

Chazal say, **נפקדה שרה רחל וחנה בר"ה** , ***"On Rosh Hashanah…Chanah was remembered, to bear a child "***, and it was in the merit of her happiness.

The Nesivos Shalom *zy'a* told the following story:

A tzaddik came home from shul on Rosh Hashanah night, filled his *becher* for Kiddush, but the entire cup spilled onto the table. When he was cutting challah, the challah slipped from his hand, onto the floor. The rebbetzin didn't serve fish that night, because it burned. "I'm afraid that these are bad omens," she said. "So many negative things are happening." The husband said, "The main omen is not what we eat; it is the emotions we have. Baruch Hashem, despite everything, we are happy. So we are having an excellent omen for the upcoming year."

Someone complained to his rav that his wife gave him the tail of a fish on Rosh Hashanah. The rav replied, "Did you say **שנהיה לזנב**, that you should be a tail?" He meant to say that everything depends on your attitude and your words, and not so much on your deeds.

Reb Yehuda Psayah zt'l:

One Rosh Hashanah, he was with his guests at the meal. He was dressed in his traditional white clothing, and an uplifted Rosh Hashanah atmosphere reigned in the home. But then, one of the guests pushed the table, and the candles fell. It became dark. His wife was bringing in the fish, but since it was dark, she accidentally dropped the tray. Reb Yehudah Psaya stood up to see what happened to the fish, but he slipped on the fish juices, and his white clothing became dirty. Reb Yehudah controlled his anger. He wouldn't let this ruin the Rosh Hashanah. Reb Yehudah Psaya said that he never had such a good, sweet year. He had siyata dishmaya in everything he did, and he merited uncovering many chidushei Torah that year, too.

Let us learn from this story to fill Rosh Hashanah with joy. That attitude is the most essential siman for the new year.

Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein- Coach Your Client

וישא אברהם את עיניו וירא את המקום מרחוק

And Avraham looked up and saw the place from afar (*Bereishit* 22:4; *Second Day Torah Reading*)

After a student of mine, lost his father, I began stepping in to mentor and guide him. He eventually went on to attend law school and become a teacher. Sometime after his schooling, he came over to me and said, "Rabbi, the best lesson I ever learned in law school was a class called, 'Coach your client.'" "Tell me about it," I said. And so, Yehuda went on to tell me the following story he heard from his professor:



When a well-to-do politician was charged with first-degree murder, he hired a top-notch defence lawyer. This lawyer was known to have never lost a case, and his retainer fee was in the millions. The prosecuting lawyer, on the other hand, was a young boy just out of school. Matched against this other seasoned lawyer, everyone expected the case to come to a close quite quickly. Yet for a few days, the prosecuting lawyer was doing unexpectedly well. It was rather surprising to see the defending lawyer simply sitting back in his chair and saying nothing. Unsure why no defence was being taken on behalf of the accused, the media was under the impression that the defence lawyer was having a nervous breakdown. Something was certainly amiss.

A few days into the proceedings, the judge finally called for summation. By then, the prosecuting lawyer had lodged a significant

number of compelling arguments with the defending lawyer saying nothing. But then the defending lawyer got up.

"You are all probably under the impression that something has gone wrong with me over the past couple of days. The truth, though, is that I was not worried at all. I didn't want to waste your time nor my time. Just the other day, I spoke to the girl who was supposedly murdered by this man sitting in front of you. She told me that she is currently in Mexico, and after telling her the details of this case, she agreed to walk into this court room. Today, on Friday, between 3 o'clock and 4 o'clock, you will see her walk through that door."

Taking the audience and media by surprise, the tables seemed to have turned. It was the defending lawyer who had the upper hand all along. All that now awaited was the clock striking 3 o'clock. The court room settled down and silence filled the room. 3:05, 3:15, no sight of anyone yet. At 3:30, the door opened. All heads turned towards the door. But it wasn't the victim; it was a court reporter. 3:30 rolled around, 3:45. 4:00. No sight of anyone. "Sir," said the judge to the defending lawyer, "what do you have to say now? Where is she?"

And then the defending lawyer stood up. "Your honour," began the lawyer, "let me ask you and the jurors something. In American law, is it not true that in order to find someone guilty, you must have proof beyond a reasonable doubt? Now, is it not that between the hours of 3 and 4, everyone in this court room was looking at that door and expecting that the girl would enter? And is it not true that at 3:30, when those doors opened, you all picked up your heads and thought she was there? That being so, I do not believe there to be evidence beyond a reasonable doubt that my client is guilty. I rest my case for his innocence." Brilliant.

The judge could not disagree with the argument. All he could do was tell the jurors to deliberate and reach a conclusion. And sure enough, not too long thereafter, they returned with their decision. "Your honour," one of the jurors said, "we find the accused guilty of first-

degree murder." Pandemonium broke out in the court room. Shocked by the verdict reached, the judge asked for an explanation. "Your honour," said one of the jurors, "let me tell you something. It is true that everyone in this court room believed that the girl would walk through that door. And it is also true that at 3:30, when the door opened, everyone here jumped up and thought she had arrived. However, I was looking at the accused for that entire hour. And not once, did he pick his head up and look at that door. And that is because he knew that he murdered the girl."

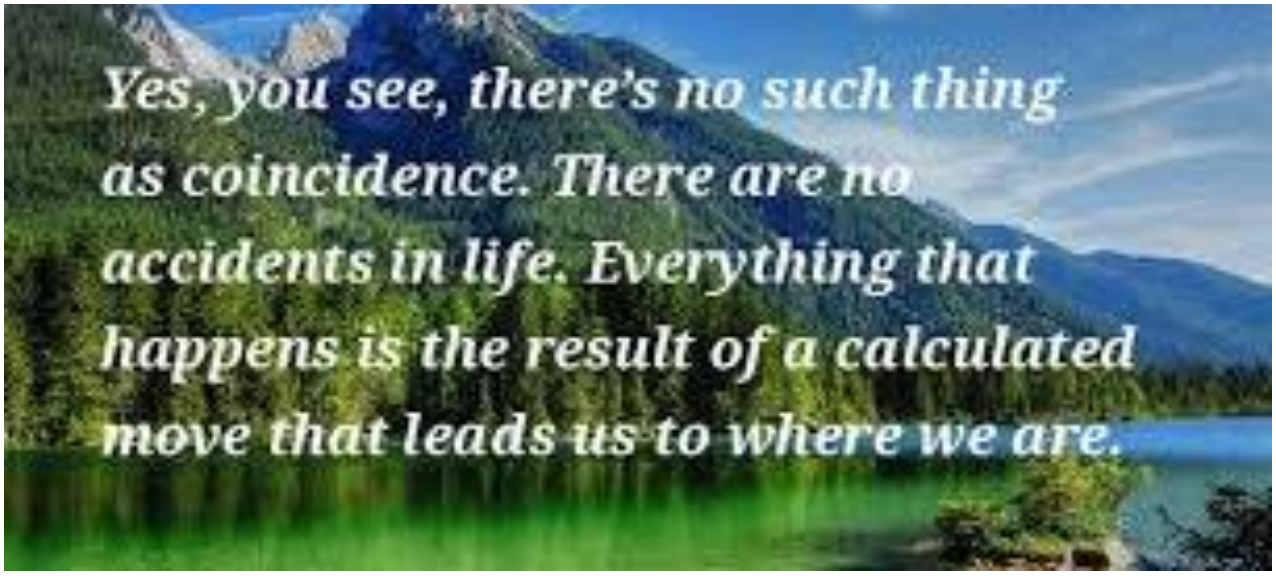
Case closed. And with that, the defending lawyer got up and walked over to his client. "You fool! I had everything in place for you. All you needed to do is just once look at that door!"

Yehuda concluded telling me, in front of all of us young, aspiring lawyers, he said, "Let me tell you about the most important principle in law. You can be the most brilliant lawyer and have everything ingeniously worked out, but if you do not coach your client, you will not win the case." As Yehuda finished telling me this lesson, I said to him, "Yehuda, that's a big story. Not only for law, but for life."

All too often, we are inspired for a short while, and then the inspiration disappears. We attend a convention or a lecture, and we hear all about how we can change our lives and improve. We hear motivational words from the best lawyers, the best rabbis and the best speakers. But then, we walk out of the room and return home. And then we wonder, what happened? Where did the inspiration go?

If we do not wish to turn around and look at the door, we will end up losing the case. More than anyone else, the one who will change our lives the most is none other than *ourselves*. Our job is to take their words of inspiration and make them words of reality. And when we do so, we will surely see doors of potential and opportunity open right before our eyes.

Rabbi Fischel Schachter- Special Admission



Rabbi Alter and his wife travelled from Chicago to Toronto for a wedding. At that time, airports were just beginning to introduce the use of full body scanners as part of their security system instead of metal detectors. They were installed with the intention of ensuring greater safety for all those traveling.

As Rabbi Alter and his wife got into line, they took note of the body scanners. It was clear that security was trying to accustom travellers to the scanners as a big yellow ribbon was taped across the metal detector. They both assumed that passing through the metal detector was not an option.

As they inched closer to the scanner, Rabbi Alter's wife turned to her husband and said, "I'm not really comfortable going through the full body scanner. Is there any way of going through the metal detector?"

Trying to reassure his wife that he had spoken with a Rav in Chicago who clarified that there was no impropriety in going through the scanner, she still remained sensitive to doing so. "Even so," she said, "I would prefer the metal detector."

Getting out of line and walking up to the TSA agent who stood in front of the line, Rabbi Alter asked if passing through the metal

detector was an alternative option. "It actually is," the TSA agent said. "The only thing is that if you choose to do so, we will subject you to a full body pat-down. We have strict protocol dictating that everyone goes through the scanners and if anyone wishes to do otherwise, we will just have to complete the procedure ourselves."

Thanking her for the information, Rabbi Alter headed back to his wife. As Rabbi Alter relayed what the TSA agent had said, it was not long before his wife changed her mind and agreed to go through the fully body scanner. "I would rather go through a scanner than receive a pat-down," she said.

Slowly moving closer to the scanner, it was now Rabbi Alter's turn to go. Speedily and without any issues, he made it through. Within seconds, though, he heard some commotion coming behind. The TSA agent who had a walkie-talkie attached to her shoulder and an earpiece in her ear put her hand up in front of Rabbi Alter's wife as she listened intently to a message on her earpiece. "What? Fifteen minutes lunch break…okay fine, no problem." She then said in a loud voice to everyone standing in line, "Ladies and gentlemen, the full body scanner is closed. Everyone should now please move aside to enter through the metal detector."

Rabbi Alter's wife was the first on line… and now, she walked through the metal detector without receiving any pat-down. After all, it was not she who had changed the protocol, but the airport security.

Looking at each other, Rabbi Alter and his wife both realized that this was a moment of Divine providence. Her silent prayers to go through the metal detector had been answered immediately. They continued on to Toronto both knowing that they had just seen a small part of G-d's hand.

Shortly after arriving in Toronto, Rabbi Alter and his sat down with a number of other people who had also travelled from Chicago, and Rabbi Alter decided to share what had happened at the airport. As

he neared the end of the story, a man from a nearby table tapped him on the shoulder. Surprisingly, it was a close friend of his, Heshy Wangrow. "Heshy, what are you doing here?" he said enthusiastically. Looking back, Heshy asked, "Do you want to hear the rest of the story?" "There is more to the story?" Rabbi Alter curiously replied. "Yes, please tell me."

"Well," Heshy began, "I was standing a few people behind you as you were going through security. As you probably know, right after you passed through the scanner, the TSA agent put up her hand and signalled for the rest of us to file through the metal detector. Being that your wife was first in line, she quickly went through the detector. But just then, the TSA agent again put up her hand as she listened to another message on her walkie-talkie. Speaking back into her microphone, she said, 'Oh, in fifteen minutes. I'm sorry; I misunderstood. You are going on a lunch break in fifteen minutes.' And with that, she said to all of us now standing in line for the metal detectors, 'Ladies and gentleman, I am very sorry to trouble you again. If everyone can please move back into the line for the full body scanner. The metal detectors will be closed for another fifteen minutes.' "And so," concluded Heshy, "your wife was the only one who went through the metal detector."

There is no such thing as coincidence in life; everything is orchestrated by Hashem above. We should never feel we are alone without Divine security. Looking down upon every one of His children closely and lovingly, our Father's eyes never turn away from helping us reach our destination happily and safely.

An arrow can only be shot by pulling it backward. When life is dragging you back with difficulties, it means it's going to launch you into something great. So just focus and keep aiming.

Towards the end of his life, Rav Moshe Feinstein zt"l was too weak to eat the yom tov meals with the yeshiva, and so on Rosh Hashana, he ate in a room by himself. **R' Moshe Meir Weiss shlit"a** had the zechus of serving the rosh yeshiva and eating with him.

That year, the first day of Rosh Hashana was on Shabbos and so R' Moshe Meir sang Shabbos zemiros. When he sang 'Mah Yedidus' and got to the words 'v'ha'sheina meshubachas' (sleep is praiseworthy) he paused and asked his rebbe 'what about this year', referring to the strong custom not to sleep on Rosh Hashana.

R' Moshe replied: "who said it refers to lying down in bed? 'sheina' refers to learning", because R' Moshe knew that Torah study can be the most relaxing activity possible.

Rabbi Dovid Kaplan- The Perfect Product

Raising his family in Chicago, Mr. Kaplan owned a company called "Kofer," literally meaning tar, named after the tar which was placed within and without Noach's Ark. The company developed a product called Driveway Medic, developed by Phillips Petroleum. Driveway Medic functioned as a roll of asphalt on double-stick tape. If a person would have a crack in his driveway, by taking this roll of asphalt, cutting it any length desired, peeling off the backing and stepping on it, the driveway would remain repaired for the long haul. It was a great product.

As Mr. Kaplan's children grew up, it was time to marry off his eldest daughter. He approached his Rebbe and said, "Rebbe, I don't have enough money to marry off my daughter and I don't know what to do. The product Driveway Medic is just starting up and I have not made enough money yet to afford a wedding."

Looking for advice, his Rebbe told him, "Hashem will help. Trust in Hashem and you will see that He will take care of you." And with

that, he left knowing two things: he would do his utmost to procure money for the wedding but leave the rest to Hashem. He placed his trust in Hashem that everything would be alright.

The wedding was set for a date in November. Although he believed that matters would work out, time was ticking. It was now getting closer to the wedding, and he was still short money. And so, he approached his Rebbe again. "Rabbi, what should I do now?" Faced with a difficult situation, his Rebbe told him that he would help him. He arranged that he would take a second mortgage on his house and give him some money. This arrangement would help, but Mr. Kaplan remained uneasy. He did not want to take handouts from others; he wanted to be able to pay for the wedding himself. But business for Driveway Medic wasn't helping him enough.

During Chol Hamoed Sukkos, Mr. Kaplan approached his Rebbe a third time. "Rabbi," he said, "thank you very much, but I don't need the money." "You don't need the money?" his Rebbe exclaimed. "What happened?" Mr. Kaplan went on to explain.

"I was attending an entrepreneurial show for all sorts of businesses. There, I handed out brochures for Driveway Medic. I didn't exactly know in whose hands the brochure would end up; I simply gave it to whomever came along. A little later, I received a letter. It was from a company in Abu Dhabi, capital of the United Arab Emirates. They said that they received my brochure and noticed that it stated I would send a sample of Driveway Medic for ten dollars upon request. And so, they wished for me to send them a sample. Thinking about it for a moment, I was at a loss of what to do. First of all, it would cost me more than ten dollars to send a sample all the way to Abu Dhabi. Moreover, what would they do with this product in Abu Dhabi? Driveway Medic is meant for those who live in a climate where the asphalt cracks. In Abu Dhabi though, you don't need Driveway Medic. There, the temperature is warm all year round. There is no freeze-thaw cycle that would necessitate any repairs. And on top of all that,

when they find out that my last name is Kaplan, that will be the end of the story. And so, considering all these points, I shoved the letter in the drawer and ignored it.

"Two weeks later, I received another letter. It was from this company in Abu Dhabi again. They said, 'We previously sent you a letter with ten dollars to receive a sample of Driveway Medic. We would appreciate that you send it to us as we think we have a market here.' Ever after reading the letter to myself a second time, I still figured it was ridiculous. What would they do with Driveway Medic in Abu Dhabi? And so, I put yet again this second letter into a drawer as I did to the first. And then I received a fax. 'We sent you ten dollars requesting a sample of your product. We would like to do business with you. Here is a guarantee from the Bank of Dubai corroborating our request; we would like some of your product.' After receiving this third letter, I figured that I would send them a sample even though I would be losing money. I didn't want to make a Chillul Hashem if they would find out that my name is Kaplan. And so, I packaged a small roll of the product, sent it off to Abu Dhabi and forgot about it.

"A week later, the company sent me a fax. 'Thank you very much for sending us your product. Can you please send us a shipping container load with ten thousand pieces of this product?" Included was a letter of guarantee from the Bank of Dubai.' "Rabbi," continued Mr. Kaplan, "you want to know something? The profit I made from that container I sent to Abu Dhabi is enough money to pay for my daughter's wedding. I never would have imagined that I would be able to say this, but you need not take a second mortgage on your house. Thank G-d, I can pay for the wedding myself."

P.S. Two months later, after the wedding had already been paid for, Mr. Kaplan received another fax: We realized there is no market for Driveway Medic in Abu Dhabi. Would you consider buying back your product?"

While at times we may wonder how we will be able to manage, we need not be all too disconcerted. Probably the last thing on Mr. Kaplan's mind was that he would make a nice profit selling his product to a country thousands of miles away. But when Hashem is on our side, even a long distance is short.



Rabbi Frand on Rosh Hashanah - We Call Out To Our Father, Our King

Parshas HaAzinu (which is the Shabbos after Yom Kippur this year) contains the famous pasuk [verse]: *"He was like an eagle arousing its nest, hovering over its young, spreading its wings and taking them, carrying them on its pinions."* [Devorim 32:11].

The Song of HaAzinu, written on the last day of Moshe Rabbeinu's life, describes, among other things, the relationship of the Jewish people to the Almighty. Rashi, on the above-cited pasuk, elaborates on the metaphor. The eagle is an enormous bird. Seen up close, it looks more like an animal than a bird, due to its size and power. The wingspread of an eagle is awesome! When an eagle returns to its nest and hovers over the little eaglets, it takes great care not to frighten the still young, immature, and fragile little birds. Out of compassion for these little birds, the eagle does not suddenly swoop down onto its nest. Rather, she bangs her wings against the tree branches so that the little birds know the mother is about to come, the mother is about to land. The little eaglets are forewarned. They can brace themselves and prepare themselves so that the eagle's landing will not damage them.

This is how the Almighty treats us. Ultimately, He is our father. There is an implicit paradox in the day of Rosh HaShanah, which is articulated in the words Avinu Malkeinu – He is our Father, our King. Our relationship with the Almighty on Rosh HaShana is expressed in these two almost paradoxical terms. He is both Avinu and Malkeinu.

"Our King" is a very scary concept. A King expects things from his servants. A King does not always tolerate infractions by his servants. That which will happen to us over the course of the next year will be determined over the course of the 10 days between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur. But we must never forget that the Almighty is also Avinu [Our Father]. As Rashi says, He is like the eagle that has compassion and mercy upon its young. He is the father that loves us. There is no father in the world that loves his child more than the Almighty loves us. We tend to forget this.



I recently heard the following true story: A father had a son who was having problems during his teenage years. The son was not acting as he should, and he gave his father much grief. In hope of putting the son on the right path, the father sent him to Eretz Yisrael with the hope that somehow in the Holy Land, the boy would straighten out. In Israel, the son visited a psychologist who had some success with the lad. The father visited the son that year and decided to go speak to the psychologist himself to hear firsthand how his son was doing. The psychologist explained to the father that the problem he was having with his son could be traced back to unresolved issues that he (the father) was having with his own father.

The person heard what the psychologist said and understood it. But when he came back to America, he really did not act upon it. Several months later, however, a friend of the boy's father lost his own father and was sitting shiva. The father went to visit his friend who

was mourning the loss. The mourner made the following comment: "I lost the person in the world who loved me the most. No one loved me like my father."

When the father with the problem son heard this comment, it stuck with him. He deeply wished that he could make a statement like that about his own father. He wished that he could feel he had a father who loved him. He decided that the next time the Israeli psychologist came to America, he would make an appointment to see him together with his own father so that the two of them could try to work out their issues. And so it was. The psychologist came to America. The father went to his own father – a European Jew, a holocaust survivor – and said "I want to go with you to a psychologist." He explained, "Our relationship has suffered for years. Maybe we can do something to improve it."

Much to his surprise, the father agreed and thus the "grandfather" and the "father" went to the psychologist and had a session. At that session, when the "grandfather" began telling over his life story – the events that happened before, during, and after the holocaust -- how he was instrumental in saving members of his own family from death and so on -- the "father" suddenly had an amazing epiphany. He turned to his father and said "I never knew this about you! You are a hero! I never knew this. The only thing I knew about you was that I was afraid of you."

The "grandfather" turned to his son and said, "I love you more than anything else in the world." Those words that the son (now a middle-aged man) was longing to hear his whole life, he now heard from his own father. This "father" then had an even greater epiphany and an even greater awakening: "If my father who is flesh and blood loves me that much, then how much more so does the Ribono shel Olam [Master of the Universe] love me!" This awakening changed the person's entire relationship not only with his own father, but with his Father in Heaven.

As we approach the scariest days of the year, when everything that happens to us during the coming year is on the line, as much as we should be in a mental state of awe and fear, let us not forget that He is not only Our King, but He is also Our Father. He is a Father that loves us and wants to take us back. He opens up His hands to us, just waiting for us to make the move. Seek out the L-rd when he may be found, call out to him when he is near to be called.

Like any father, He wants to take us back. He is just waiting for the son to say, "Dad, I want things to be better between us. I am sorry for the fact that I have not lived up to your expectations." Which father would not take his son back under those circumstances? The Almighty is a more compassionate and more merciful father than any father any of us ever knew. Let us not squander this opportunity to return to our Father in Heaven. He will have mercy on us, "like a father has mercy on his children."

May we all be written and sealed for a year of good family relationships, a year of prosperity, a year of health, and a year of peace upon Israel, and a year which marks the coming of the Righteous Redeemer to Zion. Amen.

Parsha Potpourri by Oizer Alport

כי עלה אלקים בתרועה ד׳ בקול שופר זמרו זמרו אלקים זמרו זמרו למלכנו זמרו מלך כל הארץ אלקים זמרו משכיל (תהילים 47:6-8)

Just before blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashana, we recite chapter 47 of Tehillim, in which Dovid writes, “G-d has ascended with the teruah; Hashem, with the sound of the shofar. Sing to G-d, sing; sing to our King, sing. For G-d is King of all the earth; sing, enlightened one.” Dovid appears to link the blowing of the shofar to singing, which is difficult to understand, as singing is normally an expression of joy, while the teruah represents cries of pain.



Additionally, as Dovid appears to advise, the incorporation of singing into the Rosh Hashana liturgy has become almost universal, which seems highly incongruous for the somber nature of the day. If a defendant accused of a capital crime began singing on the witness stand while testifying in his defense, his brazen disrespect for the decorum of the courtroom would certainly not elicit compassion and clemency from the judge. Why then do we permit ourselves to indulge in singing as we beseech Hashem for mercy on the Day of Judgment?

Rav Moshe Nosson Nota Jungreis, the Rav of Tiso-Fired in Hungary whose yahrtzeit is this Friday, gives a beautiful mashal to answer these questions. There once was a king whose only son suffered a nervous breakdown. This caused the king tremendous pain, so he sent his son to the best medical facility in the world to be treated and cured. Although the cost was exorbitant, money was no object to the king, whose sole focus was to get his son back to normal.

Little by little, the son made progress, and after several months, he wrote a letter telling his father that he was cured and expressing his desire to return home. He gave the letter to the chief psychiatrist and asked him to mail it to the king. However, the doctor understood that if he allowed his prized patient to leave, his income stream would dry up, so he tore up the letter and threw it in the garbage.

When several weeks went by and the king did not come for him, the son assumed that his letter was lost in the mail, so he wrote a new

one, but the physician just threw it away, as he also did with the third and fourth letters the son wrote begging his father to free him from the institution and bring him home. Eventually, the son understood that his four letters didn't all get lost, and the real reason his father wasn't coming was that the psychiatrist wasn't mailing his letters, so he came up with a clever plan to get past the doctor's interference.

The son took a piece of paper and scribbled all over it, but amidst the seemingly unintelligible drawings, he hid a series of letters that combined to form a message to his father. When the physician saw this latest "communication," he was ecstatic, for when the king would receive it, he would conclude that his son was still in need of additional comprehensive therapy. Indeed, when the king received the letter and excitedly opened it, he began to cry when he saw that after so many months with no communication, the first letter his son was able to compose consisted of incomprehensible doodles.

However, just as the king was about to throw it away, he noticed a letter concealed in the middle of the scribbles, followed by a second letter and then a third. After scrutinizing the entire page, he succeeded in assembling his son's hidden message: "Dad, I am fully cured and miss you terribly. Please come quickly and get me out of here." The king jubilantly went to pick up his healthy son and brought him back to the royal palace.

The Gemora (Rosh Hashana 16a-b) teaches that the reason we blow the shofar twice, once before Mussaf and once during Mussaf, is to confuse the Satan, for just as the doctor prevented his patient's letters from reaching his father, so too the accusing angels attempt to block our entreaties on Rosh Hashana from reaching Hashem.

To circumvent their efforts, Rav Jungreis suggests that we emulate the son in the mashal by singing our prayers. When the prosecuting angels see us singing at a time when the Books of Life and Death are open, they assume that we've lost our minds and gladly permit our

prayers to ascend to Hashem's Throne of Glory, hoping that He will judge us harshly for our lack of trepidation at such a critical time.

Just like the king, Hashem carefully examines our songs and discovers the sincere prayers that they conceal, which move Him to respond like a loving Father that rejoices over our calls to reunite. Because our multiple shofar blasts and our Rosh Hashana songs both serve to trick the Satan, Dovid links them together and alludes to this rationale by concluding **זמרו משכיל** – sing shrewdly.

The Meiri writes in his commentary on Rosh Hashana that the story of Chana's conception (Haftorah 1st day – Shmuel 1 1:19-20) after years of enduring the pain and frustration of her inability to give birth is read as the Haftorah on the first day of Rosh Hashana as a lesson in the power of heartfelt prayer on this special day. However, the Medrash (Yalkut Shimoni Bereishis 78) teaches that Chana was barren for 19 years and 6 months prior to the birth of Shmuel.



It is reasonable to assume that a number of Rosh Hashanas had passed on which Chana prayed with great intensity and was nevertheless unanswered. What was unique about her petitions at this time that caused them to be answered?

When Chana's husband Elkanah ascended to the Mishkan in Shiloh to bring sacrifices, he gave the best portion to his beloved Chana (Shmuel 1 1:3-7). Nevertheless, she was unable to enjoy this, as Elkanah's other wife, Penina, provoked her, leaving her crying and unable to eat.

When Elkanah noticed this, he asked her why she refused to eat, noting that even if she was in pain over her inability to bear him even one child while Penina had already borne him ten, "Am I not better to you than ten children?"

Rav Aharon David explains that until this point, Chana had always assumed that her barrenness pained Elkanah as much as it hurt her, and that he prayed for her with the same intensity that she did. Although she prayed with great fervor, there was nevertheless a degree of desperation missing due to her reliance on the assistance of Elkanah's prayers. Upon realizing that he had made peace with the situation by concluding that their relationship was more valuable than the birth of a child, she recognized that her entire fate was solely dependent upon the power of her prayers.

Armed with this newfound conviction, she prayed as never before, and it was in that fateful year that her heartfelt prayers were finally answered!

Rav Levi Yitzchak's Lessons on Prayer by Rabbi Yehudah Prero

The prayers on Rosh Hashanah differ from the rest of the year. Some passages appear unfamiliar, with words and sentences we are not accustomed to. While it is incumbent upon us to properly prepare for this holy day, we all know that each of us has some limitations.

Everyone assembled in the synagogue was awaiting this moment. Their spiritual leader, the sainted Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev

was going to sound the Shofar himself this year. They knew of his dedication to G-d. They knew of his piety. They knew that there was no more worthy person to lead the congregation in this special Mitzvah on this holy day.



Rav Levi Yitzchak readied himself for this task of utmost importance. He immersed himself in the Mikvah, purifying himself in preparation for this hallowed duty. When the time came for him to blow the Shofar, he looked angelic, garbed in his white Kittel, enveloped in his Tallis. He recited the introductory prayers with utmost concentration, inspiring the entire congregation to do so with him. He then read a prefatory portion of the Zohar with heartfelt emotion. Now was the time for the blowing of the Shofar. The entire congregation stood with anticipation and trepidation, awaiting the blessings and the first sounds of the Shofar. But they did not come.

Rav Levi Yitzchak did not recite the blessings. Instead, he placed the Shofar back down on the table before him. A few moments passed, and he again picked up the Shofar. He readied himself to recite the blessing. He hesitated, and then placed the Shofar down once again. After some time had passed, Rav Levi Yitzchak turned to the confused assembled. "My friends," he said, "there is seated here today a man. This man is not like you or me. He was separated from his family in his youth, and has no background or familiarity with his religion. He does not know how to read Hebrew, let alone pray. He knows that today is Rosh Hashanah, a day to pray to G-d, and he therefore joined us. Standing here, he saw the entire

congregation immersed in meaningful and earnest prayer. He felt a jealousy, a burning feeling of envy, because he could not participate with the congregation. This man turned his head towards heaven, and cried his heart out. 'Our merciful Father, You know all the sincere prayers, the depths of the feelings with which they are uttered, the meanings and implications of each and every word. The only thing I know are the 22 letters of the Alef-Bet. My prayer to You, on this holiest of days, is all that I know: Alef, Bet, Gimel, etc.. Please G-d, in Your abundant kindness, join together these letters to formulate a prayer for me.'" "You should know," Rav Levi Yitzchak said, "that this is the reason for my hesitation. G-d is in the midst of assembling this purest of pure prayers. While G-d joins together the letters uttered from the mouth of this righteous man, we must wait."

G-d values all pure prayer. Our Sages formulated prayers in a specific fashion, with a precise composition, as they were aware of the deep implications and spiritual ramifications of the words. Yet, prayer without heart is prayer without soul.

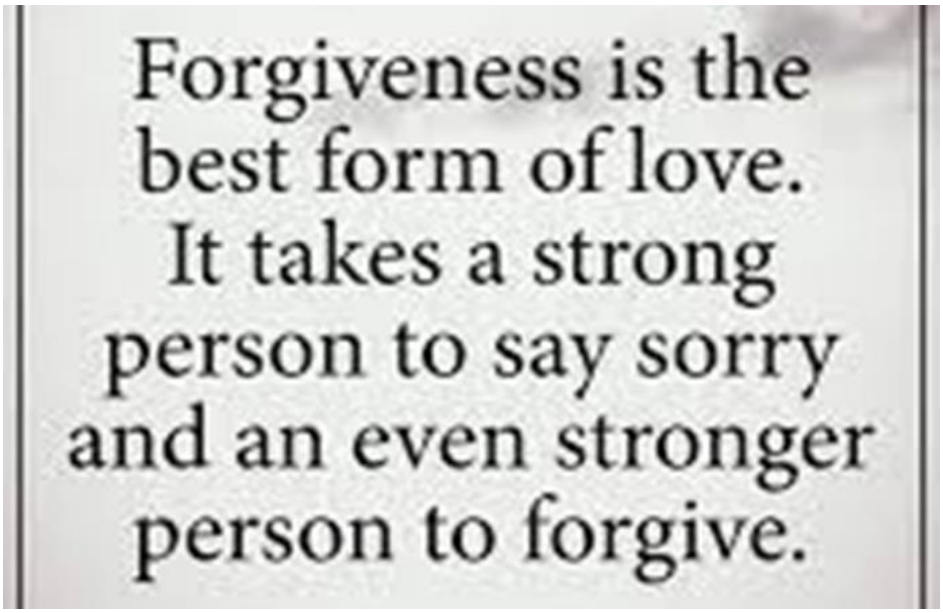
The word was out: Rav Levi Yitzchak was looking for an individual to blow the Shofar for Rav Levi Yitzchak and his followers on this Rosh HaShana. Many people were thrilled to be presented with this opportunity. They made appointments to "interview" with Rav Levi Yitzchak for this esteemed position.

The day of the interview came. All the candidates gathered together in a room, and were called in one by one by Rav Levi Yitzchak. With each one, he asked a similar question: What are you thinking about while you blow the Shofar? Each aspirant answered similarly, displaying his vast knowledge of the deep concentrations and metaphysical meanings upon which to focus during the blowing. Rav Levi Yitzchak, however, was not satisfied with any of the responses. Rav Levi Yitzchak noticed a man who was standing silently in the corner of the room, shifting uncomfortably, with a nervous look on

his face. Rav Levi Yitzchak called him over and asked him the same question. "Rebbe," he responded, "I am merely a simple Jew. I have daughters to marry off. I am a poor man with no money for their dowries. When the time comes for the sounding of the Shofar, I mentally utter the following prayer: Father in Heaven, I have done Your will, and I am blowing before You the Shofar. Please, if You could, do for me the same - please send me fitting husbands for my daughters!' "

A large smile broke across the face of Rav Levi Yitzchak. "Excellent!" he said. "You have the correct and true feelings in mind when you blow the Shofar. You are the type of person I am looking for to blow the Shofar!"

Living Jewish - Do You Forgive Me?



A Lubavitcher chassid left late on Friday to join his family in the Catskills for Shabbat. Realizing that he would not make it due to an accident, he turned off the highway on Route 130 and drove to spend Shabbat in Kiryat Yoel. He was left astounded by the Satmar chassid who hosted him.

Rabbi Yisroel Besser, Contributing Editor of Mishpacha Magazine and author of several best-selling books, shared the following story he heard from a Lubavitcher chassid. He told COLlive.com he vouches for the story as the chassid asked to remain anonymous:

This Lubavitcher chassid was travelling to his family in the Catskills for Shabbat. It was Friday and he left a little later than he was planning to and found himself in bumper-to-bumper traffic on Route 17. He played with the different routes on Waze but realized that his entire trip was completely backed up and making it to the country for Shabbat would be tight.

Suddenly, an accident sprang up in front of him, making the route even more impossible than before. He realized that there was no way for him to make it to the mountains for Shabbat.

He turned off the highway on Route 130 and started making his way to Kiryat Yoel for Shabbat. He called his wife and children and told them the disappointing news, all while driving straight to the main shul in town in order to make it in time for Shabbat. With no clothing or plans, he davened Mincha, Kabbalat Shabbat and Maariv with the community. He then lingered afterwards as people began to leave.

One Satmar chassid approached and engaged in conversation with him, asking where he was from and where he would be eating that night. When the Lubavitcher replied that he had no plans, the Satmar chassid invited him to be his guest for Shabbat.

They had beautiful meals together, with lots of singing and divrei Torah, enjoying each other's company. On Motzaei Shabbat, the Lubavitcher chassid remarked, "I have to tell you something amazing. When I was a bochur, I came to Monroe on a Thursday night to teach Tanya. After gathering some people to learn with, a few Satmar men came and kicked me. One guy even picked up a bench and hit me with it."

The Lubavitcher continued, "Now, you so graciously invited me for Shabbat, and we spent the whole time talking about Chassidus. "Previously, I felt such a clash be-tween Satmar and Lubavitch, but now I feel like we are brothers! What a long way we have come!"

The host looked at his guest and asked him to repeat what had happened to him.

The Lubavitcher related again that he had come to teach Tanya but had been asked to leave. When he refused, a man picked up a bench and hit him.

Tears filled the host's eyes and he said, "I am the one who picked up that bench. Three times a day for the past 15 years, I davened to the Ribbono Shel Olam to send me the person so that I can do teshuva."

"Do you forgive me?" he asked. Needless to say, the Lubavitcher forgave him.

Chabad.org The Master Key — A Broken Heart

One year, **Rabbi Yisrael Ba'al Shem Tov** said to Rabbi Ze'eiv Kitzes, one of his senior disciples, "You will blow the *shofar* for us this *Rosh Hashanah*. I want you to study all the *kavanot* that pertain to *shofar*, so that you should meditate upon them when you do the blowing."

Rabbi Ze'eiv applied himself to the task with joy and trepidation: joy over the great privilege that had been accorded him, and trepidation over the immensity of the responsibility. He studied the *kabbalistic* writings that explain the multifaceted significance of the *shofar,* and what its sounds achieve. He also prepared a sheet of paper on which he noted the main points of each *kavanah* so that he could refer to them when he blew the *shofar*.

Finally, the great moment arrived. It was the morning of *Rosh Hashanah*, and Rabbi Ze'eiv stood on the *bimah* amidst the Torah scrolls, surrounded by a sea of *tallit*-draped bodies. At his table in the southeast corner of the room stood his master, the Ba'al Shem Tov, his face aflame. An awed silence filled the room in anticipation

of the climax of the day — the piercing blasts and sobs of the *shofar*.



Rabbi Ze'eiv reached into his pocket and his heart froze: The paper had disappeared! He distinctly remembered placing it there that morning, but now it was gone. He desperately searched his memory for what he had learned, but his distress over the lost notes had incapacitated his brain; his mind was a total blank. Tears of frustration filled his eyes. He had disappointed his master, who had entrusted him with this most sacred task. He had to blow the *shofar* like a simple horn, without any *kavanot*. With a despairing heart, Rabbi Ze'eiv blew the sounds required by *halachah*, and avoiding his master's eye, resumed his place.

At the conclusion of the day's prayers, the Ba'al Shem Tov made his way to the corner where Rabbi Ze'eiv sat sobbing under his *tallit*. "*Gut Yom Tov, Reb* Ze'eiv!" the Ba'al Shem Tov called to him, "That was a most extraordinary *shofar* blowing we heard today!"

"But Rebbe...Why...?"

"In the king's palace," said Rabbi Yisrael, "There are many gates and doors, leading to many halls and chambers. The palace keepers have great rings holding many keys, each of which opens a different door. But there is a master key that opens all the doors. The *kavanot* are

keys, each unlocks a door and accesses another chamber in the supernal worlds. But there is one key which unlocks all doors, and which can open the innermost chambers of the Divine palace. That master key is a broken heart." (**סיפורי חסידים, מועדים**)



L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

Rabbi Binyomin Pruzansky relates the following poignant story:

For the first time in many years, the Jew of Lvov were going to *Shul*! Most of the Jews in this city did not know how to live a Jewish life, as the Communist government had ruled the Soviet Union for more than seventy years, and they tried hard to get the Jews to forget about their religion, jailing anyone caught practicing *Yiddishkeit*.

In 1989 the Communists were defeated and the Soviet Jews were free to go back to a life of Torah. Reb Eli Mintz was an American *chazzan*, and he was coming to lead the Rosh Hashanah *davening* in Lvov that year. He knew that it was very important to make this *Yom Tov* special, and he wanted it to be so enjoyable for them that they would want to *daven* every day and start doing *mitzvos*, and he went to Rav Shlomo Halberstam, the *Bobover Rebbe*, for advice, and he instructed Reb Eli about what to do.

When the men, women, and children came to *Shul* that Rosh Hashanah, they were very excited, but they didn't know what to expect since it was the first time in their lives that they would be *davening*. Reb Eli stood in front of them as they found seats, and he said to them, "*Gut Yom Tov*, my brothers and sisters. We are here to *daven* to Hashem, and Hashem listens to our prayers. Hashem understands every language and every cry, and I will explain this with a story.

In Berditchev, the Jews were having many difficulties. They were often attacked, and they were forced to pay high taxes. On the

morning before Yom Kippur, the holy Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev asked his congregation to *daven* with extra *Kavanah* on Yom Kippur to stop the harsh conditions they were living in. That night at *Kol Nidrei* everyone *davened* with emotion and fervour. A man in the back of the *Shul*, Shmelke the wagon driver, also cried along with everyone else, but he did not *daven* because he did not know how. He finally called out to Hashem, 'Hashem! You know that I never learned how to *daven*, and all I know is the *Alef-Bais* which my father taught me when I was young. I will say the letters of the *Alef-Bais* for You, and You, Hashem, please take them and put them in the right order and turn them into words!'



Then, as loudly as he could, he cried out, '*Alef! Bais! Gimmel!*' Others turned to stare at him, thinking of how strange he was acting. When everyone finished *davening*, Rav Levi Yitzchak stood up and smiled. He announced, 'Because of Shmelke's *Alef-Bais*, all bad decrees on us have been torn up!'"

Reb Eli Mintz explained, "Many of you do not know how to *daven*, but that's not your fault. Say only what you are able to, like *Shema Yisroel* or any other *Tefilah* that you know, and if you don't know any *Tefilos*, you can even say the *Alef-Bais*!" An old man standing nearby stood with tears rolling down his cheeks. He said, "I want to say the *Alef-Bais*, but I don't even know how to do that!" Reb Eli said, "My friends, let us say the *Alef-Bais* together. Repeat after me: *Alef! Bais! Gimmel!*" Reb Eli shouted out the letter and the people said them out loud after him, and they started to cry. They

wanted their letters to go straight up to Hashem so He could turn them into the right words. When they got to the letter *Yud*, Reb Eli said, "Let's do it again, but louder this time!" They repeated the *Alef-Bais* after their *Chazzan*, and after they finished, Reb Eli assured them that Hashem was arranging their letters into a most beautiful *Tefilah*, and told them he would begin to *daven* the regular way.

Many years have passed since that first Rosh Hashanah *davening*, but nobody ever forgot it. In fact, an interesting *minhag* began in Lvov. Every year they begin the Rosh Hashanah *davening* with everyone saying the *Alef-Bais* out loud together.

This reminds them that even those who don't know much about being Jewish, but want to get close to Hashem, can still *daven*, because *davening* comes straight from the heart, even if it's just letters of the *Alef-Bais*!



Chabad.org - "No Deposit No Return"

When a Jewish boy reaches the age of thirteen and celebrates his *Bar-Mitzvah*, it is customary for him to receive gifts. The most popular gift, of course, is a cheque, but some also receive books and other valuable items. When Yanky became *Bar-Mitzvah* he was eagerly awaiting the gift that his grandfather, a wealthy man and noted philanthropist, would give him.

Upon returning home after the celebration, he began to unpack the gifts. His grandfather's gift came in a box. Inside, was an envelope with a cheque for a large amount. As he dug down deeper, he found an old-fashioned glass bottle of Pepsi Cola. On it was a note from his grandfather telling him that the bottle carried an important message for him to remember all the days of his life, and which will be his key to great success.



Unable to decipher the message, he waited until the morning when he went to his grandfather's home, thanked him for the cheque, and then asked, "What was I to learn from the bottle?" The grandfather gently told Yanky, "Nowadays in most cities when you buy a bottle of soda you leave a deposit, which you receive back when you return the bottle. Etched in the glass of this old bottle that I gave you, are the words, 'no deposit no return,' and it is an important message which you should always remember. In life, if one expects a 'return,' it is necessary to make a 'deposit.' "

"Miracles do happen, but only from time to time and only to certain people. To sit idle and wait for them to happen is improper. It is necessary to *do,* to put in one's best effort, and undoubtedly Hashem will bless one with happy returns. This is true in every facet of life.

"When difficulties occur in a marriage, it is necessary to determine whether the husband and wife really made a 'deposit' and gave of themselves to each other. When a partnership in business goes sour, one should see if each partner really made honest deposits — earnestly devoted himself, his time, and his interest to the business. If one is disappointed with the way his children are turning out, he should ask himself, 'Is it their fault or is it mine? Did I deposit into them an education and appreciation of *Yiddishkeit* which would produce the returns I would like to see now?' "

Rosh Hashanah is the time of the year when one makes resolutions, but resolutions in themselves are meaningless and insufficient. A resolution must be supported with sincere efforts. First and foremost, we must not forget: "no deposit, no return." One cannot sit back and just rely on a miracle. It is up to us to put forth the effort and make the deposit, and when we do, the return is usually well worth it. (**הרב יעקב יהודה ז"ל העכט**)

Simanim of Rosh Hashanah- By Rabbi Chaim Schabes Rav D'Cong. Knesses Yisroel



The Mishna Berura writes that one should be careful not to get angry on Rosh Hashanah, because besides it being a sin in itself, it is also a bad omen. Rather, one should feel happy and secure in Hashem's judgment, to go along with teshuva and good actions. Our chachamim tell us that simana milsa - making symbols - is valued by Hashem, and it is a way of impressing upon ourselves the subject of the day, and that is why we eat foods that bring out this remembrance and consciousness on the nights of Rosh Hashanah.

We must remember to recite the additional berachos in the proper order, and therefore, if it is someone's custom to eat dates, the borei pri ha'etz should be said over them; otherwise, it should be said over the pomegranate rather than over the apple, because dates

and pomegranate are among the seven species for which Eretz Yisrael is praised.

The Mishna Berura writes that one should say the yehi ratzon after one has eaten from the fruit so that there is no hefsek (interruption) between the beracha and the eating.

The Mishna Berura holds that the yehi ratzon should be said with Hashem's name (Hashem Elokeinu v'Eilokei Avoseinu), but many have the minhag not to say Hashem's name; everyone should follow their own minhag. Before one says yehi ratzon sheyirbu zechuyoseinu, that our merits should multiply, one should do teshuva in his heart. For the aforementioned reason, we do not eat sour or sharp foods on Rosh Hashanah either, like pickles, horseradish, sauerkraut, etc. We don't eat nuts because the numerical value of egoz is equivalent to chait (sin).

The Vilna Gaon's opinion is not to eat grapes either, because according to one opinion, the fruit that Adam ate from the aitz hada'as was grapes, and that happened on the day he was created - Rosh Hashanah. The accepted minhag is to consume grapes, especially in the form of raisins in the Rosh Hashanah challah.

When we come home the first night of Rosh Hashanah, we wish each other wish L'shana Tova, and it may be said until chatzos of the first day. Some Poskim hold that it is said the second night also, but the general minhag is not to say it other than the first night. After that, we bless each other with Gmar Chasima Tova, and one should be careful not to say Gmar Tov, because it means to have a 'good end'. So too, when replying, some are careful not to say v'chen l'mar (mar means bitter), rather v'chen l'mor.

May Hashem grant a good and sweet year for all of Klal Yisrael, both in Eretz Yisrael, as well as all over the world, and may we elevate our tefillos to Hashem to bring the final geula.

The Story of the "Unesaneh Tokef"



The tragic story of the events leading up to the composition of the liturgical poem "Unesaneh Tokef" is brought in the work Ohr Zarua, written by Rabbi Yitzchak ben Moshe of Vienna. (1189- 1250)

Rabbi Amnon of Mainz established 'Unesaneh Tokef' because of the terrible incident which he experienced." At the end of the story of Rabbi Amnon of Mainz, mention is made of a Rabbi who lived at that time and who received the exact version of "Unesaneh Tokef" in a dream. This was "Rabbi Klonimos ben Rabbi Meshullam ben Rabbi Moshe ben Rabbi Klonimos." Rabbi Klonimos was known to many, and his name is mentioned in books of halacha. Based upon his name, the story of Rabbi Amnon of Mainz is estimated as having taken place around 4780 (1020), about seventy years before the decrees of 4856, during which the large massacres which accompanied the First Crusade took place. In other words, Ohr Zarua recorded an event which took place about two hundred years before his time.

The Mainz Jewish community was one of the three largest and oldest communities in Ashkenaz, which were known collectively by the acronym "Shum" - Speyer, Worms, and Mainz. Mainz was the oldest

of the three communities. The Klonimos family, which came from northern Italy, established a large talmudic academy there, and from it grew the Jewish community of Ashkenaz. Mainz was ruled by a senior clergyman. At that time, there were quite a few cities that were given over to the control of the church by one of the kings in return for a pardoning of sins, or in order that the church pray for him. Only hundreds of years later was secular rule re-established in Mainz.

This is how the Ohr Zarua relates what transpired: "Here is the story of Rabbi Amnon of Mainz who was the leading Torah sage in his generation, wealthy, of praiseworthy lineage, handsome, and whom the ministers and governors began to attempt to convert - yet he refused to listen to them."

It appears that the governor of Mainz at that time was interested in attaining wisdom and in learning about the sources of Christianity. Most clergymen were ignorant, and very few enjoyed attaining wisdom and speaking with the Jewish scholars. The Jews had little choice but to agree and to maintain good relations with the governor. And so they would meet in order to talk from time to time. As time went by, the governor and the ministers began speaking with Rabbi Amnon. They did not use force; they "merely" requested that he abandon his faith: Such discussions were carried out in a calm and routine manner; however, every such discussion involved repeated petition and request. They met on a daily basis. The educated church leaders were looking for company on their own level. The Jews, especially the Jewish sages, were potential partners as far as they were concerned. Furthermore, every governor considered it a challenge to cause a Jewish sage to abandon his faith and convert to Christianity.

Great efforts were invested, sometimes by sweet enticement, sometimes by force, to cause a Jew - and how much more so a Jewish scholar - to disparage his faith and become Christian. The Pressure

Mounts After many days and repeated requests, the situation became worse. The governor and his ministers applied much pressure, and it was difficult to reject them outright. Therefore, Rabbi Amnon asked to be given a number of days to take counsel and consider the offer. This is a reasonable response. It is an acceptable request.

Until now, the course of things is understandable and expected, especially when we take into account the stress of survival. "And it happened that as soon as he parted with the governor, he reflected upon his having voiced uncertainty, that he was in need of counsel or time to think over the question of disavowing the living G-d." His Judaism was his complete essence, his entire being. How could he have made such a statement? True, there is great importance in securing the necessities of physical existence, peace, and quiet. But what does it involve? It is even possible that somebody in the world should think that this matter calls for taking counsel or consideration? "He Would Not Be Comforted" "He returned home and was unable to eat or drink, and he became ill. All of his relatives and friends came to comfort him, but he would not be comforted, for he said, 'I will go down to the grave mourning because of what I said.' And he cried and became very depressed. "And it came to pass that on the third day, as he was paining and distraught, the governor sent for him, and he responded, saying, 'I will not go.' And the oppressor sent many additional ministers, more prestigious than they, yet he refused to go to him. And the governor said, 'Go quickly and bring Amnon against his will.' And they went quickly and brought him to him. And he said to him, 'What is this Amnon? Why did you not come to me on the day that you designated so that you could take counsel and give me an answer and fulfil my will?' "And Rabbi Amnon answered, saying, Indeed, I did not come to you, and I know that you are angry with me, and because I have no intention of fulfilling your will, I know that you will punish me. Yet, "I will determine my own sentence." I will decide what my punishment will

be because I misled you. I should not have instilled false hope in you that I would abandon the Jewish faith. True, I am to blame for this, and I shall determine my own sentence.

Rabbi Amnon did not wish to endanger the entire community, and therefore he endangers himself alone: "The tongue which spoke and misled you shall be cut off," said Rabbi Amnon. For Rabbi Amnon desired to sanctify Hashem for having spoken in such a manner - he wished to sanctify Hashem in the eyes of the Jews, and, indirectly, in the eyes of the non-Jews. He wished to make it clear to all that a Jew who promises to somebody to consider abandoning his faith can do nothing but disappoint. It is unthinkable. There is no reason to think about such a thing. There is no point in trying to persuade Jews into doing this. The Decree of the Oppressor "And the governor answered, saying, 'No, the tongue shall not be cut off, for you spoke well. Rather, the feet which did not come at the time that you told me, they shall I cut off, and the rest of your body I shall torture.' And the oppressor gave the command, and they cut off his fingers and thumbs." Yet not all at once - "And with each finger, they would ask him, 'Perhaps now, Amnon, you would like to join our faith?' And he answered, 'No.'" The axe was raised twenty times on each finger and toe. We are not talking here about the pain of the cut alone, but also of the horrifying anticipation of the one to follow. And it is possible to stop the process. He need just say the word. But Rabbi Amnon repeats twenty times "No!" to the conversion proposal, twenty times to continue with the cutting, to continue the torture, to continue the irreversible damage to his body, and, in fact, the hastening of his end.

"And when they finished the cutting, the wicked governor gave the order to lay Rabbi Amnon in a bed and to place all of his dismembered fingers and toes at his side and to send him to his home." This was done, of course, so that all see and become fearful. It was done to show everybody what happens when one does not abide by the governor.

"After these things, the holiday approached, and Rosh Hashanah arrived." He rolled in torment. From one such wound, it was difficult to recover in those days because of infections, blood poisoning, swelling, and abscesses. Yet he had twenty such wounds. This was no quick death. For many days his body was inflamed, languishing, bleeding, and he could see and feel everything. He writhed. This was the punishment. The oppressors knew very well that a quick death would be an act of compassion. And so, he lay this way, in his sickness, his suffering, with the knowledge that his death was approaching.

"He asked his relatives to bring him to the synagogue with all of his dismembered organs and place him by the prayer leader, and they did this." We can well imagine the atmosphere in the synagogue. Everybody knew what had happened to Rabbi Amnon, and now, here, they were bringing him in on a stretcher and placing him next to the prayer leader at the head of the congregation. "And as the prayer leader was about to say the Kedusha prayer, Rabbi Amnon said, 'Wait a moment, and I will sanctify the great G-d.' And then he said in a loud voice, 'And so the Kedushah prayer shall ascend to you,' i.e., that I have sanctified Your name upon Your kingship and Your unification. Then he said 'Unesaneh Tokef Kedushas Hayom,' ('Let us now relate the power of this day's holiness)." Now he was able to relate the power of this day's holiness. "Then he said, 'It is true that You alone are the One Who judges,' in order to declare Hashem's acts as just, that Hashem take note of these dismembered fingers and toes and the whole episode. And he mentioned 'and everyone's signature is in it' and 'consider the soul of all the living,' because it was thus decreed upon him on Rosh Hashanah, and when he finished the entire prayer ("siluk"), he passed away (nistalek)." "And he disappeared from the world before the eyes of all, for Hashem took him, and regarding him, it says, 'Oh how great is Your goodness, which You have hidden away for those who fear You' (Tehillim 31:20)." It would appear that immediately after he finished his prayer, his soul ascended to Heaven.

The congregation in the synagogue was no doubt startled. This man's prayer as he lay dying on his bed and his subsequent death left them shaken, and they could not accurately recall all of his words. "After these things, wherein Rabbi Amnon was elevated and called to the Academy on High, on the third day after his sanctification, he appeared in a dream of Rabbi Klonimos ben Rabbi Meshullam ben Rabbi Moshe ben Rabbi Klonimos, and he taught him this prayer, 'Unesaneh Tokef Kedushas Hayom,' and he commanded him to send it to the entire Diaspora, that it should serve as a testimony and a remembrance. And the rabbi did this."

It is interesting to note that a version of the prayer "Unesaneh Tokef" with minor differences was discovered in the Cairo Geniza. Apparently, this prayer was sent from Ashkenaz to many communities in exile, and it was even sent to Cairo. And indeed, the prayer also reached the communities of Spain, though it did not command so central a role in their prayers as it did in Ashkenazi liturgy.

The Mitzvah of Shehecheyanu



On Rosh Hashana the shehecheyanu blessing is recited, whenever doing something for the first time that year, like doing a mitzvah, such as the first lighting the Chanukah candles, reading the Megillah on Purim, and taking the lulav and esrog on Sukkos. In addition, the first time each year one eats a fruit or

vegetable which is seasonal, i.e., one which grows only at a certain time of the year, the fruit is considered a "new fruit" and this special brocha is recited.

On the second night of Rosh Hashanah, a "new fruit," i.e., a seasonal fruit which we have not yet tasted since its season began, should be present on the table when the candles are lit, and during the kiddush. This is because we normally only say Shehecheyanu on the first night, but on Rosh Hashana, it is a machlokes if it's really one day or two, so we say shehecheyanu again. To save ourselves from problems, we have a new fruit on the table to be yotzei the chiyuv of saying shehecheyanu if it is two separate days. While reciting the Shehecheyanu brocha after candle lighting and after the kiddush, one should have the new fruit in mind.

The Tefillos of our Imahos

Jewish women have long been praised for their ability to speak from the heart and pour out their emotions to Hashem. The Tefillos of our Imahos as well as Chana, Esther, and other notable women serve as an example of the power and importance of women's prayers. In some circumstances, their prayers even take precedence over those of men.

R' Yitzchok Zilberstein shlit'a recounts the following story in one of his Teshuvos. During the Summer and Elul zmanim in 1991 (5751), the Ponovezher Yeshivah in Bnei Brak experienced a tremendous growth in the number of bochurim attending the yeshivah. As Rosh Hashana approached, and the number of students swelled considerably, there grew a concern that for the Yamim Noraim, there would simply not be enough space in the oversized Beis Medrash to accommodate the overflow of bochurim. As it was, the Beis Medrash was tremendous - and there still wasn't enough room! No matter how they calculated, the numbers did not match up and a

few recommendations were put forth to try and make things work for Rosh Hashnan and Yom Kippur.



One idea was to erect a wall that would split the considerable women's section in half in order to open up many more seats for the men and bochurim. It seemed rather obvious to the Yeshivah's faculty that based on the dictates of halacha, the bochurim of the Yeshivah, who have an obligation to daven with a minyan, should take precedence over the group of women that would come to daven in that space. Before they could enact any new arrangement in the Yeshivah, though, they first had to receive the permission of the Rosh Yeshivah, **R' Menachem Man Shach zt"l**.

They came to his office and explained the difficulty they were having trying to fit everyone into the Beis Medrash, and the proposal to split the Ezras Nashim and give the men a considerably larger amount of space. R' Shach listened wordlessly, and after he was informed of all the intricate details he responded, to their surprise, that he needed some time to weigh the issue.

Two days later, R' Shach returned with his answer. He said the following: "Let us carefully consider who are the individuals that will be davening with us during the Yamim Noraim. The women's section is made up of many women who, due to their personal situation in life, come to shul with very special prayers that they need to recite. Some of the women who come are not yet married, some are praying for children, some are seeking refuos; they pour their hearts out

with supplication to merit blessing from the Almighty. Some who attend davening in the Yeshivah are older women, widows, who are here without husbands and feel the pain of loneliness." R' Shach's eyes welled up with tears as he continued. "The supplication of the women who join us emanate from a deep place. Their tefillos are saturated with tears. Their prayers, perhaps more than ours, have the strength to break through even the locked gates in heaven. Therefore, we must understand that our entire Yeshivah rests on the prayers of women - how can we possibly allow even one less woman to attend?" The matter was closed. That year, and every year after, R' Shach did not allow the women's section to be diminished by even a single chair.

Chabad.org - Pay Up Your Pledges

The *Haftorah* for the first day of *Rosh Hashanah* is the story of Chanah who yearned for a child. Together with her husband Elkanah, she made an annual pilgrimage to pray in the Tabernacle of Shiloh. Eventually she was blessed with a child, whom she named Shmuel because, "I borrowed him from Hashem."

The most well-known reason for designating this story for the *Haftorah* on *Rosh Hashanah* is that it was on *Rosh Hashanah* that Hashem remembered Chanah and made it possible for her to conceive (see *Rosh Hashanah* 11a).

One may, however, wonder, is this the only event recorded in Scriptures which took place on *Rosh Hashanah*? For instance, it was on *Rosh Hashanah* that the prophet Elisha came to Shunam and blessed the woman with a child (see II Kings 4:8, and *Shulchan Aruch*, *Orach Chaim* 597:1, *Taz*). It was also on *Rosh Hashanah* that the people gathered around Ezra to hear the Torah being read and resolved to follow its teachings. When the listeners wept because they realized that they had been neglecting the teachings of the

Torah, Ezra and Nechemiah told them not to be sad since it was *Rosh Hashanah*. "Go eat rich foods," they said, "and drink sweet beverages... for today is sacred to Hashem" (see Nehemia, chap. 8).

Perhaps we can add another reason for the selection of the story of Chanah to be read on *Rosh Hashanah*.

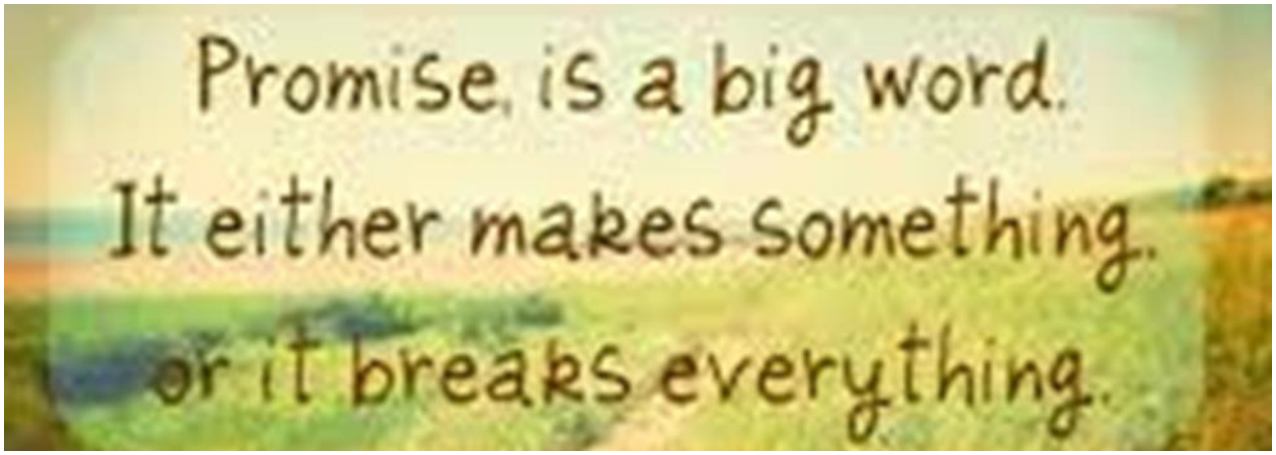
Rosh Hashanah is a day when many come to *shul* with a trepidation, not knowing what the New Year will bring. They make resolutions and even vows of loyalty to Hashem and donations to charity, etc., hoping that in this merit, their wishes will be granted, and they will be blessed with a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year. Unfortunately, when the inspiration of the crisis disappears and when the danger is over, many pledges remain unredeemed and many vows are violated.

I am reminded of the story of the old woman who was about to walk across an old, rickety bridge. She said, "O G-d, if I get across safely, I will give one hundred dollars to charity." When she was a quarter of the way across and all seemed well, she said, "O G-d, I do not have so much. You won't mind, I know; fifty dollars are also enough." As she walked a little further, the bridge suddenly began to shake underneath her feet. "Oh," she said, "I only made a joke and G-d took me seriously!"

Chanah lacked fulfilment as a woman. She wanted very much to have a child of her own, and for years she came to the Mishkan, poured out her heart, and beseeched Hashem to grant her a son, vowing, "If You will look upon the anguish of Your maidservant and give Your maidservant a male child, then I will give him to G-d all the days of his life." Finally, her wish was granted, and when the boy was still very young, she brought him to the house of Hashem in Shiloh.

Though she could have procrastinated and waited until he became much older, claiming, "A young little boy needs the tender loving care

of his mother," she did not look for loopholes in her vow, but made every effort to fulfil her pledge promptly.



This may be a reason for reading Chanah's story, which took place on *Rosh Hashanah*. It is a reminder to all of us that when in the midst of our inspiration and fervent prayers we make resolutions, vows, and oaths to improve our relationship with Hashem and man, we should remember to carry on tomorrow in accordance with those resolutions.

Chanah was blessed with an abundance of *nachas* for keeping her word, and we too, will be greatly rewarded when we fulfil our promises.

Chabad.org - Confusing Satan

The uniqueness of *Rosh Hashanah* lies in the blowing of the *shofar*, which is not blown on any other holiday.

Why is the *shofar* blown on *Rosh Hashanah?* The sages of the *Gemara (Rosh Hashanah* 16b) consider this question and suggest a peculiar answer: The *shofar* is blown so as to confuse Satan. *Rosh Hashanah* is Judgment Day, and Satan on that day acts as accuser. Having seduced man to sin, he then returns to accuse him of the very sins which he incited. But when he hears the sounds of the *shofar*, he becomes so confused that he loses track of the proceedings and is unable to prosecute effectively.



The obvious question, however, is what could there possibly be in the *shofar* that has such a devastating effect upon Satan? He, who all year round is full of fire and fury, fearing no one, suddenly trembles on *Rosh Hashanah* — just on account of a few blasts from the *shofar*?

Our sages explain that his confusion is caused by the numerous sounds produced by the *shofar*. In addition to the smooth and long blast known as *tekiah*, there is a broken-up blast of *shevarim*, followed by a tremulous sound of the *teruah*. That confuses him!

But even that is hard to understand. How could it be that the perennially old and forever-the-same clever Satan, who induces man to sin, could not by now have learned about the power of the *Shofar*.

The *shofar* sounds on *Rosh Hashanah* represent different types of Jews. First comes the *tekiah*, a simple, straight and even sound, comparable in nature to the *tzaddik*, who is righteous, uncomplicated and honest.

Shevarim means "broken" and represents the *rasha* — evil-doer — who is not satisfied with his own evil ways, but, being crooked himself, wants to see all that is whole broken and all that is straight made crooked.

The *teruah*, which means "torn-apart," represents the tormented soul of the *ba'al teshuvah*, who bemoans his past and is now struggling to become an enlightened Jew. He is no evildoer; he does

not seek to break; he just knows very little about being a Jew. His soul is torn because of its past, yearning to enter a better and refined Torah way of life.

Finally there comes a *shevarim-teruah*, which is a mixture of the two. Not fully committed to one way of life, this Jew wavers and fluctuates from one extreme to the other.

Rosh Hashanah is the Day of Judgment for all. Satan realizes that it is in his interest to overlook the "*tekiah* Jew." He agrees to rest his case against him but anticipates destroying the Jews represented by the *shevarim, teruah,* and *shevarim-teruah*. They unfortunately have provided him with enough ammunition to prosecute and destroy them.

Therefore, our great sages have devised an ingenious legal procedure on Judgment Day, which even that devious prosecutor, Satan himself, cannot overcome, that disrupts him to the extent that he is unable to proceed.

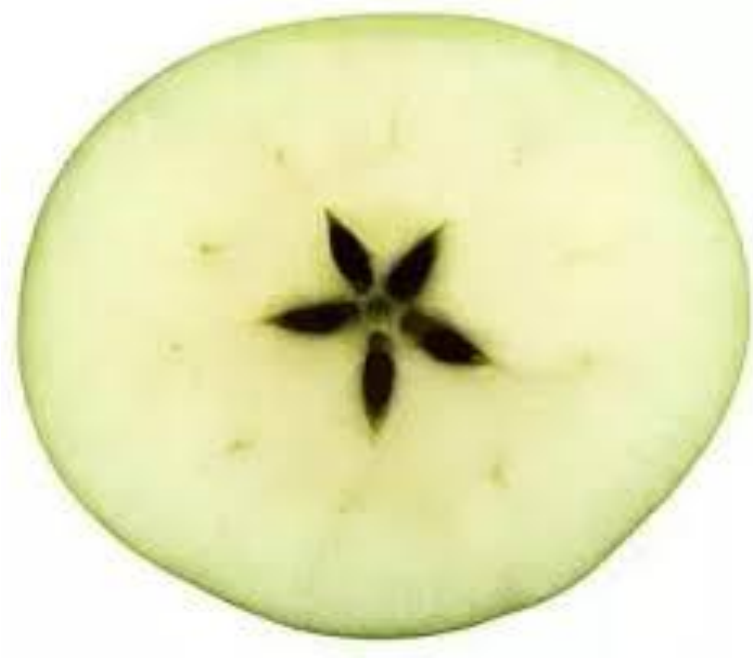
And what is this procedure? They established a rule that a *shevarim*, or a *teruah*, or the *shevarim-teruah* is never blown alone; each *shevarim* and each *teruah* is preceded by a *tekiah* and followed by a *tekiah*. Thus, we never see the evildoer, the rent soul, or the wavering Jew step up alone before the Court-on-High. They know very well that, were they to be judged alone, they would not come off very well. They are fortunate in having two companions, the *tekiot*, one on each side, and they all step up before the Court-on-High and say: "We wish to be judged together. We are brothers, inseparably attached and responsible for one another!"

And so, what is there left for Satan to do? How can he produce a valid case against all three, particularly when two of them are righteous, even though the third is not quite so 'kosher'? If he accuses the *shevarim* of a certain "break-up," it is quickly covered up by the evenness and straightness of the *tekiot*. The same happens

in the case of the *teruah*, and *shevarim-teruah*. All come up to the tribunal flanked with the *tekiot* supporting them on each side, and Satan loses.

Therefore, it is understandable why Jews flock to *shul* on *Rosh Hashanah* more than all year round. Even those who are deeply immersed in sins and even those who never come to *shul* all year round are present. Jews feel innately that only together do they stand a chance. Against all of them standing together, even the crafty Satan cannot prevail. They come to pray together with the great community of Israel and are confident that in their merit, they too will be blessed with a happy, healthy, and prosperous New Year. (הרב יצחק חיים שי׳ אביגדור)

Chabad.org - Significance of Apple Dipped in Honey



When any apple is cut in half horizontally one sees five grooves with pits, encircled by ten dots. Using the *alef-beit* as numerals, the *hei* (ה) is five and the *yud* (י) ten. Thus, the five grooves and the ten dots are an allusion to the "*yud-hei*" (יה) — the first half of the Holy four-lettered Name.

The reason for the emphasis on the "*yud*" and "*hei*" of His Holy Four Lettered Name is that "*Hayom harat olam*" — "Today is the birthday of the world" — and with these two letters the worlds were created. The *Gemara* (*Menachot* 29b) explains that the *passuk*, "*Be'yah Hashem tzur olamim*" — "For in G-d, *Ado-noy*, is the strength of the worlds (Isaiah 26:4), should be expounded as if it means, "*With*

'yah' (the letters *yud* and *hei*) Hashem formed worlds." With the letter *"yud"* — *"Olam Haba"* — "the World to Come" — was created, and with the letter *"hei"* — *"Olam hazeh"* — "this world" — was created (see *Bereishit* 2:4, Rashi). Thus, eating an apple is particularly appropriate on *Rosh Hashanah,* the birthday of the world and the day of Hashem's coronation as King of the world.

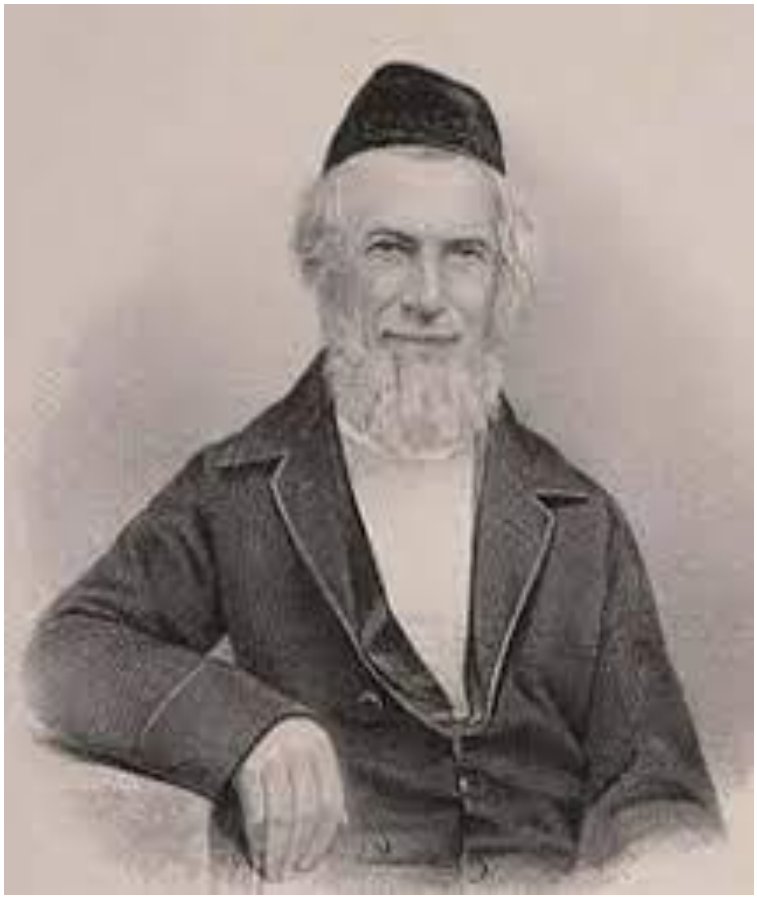
Yeshivas Beis Dovid Newsletter



The Torah (Bamidbar 29:1) refers to Rosh Hashana as Yom teruah – a day for blowing the shofar. **Rebbe Berish of Biala zt"l**, said that yom teruah can also be translated as "a day for friendship" (from the root re'us), because on Rosh Hashana it is important to increase our love and friendship for our fellow man.

The sefarim tell us that it is very difficult for a person to be judged worthy and deserving of a good year only on his own merit. But with unity and ahavas Yisrael, we join together with the meritorious Klal Yisrael, and then there's a far better chance we'll be judged favourably. (**Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld**)

ובחדש השביעי באחד לחדש מקרא קדש יהיה לכם כל מלאכת עבדה לא תעשו יום תרועה יהיה לכם (במדבר 29:1)



The Aruch L'Ner, Rav Yaakov Ettlinger, writes (Minchas Ani Parshas Haazinu) that upon examining Jewish history, he discovered a peculiar phenomenon. The years that were the best for the Jewish people were all years in which Rosh Hashana fell on Shabbos. However, he also noticed that all the years in which the Jews suffered the most from attacks and persecutions, including the years when both Temples were destroyed, were also years in which Rosh Hashana fell on Shabbos. Why should Jewish history be so dependent on this seemingly arbitrary association, and why it should sometimes be so beneficial and at other times so detrimental to our nation?

Rav Ettlinger compares this phenomenon to the case of a king who had two servants who were caught engaging in treasonous activities. At the trial, they were both found guilty, and each was sentenced to death for attempting to rebel against the king's authority. Prior to their executions, each of their wives, who also worked in the king's palace, approached the king to beg him to mercifully spare their beloved husbands' lives. Each woman argued that although her husband had indeed committed an egregious crime, she had done no wrong. As she had faithfully served the king and did not deserve to suffer the pain of losing her husband, each woman beseeched the king to spare her husband's life.

Because the king prided himself on his reputation as a just and fair ruler, he listened to their arguments and considered their petitions. After some thought, he turned to the first woman and informed her that he had accepted her request and would spare her husband's life. To the second woman's chagrin, he then announced that her husband's sentence would stand.

Sensing their confusion over his differing verdicts to their seemingly identical pleas, the king explained that as a merciful and benevolent ruler, he couldn't help but be swayed by their powerful emotional arguments and was therefore prepared to grant their requests, which he indeed did for the first woman. Upon looking at the face of the second woman, however, he was taken aback by the numerous bruises that testified to the beatings she suffered at the hands of her abusive husband. He therefore concluded that a husband who sins both against the king and against his wife is undeserving of mercy.

Similarly, when the Day of Judgment arrives, the prosecuting angel recounts before Hashem all the sins that the Jewish people committed in the previous year. Just when everything is looking bleak, the spouse of the Jewish people – Shabbos (Bereishis Rabbah 11:8) – comes to our rescue and beseeches Hashem not to leave her all alone without the partner enjoyed by the other days of the week.

Even if our sins are numerous and overwhelming, Hashem may still commute our sentence and give us another opportunity in the merit of the pleas of Shabbos. If, however, Hashem sees that Shabbos is black-and-blue, beaten up and abused by her beloved spouse, He feels compelled to throw the book at us. Let us resolve to give our beloved spouse the honour she deserves, and in that merit we should all enjoy the best year the Jewish people have ever known.

SHABBOS STORIES FOR ROSH HASHANAH

12 People Who Left Their Mark on Rosh Hashanah By Yehuda Altein



1. Adam - Rosh Hashanah, the head of the Jewish year, coincides with the sixth day of Creation—the day G-d created Adam, the first human. This is by no means coincidental. G-d specifically chose the birthday of the first human as the day that marks the Jewish New Year.

Why do we celebrate Rosh Hashanah on the anniversary of humankind, as opposed to the anniversary of the universe (six days earlier)? Because we—descendants of Adam—play an integral role in Creation. G-d created an incomplete world. It is up to us to use the coming year to fill in that gap, by instilling the world with Divinity and sanctity, one mitzvah at a time.

2. Chava - Shortly after Adam was created from the dust of the earth, G-d determined that it was "not good for man to be alone" and He created Chava, the first woman.

Rosh Hashanah is thus the anniversary of the creation of the first man, as well as the first woman. Ironically, while Eve was the paradigm of fertility (the very name Chava means "mother of all life"), the other women on this list struggled to conceive.

3. Sarah - Our matriarch Sarah was barren for many years, until miraculously giving birth to Yitzchok at the age of 90. Our Sages tell us that it was on Rosh Hashanah that G-d "remembered" Sarah, resulting in Yitzchok's conception.

To recall this event, the Torah reading of the first day of Rosh Hashanah relates the story of Yitzchok's birth and formative years.

4. Yitzchok - The Torah reading of the second day of Rosh Hashanah also features Yitzchok. It relates the story of the binding of Yitzchok, in the merit of which we pray that G-d judge us favourably and grant us a year of blessings. One detail of this story is the ram whose horns were tangled in a thicket—recalled by the shofar, made from a ram's horn.

5. Rochel - Rochel watched as her sister Leah bore Yaakov one son after the next, while she remained barren. Finally, on Rosh Hashanah, Rochel was also remembered On High.

6. Yoseph - Years later, in the dramatic saga of Yoseph's life, Rosh Hashanah appears once again: It was the day he was released from prison, after being falsely accused of attempting to act immorally with the wife of his master Potiphar.

7. Chana - Chana, mother of the prophet Shmuel, is the third of the trio of barren women who were remembered on High on Rosh Hashanah. Some add that Rosh Hashanah was the day she offered a

silent prayer in the Tabernacle in Shiloh, which the High Priest Eli mistook as a sign of intoxication.

In commemoration, we read Chana's story in the *haftarah* of the first day of Rosh Hashanah. This moving account underlines the power of prayer, demonstrating that if we invest our hearts and souls into our prayers, G-d will surely heed our requests.

8. Gedaliah - After Nebuchadnezzar destroyed the first Holy Temple in Jerusalem, he appointed the righteous Gedaliah, son of Ahikam, as the governor of the remaining Jews. Under his leadership, the small group of Jews began to recover and reclaim some sense of peace and security. However, this tranquility was not to last. On Rosh Hashanah, Gedaliah was slain by a jealous, treacherous Jew named Yishmael. Whoever survived the massacre fled to Egypt, and the last embers of Jewish life in the Land of Israel were extinguished. To commemorate this sad milestone in our history, the day following Rosh Hashanah is kept as a fast day - Tzom Gedaliah.

9. Rabbi Amnon - One of the most soul-stirring prayers recited on Rosh Hashanah is Unetaneh Tokef. Its passages describe in vivid terms how all created beings pass before G-d on this day, and He decides the fate of each one. We are reassured, however, that even if negative occurrences are in store, "repentance, prayer, and charity revoke the evil of the decree."

Who composed this haunting text? It was probably composed by an early medieval scholar named Rabbi Amnon. After being punished by the local duke for refusing to renounce his faith and become a Christian, the crippled sage was brought to the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah, where he led the congregants in a newly composed addition to the High Holiday liturgy.

10. Rabbi Shimon the Great - The *machzor* is replete with prayers exclusive to Rosh Hashanah (and Yom Kippur). Many of these

prayers are known as *piyutim* , liturgical compositions written in poetic style expressing the awesomeness of the day.

One of the first composers of *piyutim* was Rabbi Shimon the Great, a saintly tenth-century scholar from Germany. Many of the *piyutim* in the *machzor* were penned by him, and some of them include the Hebrew acrostic: *Shimon bar Yitzchak*.

Legend has it that one of Rabbi Shimon's sons was kidnapped and raised as a Christian, rising in rank until he was appointed pope. On a mission to Rome on behalf of the Jewish community, Rabbi Shimon met with the pope and discovered his long-lost son, who subsequently returned to Judaism.

11. Jews in Concentration Camps and Soviet Gulags - Over the course of our history, Jews have taken the most extreme measures possible to mark this holy day and perform the sacred rite of blowing the shofar. Shofars were even smuggled into concentration camps and Soviet gulags and blown in secrecy, demonstrating that no one and nothing can destroy the indomitable Jewish spirit.

12. You! - Rosh Hashanah is a day of prayer, a time to ask the Almighty to grant us a year of peace, prosperity, and blessing. But it is also a joyous day, when we proclaim G-d King of the Universe. The Kabbalists teach that the continued existence of the universe depends on G-d's desire for a world, a desire that is renewed when we accept His kingship anew each year on Rosh Hashanah. This is something that is up to each and every one of us, by hearing the shofar blasts and resolving to serve G-d over the upcoming year to the best of our ability. So the true hero of Rosh Hashanah is no one else but *you*.

10 Reasons for Blowing the Shofar -This list was compiled by Rav Saadia Gaon:



1. The Shofar is like the trumpet which announces the coronation of a king. That is why it is used on Rosh Hashanah, the birthday of the universe. At that time we accept Hashem's Rulership. Our tefilos and shofar blasts are like the coronation ceremony in which Klal Yisroel crowns Hashem as Sovereign.

2. The Shofar calls us to examine our deeds and return to Hashem, who will always accept us if we are sincere. This is why we blow the Shofar on Rosh Hashana which is the first of the Aseres Yimei Tshuva.

3. The Shofar reminds us of the Shofar which blew when the Torah was given at Har Sinai; thus we are reminded to study and cherish Hashem's Word.

4. The Shofar reminds us of the voice of the Nevi'im, whose voices rang out like a Shofar blast in calling the people to do justice and mercy and follow Holy ways.

5. The Shofar sounds like crying, which reminds us of the destruction of the Bais HaMikdash, and thus calls upon us to work for and daven for the Geula.

6. The Shofar, since it is a ram's horn, reminds us of the binding of Yitzchok, when Hashem provided a ram to be sacrificed instead.

Thus we are called upon to be as faithful to Hashem as Avraham, and be inspired by his example of sacrifice and love of Hashem.

7. The Shofar calls us to be humble- its mighty blast reminds us of the mightiness of Hashem and the fact that Hashem is everywhere at all times.

8. On the Day of Judgment, a Shofar will be blown to announce Hashem's Rulership- our Shofar blasts remind us to prepare for Hashem's examination of our deeds.

9. The Shofar foreshadows the jubilant return to freedom and peace when we all end up in Yerushalayim in the time of Moshiach- it reminds us to have hope and faith in Hashem's saving power.

10. The Shofar will be blown in Messianic times to announce the redemption of the whole world, when all nations will recognize that Hashem is One.

Rabbi Shalom and the Rosh Hashanah Challos

During the Blitz, World War II, **Reb Shalom of Shotz zt'l** left the bombarded city of London for Gateshead, until the war's end. Food was scarce. Fish and meat could only be purchased with vouchers. Potatoes and onions, however, were in abundance, and that became staples.

On Shabbos, they would put a small piece of meat into a pot full of potatoes, and that was the cholent. A piece of chicken was placed in a pot full of water, and that was chicken soup.

In addition, the Jewish community faced another problem: there was only one baker in town, and being very pious, he preferred to say Tehillim, and other tefillos, rather than bake.

The problem came to a head on Rosh Hashanah. Early in the morning on erev Rosh Hashanah, the baker davened Selichos, so he couldn't

bake then. After Shacharis, he was weak from his fast (he fasted for a half day on erev Rosh Hashanah) so he didn't bake then either. In the afternoon he was busy with other preparations for Rosh Hashanah. This left the Jewish community of Gateshead with not enough challos for a two-day Yom Tov of Rosh Hashanah.



At the seudah of the first night of Rosh Hashanah, Rebbe Shalom Shotzer's host announced to his thirty guests, "We have enough challos for tonight. For tomorrow, there will be enough for everyone to get a kezayis. As for the second day of Yom Tov, there won't be any challos…"

The Shotzer Rebbe decided to speak with the baker, and have him bake more challos. At four o'clock a.m. on Yom Tov morning, the Rebbe went to the mikvah. His intention was to go to the baker's house afterwards, but that wasn't necessary, since he met the baker outside the mikvah. The Rebbe explained to the baker that he should bake challos all morning, so there will be challos for the community for Yom Tov. "But I awoke especially early, because I wanted to say the entire Tehillim before Shacharis…," the man said. "I will say Tehillim for you," the Rebbe replied.

The baker explained that he wants to at least go to shul to daven Shacharis like all other Yidden do on Rosh Hashanah morning, but the Rebbe advised him to bake until 12:00 noon, when it was time for tekiyas shofar.

"You can daven Shacharis during breaks; like when the challos are rising, or when they're baking in the oven, but otherwise, you shall

be busy baking challos for the holiday. Come to shul at 12:00 for the tekiyos. I won't begin the tekiyos, before I see that your there."

The baker asked, "But what will be with all piyutim we say Rosh Hashanah morning?" The Rebbe told him that he would say those piyutim for him. The baker understood that although he would be baking challos, and the Rebbe would be davening, in essence, they would be exchanging their merits. The Rebbe would get the merit of baking challos for Yom Tov, and the baker would get the merit of the Rebbe's tefillos.

"I agree to this plan," said the baker, "because I won't be losing anything… I will get the merit of the Tehillim and the piyutim of the Rebbe. But I'm wondering whether Heaven will agree that you should do this, because you will be losing out..."

The Rebbe replied, "Don't worry. I'm getting the better part of the deal." The Rebbe knew how great it is to do chessed for Yidden. As the Baal Shem Tov zt'l said, "It's worth living in this world for seventy or eighty years, if only to do a favour for a Yid once."

From the Depths of the Heart

I have heard from my father the **Holy Komarna**. One time a Jewish peasant boy came to the big town to celebrate Rosh Hashanah. He didn't know how to pray. He could not even read the letter Alef. He only saw that everyone was traveling to the synagogues to participate in the holy prayers. He thought, "If everybody is going to town I must go too!"

He arrived at the town synagogue with his father and watched the congregants crying and singing together swaying to and fro. He turned to his father and asked, "Father, what is this all about?"

His father turned to him and said, "The Holy One blessed be sits enthroned in the heavens and we pray all year long to Him. We



especially pray during these two days of Rosh Hashanah when the whole world is being judged and each person is being judged for the rest of the year."

The son responded, "Father, what am I to do since I do not know how to pray?"

His father quickly said to him condescendingly, "All you have to do is be quiet and listen to the other Jews praying. That is enough for you."

"But Father, if I don't know what these people are saying how is that going to effect G-d's decision? How is being silent going to help me?"

His father became unnerved and blurted out, "Listen, you should be quiet so no one will know you're an ignorant peasant!" The son stood still for a couple of minutes as his father and the rest of the congregation continued praying and then - the young boy stood up and spoke loudly.

"I am going to pray to G-d in the way I know best. I will whistle to G-d as I whistle to my flock of sheep."

He began whistling the sweet calling as most shepherds know. His father was enraged. The boy continued whistling with all his might not caring what other people thought.

Now, it happened to be, that this particular Rosh Hashanah, all the heavenly gates were shut and suddenly because of this pure whistling of the heart, all the gates burst open. The prayers of Israel were finally heard.

A Letter from G-d by Rabbi David Begoun



A Few Things to Keep in Mind as Rosh Hashanah Draws Near.

My precious child,

I want to wish you a *shana tova,* a sweet new year, and share with you a few things that I think you need you to know.

When I look at you, I see something very different than what you see when you look in the mirror. You see yourself as you are now. But when I look at you, I see who you can become. My primary goal is to help you grow from where you are now to where I know you can be.

Sometimes you are already challenging yourself and pushing yourself to become that person that I created you to become. So I just watch, with great *nachas*, and gently guide you in that direction. I orchestrate the events and experiences of your day-to-day life to ensure the maximum possibility of your achievement of that goal.

Other times, I must present you with challenges and hurdles in order to convert your potential greatness into actualized excellence. I know that those moments are sometime painful, but if I don't challenge you then you will never actualize your potential. Please remember that I am closer to you during those moments than I am at any other time.

I want to tell you about one of my most important employees. He is the V.I.P. of Human Development. His name is *Yetzer hara,* the evil inclination, and he works for me 365 days a year, 24/7. The *Yetzer hara* gets a bad rap, but he is really your best friend. If it weren't for him, you would remain a nobody forever. I have empowered him

to provide you with constant assaults and to approach you with a never-ending barrage of creative tactics, but they only come to challenge you to grow and improve yourself. The *Yetzer hara* and I have only one goal for each encounter you have with him: we both want you to overpower him and show him what you are made of. Of course, once you do that, I send him back with a more difficult obstacle to overcome, because that's how you really become great.

Here's some good advice: Speak to me. Often. And don't think I only understand Hebrew. I understand every language there is. So speak to me in your own language. And you don't have to wait to be in a shul; speak to me any time of day, no matter what you're doing – when you're driving your car, when you're taking a walk. Speak to me before you go to sleep. And most of all, speak to me on Shabbos. I am always available, and I really am a good listener. In fact, I understand you better than anyone else (even yourself) because you are mine and I made you. So don't be shy, don't feel awkward; just pour your heart out to me and I promise I will respond.



And take advantage of Shabbos; it's My special gift for you. Turn off your phone, computer, iPad and all those other gadgets and use the quiet time to celebrate your most important relationships: your relationship with Me, your relationship with yourself and your relationships with those special people that you are closest to. Even if you can't carve out the whole 25 hours for this purpose, at least use some of the day to connect to me. I will let you in on a secret:

I am talking to you all the time but I speak in a faint whisper. You have so many competing sounds, a cacophony of noises going on around you that drown me out. Find some quiet time and Shabbos and listen. You will be amazed what you hear.

Don't try to go through the journey of life on your own. I want you to find a mentor who can guide you and teach you and show you how to find Me and connect to Me. When you find that person, cling to him or her and don't let go. Make them teach you and guide you and take their advice to heart.

In addition, find someone to take this journey with. It is a lot easier to make this trip if you have someone with whom to share the journey. You can both make sure you are staying on target and heading toward your goals.

If you can, make the effort to come to the place on earth where My presence can most be felt. Spend some time in My city Jerusalem and imbibe the wisdom that oozes from the ancient walls there.

Rosh Hashanah is coming up. It's the birthday of mankind when I revise the plan of human history and write the next act for the year to come. Think about what major role you want to take. I am willing to let you play any role that you are committed to play. So think big and create a passionate vision of who you want to be this coming year. And on Rosh Hashanah, instead of counting the number of pages left in the *machzor*, talk to Me and tell Me what role you want to play.

The Book of Life will be open on that day, and I am putting the pen in your hands. Choose life.

Love,

Your Father in Heaven who believes in you and loves you unconditionally.

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

יהי רצון מלפני אבינו שבשמים שתחדש עלינו שנה טובה ומתוקה

May it be the will before our Father in Heaven that You renew for us a good and sweet year.

Since we are asking for a good year, which includes all manner of good, why do we add the words: 'and a sweet one'? Rather, as *Rebbi* Akiva says, we know that everything that Hashem does for us is for our own good. We are praying to Hashem that we *realize* the good that He is doing for us. This is our request on the night of Rosh HaShanah. We ask Hashem for a good year, but this is not enough. We also want a sweet year, and that we should realize and appreciate the sweetness.

Rosh Hashanah Treasures - An Inside Look



There is a custom to say *Tashlich* on Rosh Hashanah. *Tashlich* means *to cast away*, for on Rosh Hashanah we 'cast away' our sins, as it says in *Michah* (7:19), **וְתַשְׁלִיךְ בִּמְצֻלוֹת יָם כָּל־חַטֹּאתָם**:***You will cast away all their sins into the depths of the sea.***

The *Arizal* says that when saying this *pasuk* during *Tashlich*, one should have in mind that all his *aveiros* should be thrown away. One should also think and *daven* at this time that the *Satan*, who is standing ready to accuse, should also be hurled into the depths of the Heavenly Sea, and thereby rendered powerless against us.

L'Maaseh… A Tale to Remember

When the *Admor*, **Reb Aharon of Karlin**, began *davening* as the *chazan* at *Shacharis* of Rosh Hashanah, he began with the customary tune. However, when he was about to cry out the word *HaMelech*, he passed out.

His *Chassidim* revived him, and he then continued on with the *davening*. Later, the *Chassidim* surrounded him and curiously inquired about the reason for his fainting.

The *Rebbe* explained to them, "In *Masechta Gittin* (56a) the *Gemara* tells us that Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai left Yerushalayim

during the Roman siege in order to plead with Caesar Vespasian for the lives of the Jews within Yerushalayim. When Rav Yochanan ben Zakkai first encountered Vespasian, he said, 'Peace upon you, king, peace upon you.' Vespasian became angry with him and said, 'You deserve to be killed for two reasons. First of all, you addressed me as the king, and I am not. Secondly, if you think I *am* the king, why haven't you come until now?'"

The *Rebbe* continued, "As I stood before the *shul*, about to say "*HaMelech*," I remembered this story and the question of the Caesar, 'If you think I am the king, why haven't you come until now?'" This question pierced my heart, and I thought, 'At this moment, I am describing *HaKadosh Boruch Hu* as *Melech*, the King of the Universe! I need to find an answer to this question— *If I am really the King, why haven't you come to Me until today, with Teshuvah*?!'

It was this thought that shook me to my core and made me faint."

"The best portion of a good man's life is his little nameless, unencumbered acts of kindness and of love."

Rosh Hashanah Thoughts Ideas and Reflections *by: Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn*



A well-known custom of Rosh Hashanah is dipping the apple in honey and *davening* for a sweet, good year. Although this may seem a bit simple, I would like to offer a valuable understanding of this custom. The *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 78a) defines the comparison of the Jewish People to an apple tree.

Just as the apple tree is unique that its fruit begins to sprout before the leaves grow for it, so too, *Bnei Yisrael* took the initiative at *Har Sinai* with a proclamation of *"Na'aseh Ve'Nishma"*, *"we will do and we will hear"*, accepting to act without having to know the directives.

Honey has a very interesting chemical characteristic that it can transform anything that is left sitting in it into honey. The *Shem MiShmuel* notes that as we prepare for the judgment of Rosh Hashanah, we want our misdeeds to be converted into positive traits, just like the honey. We are dipping an apple, representing our conviction to do the right thing, in honey, symbolizing the transformation to good. When we express our wishes for a good, sweet year, we are trying to materialize this desire for good.

The *Ramban* (*Bereishis* 12:6) teaches us that we have the ability to actualize a judgment of Hashem by acting on it in a real way. Therefore, when we are dipping the apple into the honey and then wishing a good sweet year, we are showing that we want and accept the judgment from Hashem for a good sweet year.

As we prepare for this big Day of Judgment, many of us are ready to speak with Hashem and give Him our wish-list for the year ahead. This may include a steady job, *nachas* from our families, health and wealth and all other wants or needs.

Rav Matisyahu Solomon offered a helpful approach to making our requests. If before we ask for anything we begin by listing the good things that have happened to us over the past year, we are showing that we are deserving of kindness, because we will appreciate it. We will also be able to speak with Hashem in a much more loving tone, expressing our focus primarily on all the good we have received this past year.

The Czar's Son by Rabbi Reuven Semah

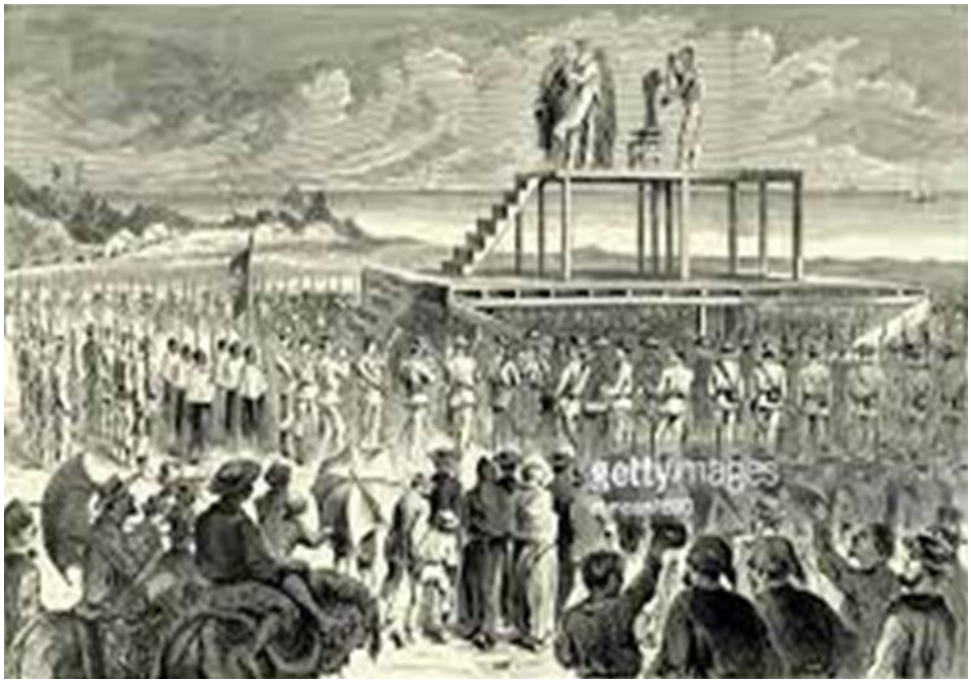
יוֹם תְּרוּעָה יִהְיֶה לָכֶם ***It shall be a day of shofar-sounding for you."*** *Bemidbar* 29:1)

Rosh Hashanah is a day of judgment, but it is also a day of intense closeness to Hashem, no matter what we have done to threaten that relationship. It is a day when we can change the past and strengthen our bond for the future.

Rabbi Yechiel Spero tells a true story. In the early 1800's there was a great uprising against the Czar. The Czar sent the best soldiers to quell the insurrection. The soldiers fought valiantly to defend the honour of the Czar. Before long the insurgents were captured and most of them were killed for their role in the rebellion. They captured the leader and were shocked to discover that he was none other than the son of the Czar.

The soldiers knew they had to reveal this information to the Czar but they broke it to him slowly. When they came to the palace they first informed him about the battle, which was good news. But then the inevitable moment came, and the Czar wanted to know who led

the revolt. When he discovered it was his own son, he reacted stoically. The verdict was clear and definitive. There would be no leniency in the face of conspiracy. "My son must be put to death," said the Czar. The Czar explained that the world must know what the consequences are for such behavior.



To show the Czar a measure of mercy, the military decided to execute the rebel far away from the palace, in a secluded area. As fate would have it, a few days later, the Czar was taking his leisurely daily stroll in the outskirts of town when he noticed that nearby his soldiers were conducting some sort of ceremony. He came close and realized he had come to the site of the execution. The soldiers asked the Czar if he would like to stay the execution. He refused without hesitation. Instead, he approached his son with tears in his eyes saying, "You understand that I cannot stay the execution."

His son nodded, and although he could not articulate his feelings at that time, it was clear that he was terribly sorry. "I understand, Father. You must do what you must do." The Czar gave the order to carry out the death sentence and the young man was asked if he had any last words. He motioned that he did, and then stepped forward and proudly declared, "Long live the Czar!" The Czar heard his son's words and immediately jumped up. "Stop the execution! Let him live!"

And as they released the prisoner from his shackles, with tears in his eyes, he ran toward his father and fell at his feet.

We have clearly sinned against Hashem, our Father, and for that He really has no choice but to punish us. But as we blow the *shofar*, we declare, "Long live the King!" Hashem hears this and He lovingly awaits our return.



Rosh Hashanah Treasures - An Inside Look

During the break before blowing the *Shofar* on Rosh Hashanah, **the *Kerestirer Rav*, *zt"l***, would stand and distribute cookies to the congregants so that they should eat and have strength. He would make sure that everyone had enough and that no one was hungry.

In his humility he would say, "The great *Tzaddikim* are involved with their concentration for blowing the *Shofar*, as well as the hidden mystical symbolism that is behind it, as it is written in the *Zohar HaKadosh*, and other holy matters, but I am a simple Jew! I am involved in the matter of **לשובע ולא לרזון** - *'For plenty and not for scarcity!'*"



Pearls of Wisdom …*A Word for the Ages*

The *Gemara* (*Shabbos* 88a) says that the Jewish people are compared to an apple tree. Just as with an apple tree, its fruit precedes its leaves, so too did *Klal Yisroel* say *Naaseh V'Nishma*, and preceded "*We will do*" before "*We will hear*". **The *Maharsha*** writes that the performance of *mitzvos* is compared to fruit and the study of *mitzvos* to leaves, because as it says in *Pirkei Avos* (1:17), performance is primary, while study is only secondary. *Meromei Sadeh* explains that the leaves of a tree serve to protect its fruit. Nevertheless, the fruit of an apple tree begins to form before its leaves. Similarly, the Jewish people declared their willingness to do

the *mitzvos* even before they had the protection of knowing what they entailed. Perhaps, as we dip the apple into honey, we can be inspired to remember *Naaseh V'Nishma* and rededicate ourselves to Hashem's *mitzvos*.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages



When it comes to eating the *Simanei Milsa*, the foods that have special significance at the *seudah* of Rosh Hashanah, the ***Sh"lah Ha'kadosh*** says that eating foods just because they have names that connote good fortune is a waste of time and does not help.

The real reason we eat the *Simanim*, he explains, is solely in order to say the *Yehi Ratzon*, the prayer that accompanies eating these foods. When eaten like this, it provides us with a reminder and a means with which we can *daven* to Hashem in the beginning of our first meal of the year for things that are important.

The Gerrer Rebbe was once asked by a chasid "There are so many things in the Machzor we don't say. Why don't we just print a new Machzor that only includes what we say?"

He responded, "And take away the Simcha a Yid gets when he skips a page in davening!?"

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages



The *minhag* to eat special fruits on Rosh Hashanah is from the *Gemara* (*Horiyos* 12a). While the *Gemara* gives a list of recommended fruits to eat, dipping apples in honey is not mentioned. The earliest source for the apple dipped in honey is from the *Avudraham* as quoted by the *Rama* (583:1). What is the significance of this famous *minhag*?

The *Sefer Mo'adim L'Simchah* offers a number of reasons:

1) **The *Maharil*** says that Yitzchok *Avinu* smelled an apple orchard when he commented on the beautiful smell as Yaakov came in to him to receive the *Brachos*. **The *Vilna Gaon*** says that this happened on Rosh Hashanah.

2) **The *Ben Ish Chai*** writes that apples give three pleasures, as they have a pleasant smell, appearance, and taste, which corresponds to three *Brachos* we request from Hashem that we would like to receive for the next year: *Banei* (Chidren and *Nachas* from our Children), *Chayai* (Life and Health), and *Mezonei* (Wealth).

3) **The *Zohar*** notes that wine symbolizes *Din* or judgment. Apples are eaten after strong wine in order not to be harmed by the strength of the wine. Therefore, since Rosh Hashanah is a time of *Din*, we eat apples in order to sweeten the judgment.

4) On Rosh Hashanah we want Hashem to remember the ashes of *Akeidas Yitzchok*. The ashes that accumulated on the *Mizbei'ach* from all the *Korbanos* are called '*Tapuach*', which means 'apple'.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages



In one of the famous, larger *Shuls* in Yerushalayim, there are many different *Minyanim* that take place in different parts of the *Shul* building, and there are two brothers who run from *Minyan* to *Minyan* throughout Rosh Hashanah, and blow *Shofar* for all the *Minyanin*.

One year, when one of the brothers got up to blow *Shofar*, it just wasn't working out for him. He tried to clean the *Shofar* and do everything he could to make the proper *Shofar* blasts, but nothing helped, and the people in the *Minyan* began losing patience. Eventually, the other brother came in and saved his brother, and blew the *Tekios* for that *Minyan*.

After *Davening*, the brother who couldn't blow the *Shofar* well went home, slightly embarrassed, and feeling bad that he caused his brother to work harder. After blowing *Shofar* for the last *Minyan*, the second brother went straight to his brother's house to check on him and try to cheer him up after his humiliating experience. He told his brother that it could happen to even the most experienced *Baal Tokei'a*, and there was really nothing to be ashamed of. The first brother said, "While humiliation is the most difficult thing in the world to deal with, I accept it with *Simchah*." He continued, "You, my

brother, have three older, unmarried children in your home. I am giving you my *Zechus* of accepting my shame with love. In that merit, all three of these children should all be *Zocheh* to get married this year!" Within a few short months, *Baruch Hashem*, all three children got married, one after the other!

Rabbi Avi Wiesenfeld *Rosh Hayeshiva Yeshivas Beis Dovid*



The Gemara tells us that on erev Rosh Hashana we do not blow the shofar. Something that we have been doing for the last few weeks since Rosh Chodesh Elul. The reason for that is because we want to differentiate between the Tekias of Reshus (the ones of Elul) and the obligatory Tekias of Rosh Hashana.

Tosfos and others say that there is another reason why we do not blow the shofar on Erev Rosh Hashana. The reason is that it should confuse the Satan. The Satan won't realize what is going on. He thinks, maybe it is the *Shofer Shel Mashiach*, and he will get nervous and confused.

This doesn't make any sense, as the Satan goes through the same scenario every year. Does he not realize the shtick by now? Every year, he hears the same thing. He hears the shofer being blown the whole month of Elul, then one day it stops, and the next day is Rosh Hashana. He would certainly have figured it out by now. So what is the point?

The Chinuch says that the mitzva of *tekias shofer* is very serious. It brings us to din. We are asking The Riboino Shel Olam to judge us. We are doing an act of *mesiras nefesh* by blowing the shofar.

If this is what the blowing of the shofar represents, the Satan is not sure whether or not that is this the *Shofer Shel Mashiach?* Perhaps this year, with everything that Klal Yisrael have gone through, a small act of mesiras nefesh will herald the coming of moshiach. Davening with a minyan, putting on *Tzitzis* or *Tefilin*, washing *Neigel Vasser*, washing *Netilas Yadayim, Bentching, acts of Chesed*. There are so many things that a person goes above and beyond their comfort zone. A person that shows The Riboino Shel Olam that he cares.

This *mesiras nefesh* is what confuses the Satan. Is this what will bring Mashiach? Is it this *mesiras nefesh* that will change the world and bring an end to all our Tzarus, and bring Klal Yisrael a good year?

B'ezras Hashem, I want to thank all my readers and listeners and bentch you all with a **כתיבה וחתימה טובה** and a gut g'bentched a yar. All of you should have nachas from yourselves and your children and family. The Riboino Shel olam should get nachas from you. You should have a year of Brocha V' Hatzloca in all that you do! You should have parnosso toiva in health and happiness. May you only have simchas.

And b'ezras Hashem, we should greet Mashiach here in Yerushalayim Ir Hakodesh, bimhero v'yameinu amen.

Have a gevaldige YomTov!

The only person you should strive to be better than, is the person you were yesterday!



שופר

Reb Faivish Feingold said that if you add up the total number of words in the לַמְנַצֵּחַ that we say prior to sounding the shofer, x7, and add it to the number of words in the pesukim said straight afterwards, you get a total of 587.

This is the same gematria as שׁוֹפָר. This is out by one, however the two words בַּמֶּרְחָב יָ-הּ should really be one word.

Taking Advantage Of The Ten Days Of Repentance

Rav Shimshon Pincus zt"l beautifully describes the urgency of taking advantage of the ten days of repentance with an impactful mashal I believe very relevant to the current situation as well.

A king's son rebelled against him, and he was exiled from the palace. Wandering aimlessly through the forest, the prince fell into a pit. Helpless, in need of food and medical care, he desperately screamed out "Help! Help!"

Sure enough, the king's entourage, making its way near the forest, heard the cries for help. Hearing his beloved son's voice, the king

quickly rushed to the edge of the pit and asked, "My dear son, how can I help you?" The son answered, "Father, Your Majesty, I need food! I need doctors!" The king quickly lowered in tons of food and commanded doctors to jump into the pit to heal his son. The king asked, "Is there anything else you need?" The son replied, "No, that's all."

The king bid his son farewell saying, "Maybe next time we pass by, you'll ask for something else..." So too, explains Rav Pincus, we often solely focus on our personal needs: continued health, healing, sustenance, family etc. But we have to remember to fervently, with a sense of urgency, ask our Father, the King, to "take us out of the pit!", to take us out of exile, to restore His Kingdom in the world and his Holy Temple!

זכרנו לחיים - חיים שיש בהן חיות

Meaningful Life, Not the Life of an Animal

Once there was a man who made himself a list on Erev Rosh Hashanah. It was a list of his needs for the coming year, in order not to forget so that Hashem should fulfil his heart's desires for the good on Rosh Hashanah. The list included *parnassah*, health, well-raised children who would do good, and other similar requests.

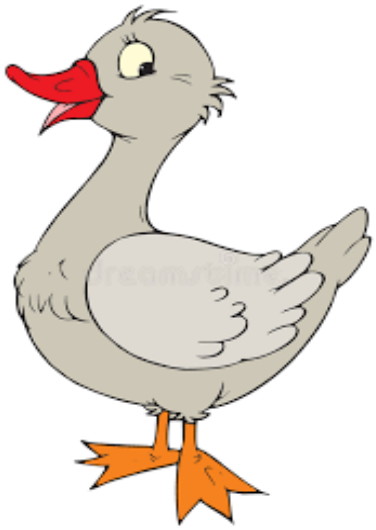
Three days after Rosh Hashanah, the man died. He got every one of his wishes fulfilled, but he died. Health - he was not sick; *parnassah* - his family inherited; well-raised children who would do good but would do so as orphans.

How could such a thing happen? He asked for everything, but he forgot to ask for life itself! So he got everything he asked for, but that.

The first thing a person needs to ask for is life itself! Once he has life, he can ask for *parnassah*, health etc., in order that his life is

not full of burdens that prevent him from fulfilling his goals, but all of that can only be if he has life itself.

That is indeed why we daven on Rosh Hashanah, **זכרנו לחיים מלך חפץ בחיים וכתבנו בספר החיים למענך אלוקים חיים** – *"Remember us for life, King who desires life, and write us into the book of life, for Your sake, the living G-d."*





We must reflect on this a bit: What do we mean by "*chaim*" (life)? To live and not to die? Horses live, geese live. Does anyone want Hashem to give him the life of a goose or a horse? "Inscribe us in the Book of Life together with all the geese!" . . . Nobody wants that. We want life - meaningful life.

If so, when we say **כתבנו בספר החיים** and then on Yom Kippur, "*Chosmaynu*", we do not mean to ask for life in the same sense that animals and birds are granted life, but rather that we want the life of a human being.

Many times, a person only focuses on external needs, such as that Hashem should give him life and that he not die; he also asks for a variety of needs - *parnassah*, health, *shalom bayis*, children who are *tzadikim* and so on - a long list in all, each person according to his needs.

All this is from the point of view of externalities, but where is the **internal** focus of the day?

Everything needs *chiyus* - some kind of life-giving force that sustains it. If it doesn't have *chiyus*, it disintegrates, it cannot go

on to exist. Plants require irrigation, animals need food and water in order to live, and human beings too require a life-giving force in order to continue to exist.

If so, when we come on Rosh Hashanah and ask Hashem to give us life, our first request, most external and basic, is simply for life itself - that we should not die, and in this concern we are no different from animals and geese.

Our second request, though, is that we should get *chiyus* - real pleasure in our life, and that this pleasure should come from learning Torah and keeping mitzvos.

Honey



The Avnei Nazer says that we use bees honey as opposed to date honey because the bees sting, cause pain, and we tend to run away from them. But why?

If we want a sweet year, just simply eat a sweet piece of kokosh cake or some sugar. Why specifically bees honey?

To teach us that the pain of the past will become the sweetness of the future.

My Bracha to you all is that any pain, aggravation, agmas nefesh, that you suffered this year, will turn into an amazing new year that is transformed into lots of simcha, gezunt, and a tremendous amount of nachas and happiness.

It should be a year that is so sweet that you will always be smiling!!

R' Meir Hurvitz ZT"L of Dzikov (Imrei Noam) says:



"On Rosh Hashanah, we dip a piece of apple in honey and say: 'May it be Your will to renew us for a good and sweet year.'

The gematria of the word **תפוח**, (apple) amounts to 494, which equals the value of the words **פרו רבו** (be fruitful, multiply). Similarly, the word **דבש** (honey) is the same amount (306) as **אשה** (woman).

We may derive from this that an apple dipped in honey on Rosh Hashanah is a segulah (good omen) for a childless woman to conceive."

Shofar in Siberia by Chaya Halberstam-Evers

It was the end of a Siberian summer, sometime in the early 1940's. My grandfather, **Rabbi Meir Halberstam**, a young boy of 13 years old, was imprisoned in a work camp together with his grandfather, the **Rebbe of Zmigrad, Rabbi Sinai Halberstam**.

Young Meir had moved with his family to Palestine to settle in the holy city of Jerusalem in 1936, before the war had broken out. In honour of his upcoming Bar Mitzvah, his father sent him on a boat back to Poland where he would be able to celebrate this auspicious day in the chassidic court of his Holy grandfather. Upon his arrival in Poland, the rumble of war was approaching. Disciples, family, and community members where all scrambling to save their lives. With

the Nazis at their heels, young Meir escaped with his Grandfather and immediate family to Russia. At last they were safe from the Nazi enemies, or so they thought.





My grandfather, Reb Meir Halberstam, of righteous memory, at 13 - the age he was when this story took place, and 12 years ago at his 80th birthday.

Due to the large number of Polish refugees in Russia, the Russian government seized the opportunity to use them as slaves. Charging them as enemies of the state since they had Polish passports, their whole entourage were sentenced to heavy slave labour in the cold Siberian plains.

Rosh Hashana was approaching, and the mild Siberian summer had ended, ushering in the tundra like winds and cold. Young Meir noticed that with each passing day, his grandfather, the Rebbe of Zmigrad was becoming more and more depressed.

"How will be blow the shofar?" he cried. Although he had the holy shofar that had been passed down from his ancestors, the thought of being caught blowing it by the evil Russian guards, brought dread to his very being.

It was two nights before Rosh Hashana, and young Meir devised a daring plan. He awoke in the middle of the night and wrapped cloth around his hands and feet in order to muffle any noise he would make. From his window, he watched the wild guards drinking and dancing late into the night. He waited until they were all stooped over in a drunken sleep and quietly trudged through the wind and cold to the front of the work camp, where the giant camp bell stood. He looked to all sides and climbed up a very high post, until he reached the top of the bell. With all his might he unravelled the rope holding the bell and watched the entire bell come crashing to the ground, where it shattered into many small bits and pieces. He then descended the post and quietly returned to his barrack.

The next morning there was an uproar in the camp. Upon awakening, the guards saw the broken bell and realized that they would have a problem waking all the prisoners in time. It would take weeks until they would be able to get a new bell.

Young Meir then shared with his grandfather the brave mission he had done the previous night and whispered his plan.

By the time all the prisoners were up, the guards where quite angry and looking for someone to blame. Instead, young Meir's uncle came forward and related to the head commander that he had an old shepherd's horn that his father would gladly blow each morning to wake the prisoners until they received a new bell.

Upon hearing this, he commanded him to bring the horn at once. The Rebbe arrived, Shofar in hand and began to blow for the commander. "Let me blow it", yelled the commander, grabbing it out of the Rebbes hands. The commander took the Shofar in his hands and brought it to his mouth, but no matter how hard he blew, no sound came out.

It was at this moment of frustration that young Meir's uncle advised the commander to let his Father blow it, since he was a 'professional'

horn blower. The commander then appointed the Rebbe as the official waker, who would be responsible to wake the prisoners each morning until a new bell was mounted.

Word spread quite quickly throughout the camp. All the Jewish prisoners knew that the Rebbe of Zmigrad, would blow his holy Shofar the next morning, on Rosh Hashana. As the frosty morning beckoned, each prisoner was up early awaiting the sound of the Shofar. The Rebbe wept as he blew the horn, the prisoners cried and prayed, and young Meir shook proudly as he watched the notes of the shofar break the darkness on that crisp Siberian morning. It was a shofar blowing that he never would forget.

My grandfather went through many more trials and hardships until he made it back to the shores of Israel where he was welcomed and celebrated for the great miracles that happened to him.

As a grandchild of Reb Meir Halberstam, I have only recently heard this story and it made a deep impression on me. Rosh Hashana is a very special time for our family. For me, it has always been a Yom Tov of hope, and positivity, as we surely believe that Hashem will embrace us and hold us, as he ushers us into a beautiful and sweet new year.

I try to think about the shofar that my zaidy heard all those years ago on that cold Siberian morning, and the strength that it gave him and all the Jews who heard it. Perhaps this year, if I close my eyes and listen with my soul, I can internalize the sounds of the Shofar and I will hear the sounds of faith, courage, and hope that it gave my grandfather all those years ago.

When everything seems to be going against you, remember that the airplane takes off against the wind, not with it.

לשנה טובה

Who added the words **לאלתר לחיים טובים ולשלום** to the greeting of **לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם?**

The Rama [Orach Chaim 582:9] brings in the name of the Tur that on Rosh Hashana one should bless his friend & family **לשנה טובה תכתב**.

Be'er Hataiv says that one should say **לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם**.

Now in many Siddurim & Machzorim it says to wish **לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם לאלתר לחיים טובים ולשלום**. What is the source for adding on the words **לאלתר לחיים טובים ולשלום?**

Surmising - The word **לאלתר** means "immediately". This notion is possibly related to the concept that *tzadikim* who have more mitzvos than aveiros are immediately written in *Sefer Hachaim*, without having to wait until after Yom Kippur for the "decision". Thus, the wish conveys the idea that Hashem considers you a tzadik who has more mitzvos and will inscribe you immediately for life.

Luach Hahalachos Uminhagim - 5771 page 30 - note 13 says this is based on the Chayai Adam 139:5 & Elef Hamagain 40

Chayai Adam 139:5 says that one should say **תכתב ותחתם לאלתר לחיים טובים**

Elef Hamagain 40 says one should add **ולשלום.**

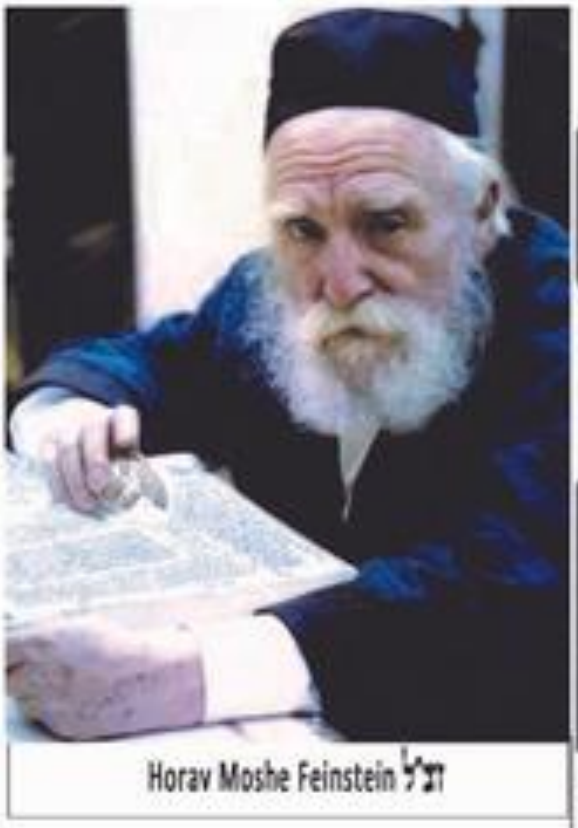
The Rama says in the name of the Tur that the Minhag is to wish one another on the evening of Rosh HaShana L'Shana Tova Tikosaiv. Is there a source that says that people should answer V'Chain L'Mar? Or is it more appropriate to respond L'Shana Tova Tikosaiv?

Saying V'chain l'mar would certainly make things easier! But the Rema gives this as the greeting, I'm assuming mitzad derech eretz you should return the bracha the same way you got it, or at least be makdim to say before the other person does.

Someone seriously replied "vechen lemotuk" ("and the same to the sweet") to me on the grounds that "mar" also means "bitter"

Nitei Gavriel Rosh HaShana 27:1 - One may answer either L'Shana Tova or Gam Atta or vchain lomar and gam atem.

כתיבה וחתימה טובה





Horav Moshe Feinstein זצ"ל and the **Boyaner Rebbe, Horav Mordechai Shlomo Friedman** זצ"ל both lived on the Lower East Side. Every year, after davening on the first night of Rosh Hashana, Rav Moshe would stop by the Boyaner Rebbe and they would give each other a beracha for a good year.

When the Boyaner Rebbe was not well, he moved to live with his children on the West Side. Rav Moshe asked his talmid, who was a Boyaner chassid, to drive him before Rosh Hashana to the Boyaner Rebbe, so that they would still be able to give each other a beracha for the new year.

Perceptions by Rabbi Pinchas Winston



While discussing the death of Queen Elizabeth II with someone the other day, they being 92 mentioned that they never thought they would see another king reign in their lifetime. The last king of England was King George VI who ruled from 1936-1952. It was his daughter, Elizabeth who inherited the crown from him. It is her son, Charles, formerly the Prince of Wales, who has just inherited the throne from her.

Everything that happens in history and when it happens is always hashgochah pratis—divine providence. Hashem runs the world and decides what will happen and when, so all that happens must be hashgochah pratis. But there is hashgochah pratis that goes unnoticed or seems insignificant, and there is hashgochah pratis that stands out and makes you think.

The death of a monarch, even if only a figurehead, is significant, or it wouldn't catch the attention of so many people around the world. Out of respect and protocol, the world will mourn for the loss of the queen as if she really was a powerful leader.

But think about what? That will depend upon the person. For me, it made me think about Rosh Hashanah and what were supposed to be doing. As someone I know has pointed out to me year after year, we do not coronate our king because He already is a king, the King of Kings, and always has been. Charles was not king before and will have to be coronated to make it official. But Hashem has always been king, though it only really had meaning since Creation. After all, what is a king without subjects?

So what do we do each Rosh Hashanah if Hashem is already king? We accept upon ourselves to be His loyal subjects, which technically we do every day when we say the Shema. But it is one thing to pledge loyalty to the king, and something very different to do it in His Presence. It's just a far more awesome and inspiring experience. That's a major component of the entire experience, awe.

Any king can inspire fear just by exercising the power of his office. But it takes a special kind of king to inspire awe. The pomp and pageantry help, but at the end of the day it is the leader themself that the people see. If there isn't anything remarkable about how they execute their leadership role, they won't capture the hearts and loyalty of the people.

That's why they're called the Days of Awe. The point of the 10 days of atonement, is for developing awe of Hashem.

We don't make Him king and we certainly do not coronate Him. What we do instead is work on developing a sense of awe of Him as our king, and as the King of Kings, so that we can live up to our role as His loyal subjects. Not for His benefit, but for ours.

Because unlike, with respect to human kings, you can't just pick up and move to another kingdom if you're unhappy with Hashem's kingdom. The entire world is His kingdom. The good news, though, is that any problems that we have with Hashem or His kingdom stem from us, and that is something we can choose to work on.



וְכָתְבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים לְמַעַנְךָ אֱלֹקִים חַיִּים

Reb Motele of Viznitz said that during the Aseres Yemei Teshuva, we often say that we should be written in the sefer hachaim. He said that if we do chesed with each other, this is a guarantee. - The gematria of **ואהבת לרעך כמוך** – 820 is exactly the same as **כָתְבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר**



Be a Head - Rabbi Shimshon Dovid Pincus zt"l

***וּנְתָנְךָ ה' לְרֹאשׁ וְלֹא לְזָנָב Hashem will make you the head and not the tail.* (*Devarim* 28:13)**



One of the blessings promised to those who keep the Torah is to be "the head and not the tail."

Being "the head" is also part of Rosh Hashanah. At the *se'udah* on Rosh Hashanah night there is a *minhag* to eat foods that are a good sign for the new year. One of the foods customarily eaten is the head of a fish. We recite **יהי רצון... שנהיה לראש ולא לזנב**. Someone who is a "head" merits a good judgment on Rosh Hashanah.

What does it mean to be a "head"? And what does it matter if a person is a head or a tail?

Indeed, a head can go wherever it wants, and the tail is dragged along after it, but in the end, the tail, too, gets to the same place that the head does. If so, we should rather ask *Hashem* that the head lead us to a good place and not a bad place.

Let us understand what is so special about being the head.: Simply speaking, the head has intelligence and understanding. It evaluates and makes decisions. The tail has no intelligence. It doesn't have a mind with which to choose and lead. A person could be a *tzaddik gamur,* but if he is a tail, it doesn't have a lot of value, because it is not emanating from his own free choice.

This expresses itself in many areas in life. Some people lead and others follow. This may be compared to a train with a lot of carriages. At first glance it is hard to know which one is pulling and

which ones are just pulled along. Maybe the last carriage is pushing all of them forward? But when the carriages are detached, we see that the engine carriage keeps on going, and then we know that it was leading the train all along.

A person could come to heaven after a long life in which he learned all of *Shas,* only to be told that he is a "tail." He didn't learn of his own accord; he was just acting in accordance with his surroundings.

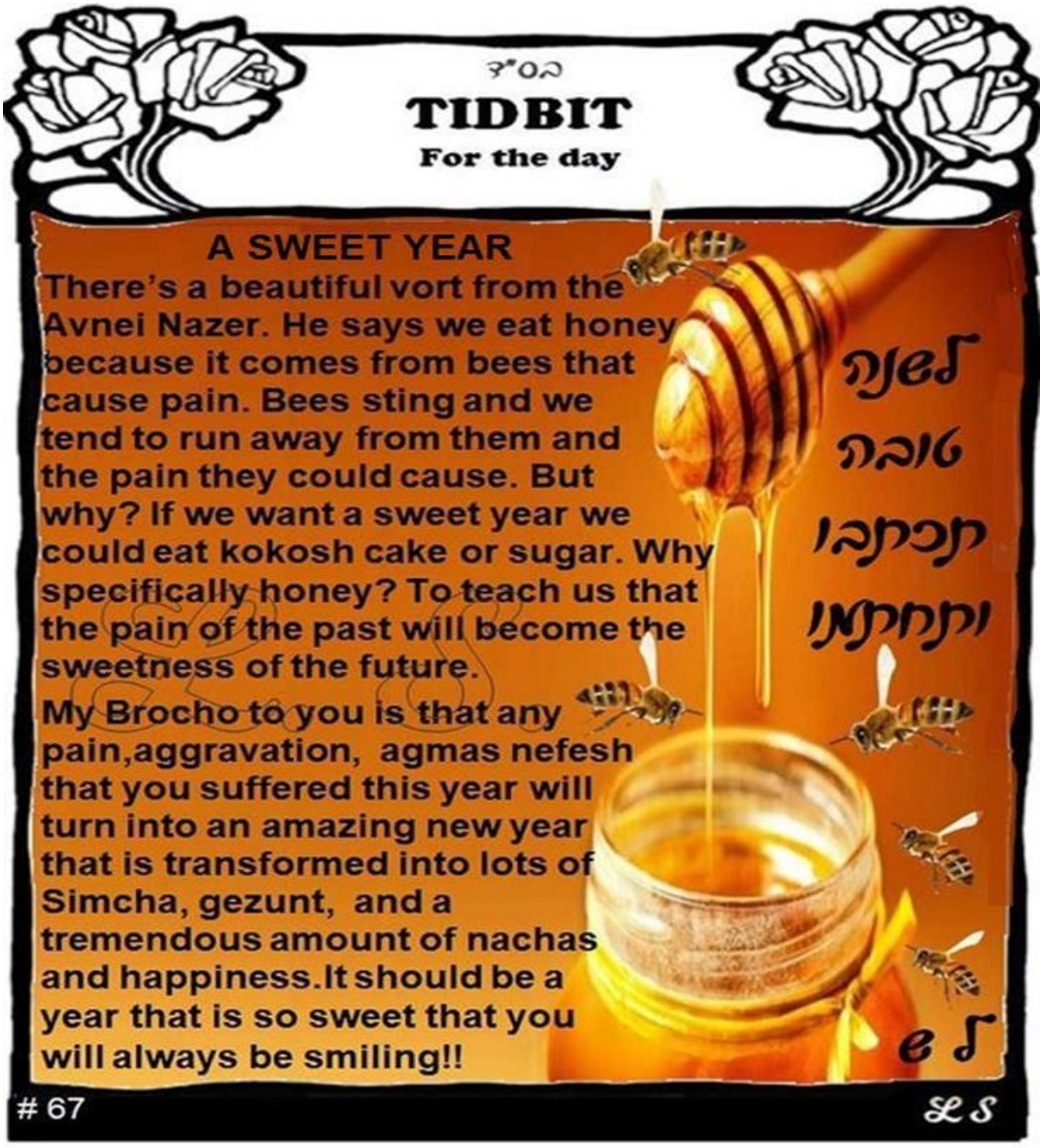
If a person does things because others do, or because he did them yesterday – then he is a tail.

The *Chasam Sofer* writes about the *Chassidim* who had a *minhag* to wear only silk garments and not wool that even though they did so in the first generation because they were concerned about *shaatnez,* in the second generation they did it only because they inherited the custom.

The first generation was the head and the second generation was already a tail. If a person doesn't do what he does because it is his own *avodah* in the here and now, it is not "head" but "tail".

"Head" means a person lives with spiritual aspirations. He is a creator and a builder. He is building himself. He is constantly working on changing and improving himself. He wants to be a bigger *masmid,* to *daven* with better *kavanah,* and so forth.

On Rosh Hashanah, a person is granted special *siyata d'Shamaya* to become a head. Not to just fall in line after other heads. On the one hand, one should be a "tail to lions," which means to follow the lead of the *Gedolei Torah v'Mussar.* To take advantage of the heads who maintain his *yeshivah* and the framework he is in. - At the same time, a person needs to be an entity on his own. He must conquer on his own some *midah* or another, and thereby revolutionize himself, and then he will be a head, not a tail.



"As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands, one for helping yourself, the other for helping others."

Feeling the Pain By R' Zecharia Wallerstein ZTL



Iyov suffered very much. The question is, why did he suffer so much?

The answer is that there were three advisors to Pharaoh, about throwing the Jewish kids into the Nile River. Yisro said, "No.", and he ran away. Biaam said, "Yes throw them in. Pharoah said, "Yes." However, Iyov didn't say anything.

Why didn't Iyov say anything?

There was a vote, and Yisro had already left. If Iyov would have said anything, he would lose anyway as both Pharoah and Bilaam had both already voted YES, so he would be out-voted anyway, so he kept quiet.

For that, he was punished that he got more pain than any other human that ever lived.

What did he do wrong? He just didn't say anything. Where is the midah k'negged midah in that?

The answer is that when a person is in pain, he screams. But the screaming doesn't help. If your finger is broken, and you scream – Aaaghh! Does it fix your finger? No. Does it fix your pain? – No - But you scream anyway.

Hashem said to Iyov, "It should have bothered you so much, that you felt the pain and yelled out, even though your vote would have made no difference."

"Therefore, since you didn't yell, even though it wouldn't help, I am going to give you pain, where you are going to yell, and its not going to help." Why am I telling you this?

When you stand in Shul on Rosh Hashana, it's not just for you. We all know people that have troubles. You must feel their pain. You have to daven for them. You have to daven for Klal Yisrael.

If you scream in pain for another person, then you will not have any pain that year. Because if you really show that you feel the other person's pain, Hashem will ease your own pains!



Kabbalistic Ideas

The Elef Hamagen (583:4) writes "When one has guests on Rosh Hashanah, it is considered as though he had in mind all the *kavanos* of **the Arizal** in his *tefillah*."

The Arizal taught kabbalistic ideas to think while praying. The average person isn't able to incorporate those lofty thoughts into his prayer. However, when one has guests on Rosh Hashanah, it will be considered as though he concentrated on all those lofty thoughts.

Someone spent most of his Rosh Hashanah in the hospital helping a sick friend. **Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil *zy'a*** commented that this man is a "ben Olam HaBa." His prayers were fewer on that day, but he will inherit Olam HaBah in the merit of the *chesed* he performed.

Simanim



In the haftorah of the first day of Rosh Hashanah (I *Shmuel* 1), we read about Chanah, who was sad because she didn't have children. Her husband, Elkanah, asked her, "Why do you cry? Why aren't you eating? I am better to you than ten children."

The Navi continues that Chanah ate but was still very distressed. She went to Mishkan Shilo and davened for children. After her *tefillos* the Navi writes, **ותאכל ופניה לא היו לה עוד**, "She ate, and her sad face was no longer." - So, Chanah davened with joy.

The Chasam Sofer teaches that her joy helped her receive her salvation. Chazal say, **בר"ה נפקדה שרה רחל וחנה**, "On Rosh Hashanah Chanah was remembered," to bear a child, and it was in the merit of her happiness.

On Rosh Hashanah night, we eat simanim, such as apple dipped in honey, and we daven for a good, sweet year. - Words have power. If you say it will be a sweet year, this is like a prophecy, which has the power to be fulfilled.

Rav Shlomo Kluger adds, "On Rosh Hashanah, after *shacharis*, one should say, **כל מה דעביד רחמנא לטב עביד** – 'Everything Hashem does is for the good. **וגם זו לטובה** – 'And this is also good.' - Such words turn things over that everything will indeed be good."

The utmost good *siman* is to be happy on Rosh Hashanah.

If eating foods and saying words that show it will be a good year make an impression on the upcoming year, certainly happiness will make a positive imprint on the year.

The primary *siman* is joy. As the Mishnah Berurah writes, "We do *simanim* for a good omen. Therefore, it's obvious that one must be cautious not to become angry on these days. In addition to the severe sin, one must make a good sign for the new year. He should be happy and trust in Hashem."

People in Yerushalayim would say, "If an apple dipped in honey is a sign for a sweet year, certainly, if a person is a 'sweet Yid,' by keeping a smile on his face and by greeting others warmly, what better omen can there be for a sweet new year?!"

Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer *zt'l* explains that we don't eat sour foods on Rosh Hashanah to avoid making a sour face on Rosh Hashanah. We don't want to show a bitter face on Rosh Hashanah, for it will *chas veshalom* set a precedent for bitterness throughout the year.

Segulos of Tekiyas Shofar

The Shaar HaMelech (3:2) writes, "Before the *brachah* for *tekiyas shofar*, stir yourself to cry a lot, especially when you answer amen to the *brachah*, because that's when it is decided how much money you earn this year."

There are other indications that shofar is mesugal for parnassah. The Gemara (*Shabbos* 117) says, **שופר ורדיית הפת חכמה היא ואינו מלאכה** – "Blowing shofar and removing bread from the walls of an oven require talent, but they aren't *melachos* (on Shabbos)."

Why does the Gemara juxtapose blowing shofar and taking out bread?

The Tiferes Shlomo explains that the Gemara is hinting that shofar is *mesugal* for *parnassah*.

Tefillah



The *tzibbur* is dependent on the chazanim and the *baalei tokeiya* for a good year, therefore, it is important that they be righteous.

The Chasam Sofer teaches that we no longer rely on the baalei tefillah (at least, not as much as people relied on them in the past). Unfortunately, the chazanim are often not sufficiently righteous to pray and to guarantee the community a good year. Therefore, the Chasam Sofer says that each person should consider himself like the chazan.

Everyone should be occupied with teshuvah during the days before Rosh Hashanah, to make himself worthy because his tefillos are needed.

We shouldn't underestimate the value of our tefillos. **The Noam Elimelech zt'l** teaches that when a person prays for himself from the depths of his heart, this tefillah will help him more than when a tzaddik davens for him.

The Beis Aharon writes that when one davens with a minyan, his tefillah is equivalent to the tefillos of the greatest tzaddikim. So, don't underestimate the power of your tefillos.

"A relationship with Hashem is much bigger than any segulah you will ever have." – Rabbi Zecharia Wallerstein Zt'l.

Tears



The Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 59.) states, "From the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, the gates of tefillah were closed. Yet, the gates of tears weren't locked."

The Arizal taught that although Rosh Hashanah is a yom tov, a joyous day, it is important to cry during the tefillah.

In many old machzorim, there are tefillos (*techinos*) written in Yiddish. These were written specifically for women, who in the past often couldn't read lashon hakodesh.

However, in the past, there were also many ignorant men. They were *am aratzim*, and they also didn't understand *lashon hakadosh*. Yet no one composed *techinos* for them. Why is that? Why are there *techinos* composed specifically for women and not for men?

It is because we primarily need the *tefillos* of women because they daven with tears, and tears break down all barriers.

Reb Elyah Lopian *zt'l* said he received a *kabbalah* that on the *yomim nora'im*, the women who stay home to take care of their children have their own individual channel that elevates their *tefillos* before Hashem's throne.

This is partially because of the unique quality of *tefillah* with tears, which women excel in. These *tefillos* are always answered.

Tears touch the heart, and *keviyachol*, something similar occurs when we cry before Hashem. Our tears open all gates, and our tefillos are answered.

Reb Shlomo Kluger *zt'l* taught that one should pray *before* Rosh Hashanah that he should be able to cry on Rosh Hashanah.

The *Alef HaMagen* (582:45 and see *Maaseh Rav, Gr'a* 207) writes that if by nature one is unable to cry, he should pray on Rosh Hashanah in a sobbing voice, the voice of someone crying, for this will rouse his *kavanah* and this will arouse his merits Above. As it states (*Tehillim* **6:9**) **כי שמע ה' קול בכיי**, "Hashem heard *the voice* of my cries."

The Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 59) states that even when the gates of tefillah are locked, the gates of tears remain open.

Reb Eliyahu Dessler *zt'l* offers a beautiful explanation on this Gemara. He says that the gates of tefillah are always open. That isn't the problem. The problem is that we daven without a heart. The heart is closed, so the tefillos don't go up.

How do we open the heart? By davening with tears. When we daven with tears (and in a crying tone), this opens our hearts and awakens our kavanah. And when we daven with kavanah, the gates of heaven are wide open to receive our *tefillos*.

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* taught that **בכי"ה** (crying) is *roshei teivos* **בשמך יגילון כל היום**, "In Your name, we rejoice all day long."

Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer explains that crying isn't contradictory to joy. In fact, when one is happy, he can cry whenever he wants to.

R' Moshe (The Tzaddik) Hoff Shlita

The pasuk in Tehilim 119:91 - **לְמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ עָמְדוּ הַיּוֹם כִּי הַכֹּל עֲבָדֶיךָ** - ***For Your judgments they stand today, for all are Your servants.***

This Pasuk is exactly the same gematria [861] as – **ראש השנה** !

The Way of Emunah – Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Are the Head and Heart of The Entire Year

Sefer Avodas Hatzadikim says in the name of the Sefer Yemos Olam (page 151) that the **Kobriner Rebbe zy"a** did not want his chasidim to study Kabbalah. When they tried to convince him to allow them to learn Kabbalah, he called over a young villager and asked him, "What is Rosh Hashanah?" The boy answer, "The head of the year."

The Rebbe then asked, "And what is Yom Kippur?" The boy answered, "The heart of the year."

The Rebbe then turned to his chasidim and said, "So, does one have to learn Kabbalah?"

Gemilus Chesed Atones for Sins



One of the true segulos to emerge unscathed and be found innocent on the Day of Judgement is to do chesed.

Rabenu Yona writes (Shaarei Teshuva 1:47) that one of the ways to do teshuva is to pursue acts of chesed and truth as is stated (Mishlei 16:6): בְּחֶסֶד וֶאֱמֶת יְכֻפַּר עָוֹן "***With chesed and truth sins will be expiated***."

He says that doing chesed protects a sinner and guards him from suffering. It also saves him from death, as is stated (ibid 10:2): וּצְדָקָה תַּצִּיל מִמָּוֶת "***Tzedakah saves from death***." This is also seen from the Gemara (Brachos 8B): "Anyone who engages in Torah and gemilus chasadim has his all of his sins forgiven."

Rabenu Yona's Drasha in Kelm

Sefer Otzros Hatorah relates an incredible story that was told by **Rav Nosson Meir Wachtfogel zt"l**, Mashgiach of Lakewood. Rav Nosson heard this story while was learning in the yeshiva of Kelm:

One night, during the month of Elul, as the **Alter of Kelm zt"l** lay in his bed, he had a dream. In his dream, he saw Rabenu Yona arriving in Kelm. An announcement was made that Rabenu Yona, the author of Shaarei Teshuva would be giving a drasha at a certain time in the central bais knesses of the city.

When the designated time arrived, the Alter saw all the residents of the city running to the bais knesses. No one wanted to miss the opportunity to hear a drasha from the Shaarei Teshuva himself, especially during the month of Elul.

Of course, the Alter also made his way to the bais knesses. But when he got to the door, his way was blocked. The guard asked him his name and when he said it, he was told that he could not enter.

The Alter began to cry, and he started listing off his yichus, hoping that would convince the guard to let him in. He then told him that he was a teacher of Torah to thousands of students. Despite all of this, the guard would still not allow him to enter.

Finally, he blurted out, "***My son is R' Nochum Velvel***." When the guard heard this, he moved out of the way and allowed the Alter to enter.

At this point, he woke up from his dream. The Alter was very shaken up by the dream. He immediately called for his son, R' Nochum Velvel, and he asked him what zechus he had that made the guard get out of the way and allow him to hear Rabenu Yona's drasha.

After hearing the entire dream, R' Nochum Velvel agreed to tell his father the story: For a long time, he said, his boots had been tattered and torn. He once passed by a shoemaker's store and



noticed a pair of strong, nice boots. He decided to save up money to buy these boots.

He saved penny by penny until, after a number of months, he had enough money to purchase the boots. He went to the shoemaker and bought the boots he wanted.

One snowy, cold winter day, there was a knock on R' Nochum Velvel's door. He opened the door to find a beggar who went around collecting from door to door. The man was dressed in rags and shivering from the cold. R' Nochum Velvel invited him in and gave him some food and a warm drink. He then gave him a sizeable donation and was about to escort him out, when he suddenly noticed that the man had no boots or shoes at all. His feet were only covered with rags, as he walked from house to house in the cold. The man's feet were visibly bruised and bloody from walking almost barefoot.

R' Nochum Velvel asked the beggar about this, and the poor man answered that he had no money to buy shoes. R' Nochum Velvel did not think twice. He immediately picked up his new boots that he had spent so much money on and that had taken him so long to buy. Without a word, he handed them to the poor man as a gift.

It seems, R' Nochum Velvel said, that this is the zechus that allowed you, my father, to hear the drasha of Rabenu Yona! The merit of teaching Torah and all of the good deeds of the Alter of Kelm were not enough to grant him entry. Only the zechus of the act of chesed of his son was able to do so!

Chesed Erases Iniquities

I heard the following amazing story from the tzadik and baal chesed, Rav Mordechai Eliezer Glick shlita of Williamsburg, who heard it from an elderly Yid in Eretz Yisroel:

Over 120 years ago, there were two men living in Yerushalaim who flouted every law of the Torah and did whatever they wanted. They lived this way their entire lives but when they got old, they began to feel some regret. They knew that they were soon headed to the next world and were worried about what would happen to them when they got there.

They decided to start a tzedakah and chesed endeavour to serve as a source of merit for them both. They led this organization together and even reached an agreement that the first one of them to die should return and inform the other how his judgement went in the Heavenly court.

The day arrived when one of them passed away. A short while later, he appeared to his friend and told him: "You should know, my dear friend, that when a person stands in judgement in the World of Truth, he is struck with tremendous fear. Everything a person did is revealed and known Above. A person's entire life is reviewed, and all his actions are shown to him.

Armies of destructive angels that were created by my sins ran to testify against me as I trembled in fear and shame. Then the angels created by my acts of kindness and charity appeared."

The dead man concluded, "You should know that even though I only had a few acts of chesed, they saved me from all of the harsh punishments I otherwise would have received.

All of the gates of Heaven are open to one who is involved with helping others."

A New Reason for a Long Life

The Ponovezher Rov zt"l was once in as hospital, in preparation for an operation. From his hospital bed, he called several of his students who were communal activists and asked if there was anything that could be done right then to help the public, such as opening a new yeshiva or the fulfilment of any other need.

His talmidim asked him why he was asking worried about this while he was in the hospital. Shouldn't he be focused on his operation? Afterwards, when things would be calm and less stressful, they could take care of it!

He told them, "It is related that the doctors who examined **Rav Yisroel of Kozhnitz zt"l** said that he had very weak body and predicted that he would not live very long. Still and all, he lived a long life. His chasidim once asked him how he merited such a long life. He told them: I always accepted upon myself to do one new thing to help the public. When I finished that thing, I started a new thing. Therefore, Hashem could not take me from this world because I was needed to finish the project I was in the middle of for the benefit of others."

The Ponovizher Rov continued: "I am doing the same thing. I am about to undergo a surgery and my life is in danger. I want to make sure that the operation will be successful; therefore, I want to start a new initiative to help the public so that I can be guaranteed that I will be granted life."

Hashem treats us with kindness and rules that a person's mission is never really completed, as one can always find new things to do in this world that will increase his lifespan, as he cannot die while he is involved in important work. This all means that if people accept upon themselves to do chesed and help others, they will merit a long life.

The Power of a Heartfelt Prayer

The Magid of Mezheritch zy"a had a student named **Rav Aharon Gordia (Gordon) zy"a**, who was a famous baal teshuva and a renowned doctor. The following story is related about him:



One day, a young girl came running to his house and cried that her father needed the doctor right away. She said that he was very sick and was near death. Dr. Gorrdia began to prepare himself to go, taking his time as he made his preparations. He went to the closet and got his coat and shook it out of dust and dirt. He then brushed his hat and polished his shoes.

When the girl saw how long he was taking, she began to cry again and she screamed, "Ribono Shel Olam! If the doctor can't hurry to help my father, I ask You to help him! Please heal my father by Yourself!"



Dr. Gordia turned to the girl and said, "Let's go to your house. Hashem has surely already helped your father."

They hurried to her father and found that he had started to feel better. After a short time, he was completely healed.

The man later met Dr. Gordia and asked him why he took so long with his preparations before coming to him. The doctor answered, "When

your daughter came to me and told me about your situation, I immediately understood that there was no natural way to save you. The only way you could be healed would be if Hashem personally sends your salvation. Therefore, I wanted to break your daughter's heart until she cried out to Hashem from the depths of her soul. That was how you were saved."

Our avodah on Rosh Hashanah is to break our hearts with the knowledge that no entity in the world can save us from our troubles besides for Hashem. We must turn to Him and beg for His salvation. We must ask Him to end the old year and its curses and begin a sweet new year of blessing and success.



Shofar

Rav Saadya Gaon lists ten reasons why the Shofar is blown — other than the fact that it is a Mitzvah in the Torah.

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

2] The Shofar sound is a call for us to do teshuvah.

3] It reminds us of Har Sinai — where a Shofar blast was heard throughout the camp. We committed ourselves then to Naaseh v'nishmah — which we should do now too.

4] It reminds us of the mussar, the chastisement, of the prophets which is described as like a Shofar in Sefer Yeshaya chapter 58 and Sefer Yechezkel chapter 33 as "like a Shofar."

5] It reminds us of the destruction of the Bais HaMikdash and arouses us to pray for its rebuilding.

6] It reminds us of Akeidas Yitzchok — and arouses within us thoughts of commitment and self-sacrifice to Hashem — something that will help us in judgment.

7] The sobbing instils Yiras Shamayim into us.

8] It reminds us of the final Day of Judgement.

9] It reminds us of Kibutz Galios — when all exiled Jews will return.

10] It reminds us of Tchias HaMaisim.

Vechol Maaminim - Yaakov Dov Marmurstein



On Rosh Hashanah night, Am Yisrael has the custom of wishing one another the birchas hashanim, a blessing for the year. People linger in shul in order to convey to each other and to receive a brachah to be signed and sealed into the Book of Life.

I have always wondered: If these brachos and good wishes said on this holy night are so important, why is the tzibbur not careful to answer amen after them? Such wonderful brachos, said on such a holy day, with solemnity and heartfelt emotion – why should we not add just a bit of effort and give them fulfilment by answering amen?!

No one doubts the fact that this hour, as the Yom Hadin begins, after so much preparation with teshuvah, tefillah and tzedakah, is a

time for compassion and is a special eis ratzon. It is not for naught that all of Am Yisrael, from the gedolei hador to the simplest people, dedicates its precious time to conveying these good wishes to anyone they encounter; why then should we not utilize it fully to make sure to answer amen for these brachos?!

Just like we fervently shout amen when the chazzan sings the beautiful piyut of "Hayom Te'amtzeinu, Hayom Tevarcheinu," we must answer amen to each and every brachah that we merit to receive from every Yid.

Chazal say (Yerushalmi Brachos 8 8): "Rabi Tanchum said: If a non-Jew gives you a brachah, answer amen, as it says (Devarim 7:14): 'Baruch tihiyeh mikol ha'amim, you should be blessed from all the nations.'" How much more so must we answer amen when we merit to hear brachos from Jews.

It is true that this amen is not the same as answering amen after brachos in which we bless HaKadosh Baruch Hu, or to Kaddish, which are an obligation. Answering amen to this brachah or best wishes from a friend is not obligatory, but it is a zechus that the those in the know will not want to forego. And as we said, especially on this night when we want to multiply our merits – just like answering amen to a brachah in which we bless Hashem fulfils the brachah, likewise answering amen on wishes that we hear from a friend fulfils his brachah.

Let us take care to answer amen to the wishes of a brachah from our friends on Rosh Hashanah night, and throughout the year, and we should all merit to be blessed with a happy, sweet, good year.

"The only thing you can take with you when you leave this world is what you've given away. ~ Rabbi Yisroel Salanter.

R' Shmuel Winzelberg- Torah U'Tefilah

לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם



May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year We have the custom on Rosh Hashanah to bless everyone individually with **לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם לאלתר לחיים טובים ולשלום** – May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year immediately for good life and peace".

It is interesting to note that the custom of the author of the Tur (Orach Chaim 586) was to express this statement in this way: **ואומר נוהגין באשכנז כל אחד מבקש לחברו לו: תכתב בשנה טובה** – The Ashkenaz are accustomed that one person wishes one another: *May you be inscribed **in** a good year.*

Why does he change the format of the blessing from **לשנה טובה** to **בשנה טובה**?

The 'Perisha' explains that in Heaven there is a book titled **שנה טובה**, and all those that merit life are inscribed in it, and so one should bless his fellow that he be inscribed **in** this book. (Umatok HaOhr)

Rosh Hashanah Treasures by R' Shmuel Winzelberg



Rav A. Leib Scheinbaum writes a question asked by **Rav Moshe Rosenblum**. It's an accepted custom, cited by the Rama, that one should not sleep on Rosh Hashanah. The source for this custom is a Gemara Yerushalmi which states that one who sleeps on Rosh Hashanah, his Mazel for the coming year will also sleep.

The question is, does this mean that for the individual who weeps on Rosh Hashanah, his Mazel will also weep? May one who laughs on Rosh Hashanah look forward to a successful year filled with joy? What about sleeping is so compelling?

Rav Rosenblum responds that the world was created for man, and everything that preceded him was created specifically for the purpose of satisfying him. The purpose of this is so that he should acknowledge his debt of gratitude to Hashem and not be an ingrate.

The Alshich notes that not only should one have gratitude for the entire Creation, but he should utilize it to serve Hashem. One who is ingrateful cannot serve Hashem properly.

Man was created on the sixth day of Creation, which was Rosh Hashanah, considering that the first day of Creation was the 25th of Elul. Man was the purpose of Creation, and therefore, the goal of Creation is to instil gratitude.

The first day of the year, the day on which man was created for gratitude, is Rosh Hashanah. Therefore, it makes sense that this day should be full of gratitude, singing Hashem's praises, and thanking Him for all that He has given to us.

The Medrash relates the sequence of events, hour by hour, on the day on which Adam HaRishon was created. At the ninth hour of the day, Adam was commanded not to eat of the Eitz HaDaas, the Tree of Knowledge. On the tenth hour, he ate the fruit, after the snake convinced Chava to eat from it. The eleventh hour was his judgment, and, on the twelfth hour, the verdict of continued life was rendered.

Hashem said to Adam, "This shall be a sign for your children. As you stood before Me in judgment and were cleared, they too will stand before Me on this day of Rosh Hashanah and be cleared."

What was Adam's sin? It was actually two Aveiros. First, he ate of the tree's fruit. Second, he blamed it all on Chava. Essentially, he told Hashem, "It was the woman whom You gave me that put me up to this."

Rashi comments, "Here, Adam was ungrateful." Not only did he not thank Hashem for giving him a wife, he pointed the blame for his Aveiros on his wife and blamed Hashem.

All this took place on Rosh Hashanah, the day where Hakoras Ha'tov should be intensified. Adam appears to have done just the opposite.

Ingratitude is the root of the problem. Chazal say that ultimately Adam was banished from Gan Eden for his ingratitude.

Rosh Hashanah is when we crown Hashem and accept His monarchy over us. Without exhibiting gratitude, one cannot accept the yoke of Heaven. The two go hand in hand.

The Noam Elimelech wonders how the serpent was able to interact with Chava without her husband's awareness. He quotes Chazal, who say that **Adam was sleeping!**

This is why we should not sleep on Rosh Hashanah, the day set aside for Hakoras Ha'tov. It would, in effect, be repeating Adam's Aveirah over again. He slept, so, in turn, we must not sleep!



Torah Tavlin

A grandson of the **Sar Shalom of Belz**, once spent Shabbos in the Hungarian town of Kerestir, after which he continued his travels. A few days later, he stopped in Kalev, where he visited the Rav, the **Be'er Menachem**.

When the Kalever Rav heard where his guest has spent the previous Shabbos, he became excited and asked for his opinion of the renowned Tzaddik, **R' Shayele of Kerestir zt"l**. The man smiled and shrugged. "What shall I tell you, Kalever Rav? I am a traveller, and I am acquainted with many of the great tzaddikim. But R' Shayele - with his leffel, the spoon with which he feeds Yidden, will outweigh all the others in the next world!"

The moments before Tekias Shofar are among the most sacred in the year. Tzaddikim have different customs: some immerse themselves in the mysteries of the Zohar HaKadosh, others are engrossed in a complex sugya in Shas, while many simply recite timeless words of Tehillim.

R' Shayele had a unique avodah at that auspicious hour. As Chassidim generally do not eat before Tekias Shofar, R' Shayele anticipated that the Chassidim would be quite hungry at the end of the lengthy davening. He spent the few minutes before tekios preparing a grand Kiddush so that they wouldn't have to wait to refresh themselves following davening. Just as soon as the tefillos were completed, food would be available for the hungry Chassidim. So important was this task to the Rebbe that he insisted on performing it himself. He stood in the kitchen, concentrating intently as he cut the cake. Only then did he head out to Tekias Shofar.

He once quipped, "Other Rebbes are engaged in 'razin d'razin' (the deepest mysteries of the world) while I do not delve into secrets - I am engaged in 'L'soivah v'lo L'razoin' ("for plenty, not for scarcity.") making sure that Yidden eat their fill!"



One year, on Rosh Hashanah, an overflow crowd filled the Rebbe's court in Kerestir, and there simply wasn't enough food to feed all the guests. On the first night of Yom Tov, R' Shayele sent for Nechemia, the local baker, and asked him to please bake several batches of large challos.

The baker hesitated, arguing that if he were to work on Rosh Hashana, he would be unable to daven properly. "Don't worry. I will daven for you, Reb Nechemia, and we won't blow the shofar until you arrive." Nechemia was calmed by this and, after davening Shacharis alone at the crack of dawn, he got right down to work. He stood by the oven throughout the morning, baking fresh challos.

When he completed the task, he headed over to the beis medrash and only then did the tzibbur begin Tekias Shofar. With R' Shayele pleading on his behalf, Nechemia the baker testified that he merited an unusually blessed year.

"You should speak to Hashem as you would to a friend. And you should pour out your heart in His presence." - ~ Rabbi Nachman of Breslov.

Maaseh Avos Siman Lebonim



New ohel of Shpoler Zeide

Near the resting place of the **Shpoler Zeide, R' Aryeh Leib of Shpola zt"l**, stands the tombstone of a man who *"Sanctified the Name of Heaven in public."* The grave is known by the local townsfolk as "the grave of the martyr, Yossele the Ganev (thief)." But how does one call a martyr a thief?

In 1929, a chasid by the name of Reb Raphael Wiltz (or Wolf) of Skoli, Galicia, recorded in his final memoir, that in 1881 he visited Shpola, in Russia. While there, he questioned a number of local residents about this curious grave, and the following is what he learned from them:

There was a band of thieves in Shpola who maintained a personal connection to the Shpoler Zeide. Whenever one of them was caught and had to serve a sentence, the tzaddik used to send him food and drink and attend to all his needs. He would say: "Ribono shel Olam, Master of the Universe! Just look at my thieves. Why, even the least worthy of them is full of good points!"

It is told that one Rosh Hashana when the prayers were over, the Shpoler Zeide told his congregation that during davening, he discovered to his anguish that the accusing angels had erected a wall between the prayers of the House of Israel and their Father in Heaven. He had turned and toiled in every possible way, seeking some

opening through which he might force his way through - but the iron wall stood firm, locked and bolted, defying any challenger.



"It was then that I recalled my thieves," the Shpoler Zeide went on to explain his congregation, "for they are able to break the strongest of locks. I quickly called them, and straight away they shattered the locks and broke down the wall. A new light shone forth, as the Almighty rose from the Throne of Judgment and rested on the Throne of Mercy. The angels of mercy brought in the prayers of all Israel to the presence of Him Who listens to prayer, and the supplications of His People were accepted graciously. I thank the Almighty that through my thieves I was able to bring about a salvation for all of Israel for the forthcoming year."



Now in Shpola there lived a young burglar of slight and athletic build, who could clamber up any stone wall with the greatest of ease. He was known as Yossele Ganev ("Yossele the thief"), and whenever his colleagues were confronted with a professional problem involving a narrow passage, he would make his services available to the cause.

One day, the local thieves planned to steal a fortune of silver, gold, gems that was found in the main church of Shpola. It stood in the middle of the town, a solid stone edifice with a tall steeple. The only way to reach the interior was for one of them to climb up the steeple, and to break his way inside through a small window near the top.

The little band of burglars collected in the dead of the dark night behind the massive walls of the church, while Yossele climbed swiftly up to the top of the steeple, wriggled in through the little window, and found his agile way in the gloom down the steep interior staircase that took him all the way to the floor. Once there, he piled all the golden icons and other valuables into the tablecloths that he found there.

Suddenly, the night watchmen appeared on the scene outside the church. With exemplary alacrity, the waiting little band disappeared in all directions. And just at that moment, unaware of this sudden change of plans, Yossele stuck his head gleefully out of the window in order to give the signal to his cronies that they should be ready to catch the loot.

The night watchmen looked up and saw a man hanging near the top of the steeple, calling out in a language they could not understand. Overawed by this marvel, he hurried to wake up the parish priest. All the local gentiles were soon on the scene, and when they opened the church, they discovered to their horror that all their bejewelled objects of worship were gone!

They climbed up, seized Yossele, and threw him into prison pending trial. When the day came, and he was brought before the judges, Yossele argued that his intention was only to test whether the icon they worshiped in church was a thing of substance. He decided to visit at night, undisturbed by anyone, and to pray to it that he be granted a more generous livelihood for the support of his wife and two children. If it helped, then he would know it was divine, and he would worship it all his life. When, however, he had prayed there a few times, and had received no answer, he lost his patience, and addressed the icon as follows: "Look, you're fooling everyone around these parts into worshiping you because they think you are divine. But I can see there's nothing to you. Better that I take you and sell your gold; that way at least I'll have a livelihood!"

Yossele continued his explanation to the court: "You realize, your honour, that I have done you a great favour, for now you know that there is no point in worshiping these objects of nonsense!"

The judges were shocked and horrified. Notwithstanding Yossele's logic, they sentenced him to be burned alive in front of the entire populace. After handing him the sentence in writing, the chief justice said: "You still have a way of saving yourself from this wretched death. Because you are so young, and you showed such prowess in climbing to the top of the steeple, we have decided that if you convert to our religion, we will let you live. Not only that: we will give you all kinds of gifts and make you rich."

The answer was bold and clear: "I, Yossele the thief, have committed plenty of sins in my lifetime. But to betray his faith, that Yossele the thief will never do, even if he is tortured by all the means in the world. Why would you exchange the living G-d for a dumb stone, fashioned by the hands of mortal man, a thing which wasn't even able to defend itself against me?

Yossele may be a thief, but to change his faith, that he will never do, whatever happens."

He was thrown back into his prison cell, and when the day arrived, an eager crowd assembled to watch the spectacle. He stood next to the fierce flames of a burning barrel of tar, and the parish priest addressed him in measured tones: "My son, you still have a chance to save yourself from a horrible death - join our Religion of Love. If not, you will be thrown into this burning barrel and boiled alive."

Once again, the answer rang loud and clear: "I, Yossele the thief, may be a thief, but to change my faith - never!" They seized his shackled hands and plunged them into the barrel. Yossele writhed in unspeakable agony. He was held up only by the hands of the burly gentiles who surrounded him. But he cried out at the top of his voice:

"Yossele the thief will be burned in fire - he will suffer all the tortures you can invent - but he will not convert!"

When it was all over, his mortal remains were handed over to the Jewish community for burial, and the simple gravestone in the old cemetery of Shpola records the date of his martyrdom.

"Nu, what do you say about my thieves now?" the Shpoler Zeide would say. "Just see what good points they have to their credit!"



Frum.org - Weekly Dvar Torah by Michael Winner

Rav Shimshon Pincus asks a very interesting question which leads us to better, understanding of Rosh Hashanah.

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 17b) writes, "What if the Jewish people were found completely evil on Rosh Hashanah, and it was decreed that they will have meagre rain, but in the end they changed their ways? To add more rain for them is not possible, because the decree was already made. Instead, Hashem brings the rains down when they are needed, and on the areas where they are needed.

What if the Jewish people were found completely righteous on Rosh Hashanah, and it was decreed that they would have abundant rain, but in the end, they changed their ways? To take rain away from them is not possible, because the decree was already made. Instead, Hashem brings the rains down at the wrong times, and on the areas where they are not needed."

Then there is another Gemara (Beitza 16a), "All of a person's sustenance is allocated to him between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur."

We grow up thinking that Rosh Hashana is a time of judgment over the past year. If we were good, we get rewarded with life for another year. If we were not, we are not. However, if this were

true, one, the world would be far less populated, and two, we should have Rosh Hashanah on the last day of the year, not the first.

Also, as we know, reward for mitzvos is not given in this world (for the most part), but rather is given in the World to Come. If so, what exactly is this judgment?

Let's take two people, for example. Both received salaries of 500,000 dollars a year. One is healthy and lives a normal lifestyle that is within his means. The other is not and has to spend most of his time and money on medical procedures. Which one has "life"?

Or let's take two people both receiving 500,000 dollars a year. One gets it because he's some popular speaker and travels around the country a few times a year to speak. The other has to work day and night with very little rest to make it. Both have the same amount of money in the end, but which one has "life"?

Rosh Hashanah is not a time of judgement over the past year and does not determine which reward or punishment we get for the next. When we are asking for "life," we are asking for a life where we can focus on the important things. When a Ben Torah asks for income, for example, he's asking for enough income to support his family, educate his children, see that his wife is happy, and that he can use as much time as he can in Torah and mitzvos, instead of having to run around all day trying to make ends meet.

Hashem can give income in many different ways. As we saw in the first Gemara mentioned above, we can be given plenty of rain, but it might be put to waste. Or it could be given at the last minute, when the farmer was stressed and worried throughout the winter that he didn't have any rain. Yes, in the end he got it, but he had a very worrying and stressful year awaiting it.

So, that is the "life" we are asking for on Rosh Hashanah. Not just a life of living and breathing, but rather a life where one can

minimize his worries in this world in order to properly use his time and energy in investing in the next.

With that, I wish you all a wonderful Shabbos, Rosh Hashana, and a healthy year full of life.

We Dip the Apple in Bee's Honey and Not Date Honey

The Rema (Orach Chaim 583:1) brings down the famous minhag to dip a sweet apple into honey on Rosh Hashanah and daven that it should be a good omen for us to have a sweet new year. For this purpose, we traditionally use honey made by bees. In Parshas Ki Savo (Devorim 26:9), the Torah describes Eretz Yisroel as a land flowing with milk and honey. This expression also appears in Parshas Bo (Shemos 13:5), where Rashi writes that the honey for which Eretz Yisroel is praised is that which flows from dates. Similarly, Rashi writes in his commentary on the Gemara (Eruvin 4b) that whenever the Torah discusses devash [honey], it is referring to honey that comes from dates.



If so, why do we use honey made by bees instead of date honey, which is the devash of the Torah?

Rav Yisroel Reisman notes that a key difference between the two types of devash is that date-honey flows naturally from the sticky fruit and is therefore easily gathered, while the sweet honey produced by bees can only be obtained with significant effort and danger. To remove honey from a beehive, one must cover his entire body in special garments to protect him from the angry swarming

bees, and even then, there is a risk that some of the bees will manage to sting him as he takes their precious honey.

When we dip an apple into honey as a symbolic sign for a sweet year, we do not use date-honey because something that is easily acquired does not represent the sweetness that we desire, which is the product of hard work and the occasional painful sting.

As we know from our own life experiences, an accomplishment that is only reached after much struggle and exertion is far more gratifying than one handed to us on a silver platter, and for this reason, we specifically use bee honey on Rosh Hashanah to denote the type of sweetness we seek in the year ahead.

Rav Reisman adds that this insight can also help us appreciate why the Rema specifies that we should use a sweet apple for this practice, even though sweet apples are typically red, which is a colour associated with sin. However, although the apple appears red externally, it is white on the inside. Sweet years are never purely white, and there is always an element of redness mixed in. The true sweetness comes when we persevere in spite of the setbacks and challenges represented by the red peel and uncover the whiteness waiting within. (R' Ozer Alport)

From The Teachings of Rabbeinu Shimshon Dovid Pincus Zt"L - The Coronation

Rosh Hashanah is the day when man was created. On this day, *Hashem* opens the storehouses of Heaven and showers the whole world with plenty, life and blessing. On this day, the world is created anew. This is the day when *Hashem* is crowned.

In olden times, after the king's coronation, his procession would parade through the streets of the capital. The king would have a sack of gold coins in his hand and would toss them out to the poor.

The poor would grab up the gold coins and shout out in a great voice, "Long live the king!"

On the day that *Hashem* is crowned, when He becomes King over the newly created world, He tosses out the treasures of heaven toward us, and we all shout out in a great voice.



Imagine the king is parading through the streets of the capital, and instead of tossing gold coins, he tosses diamonds. But no one bothers to pick them up. What an insult to the king!

We have Rosh Hashanah, *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, Yom Kippur. The King is tossing diamonds in our direction. This is the day when all the treasure houses of heaven are open. These days are full of *chesed*, days of happiness and joy.

And what is our *avodah*? - To pick up the diamonds!

Get It in Writing

At an engagement celebration, the Kallah's father was asked to put into writing the financial commitment that he promised to the young couple. He did not want to do so, saying that they should take his word for it since he was a very dedicated father who always watched out for his children.

R' Elchonon Wasserman, who was present at the time, immediately answered the Mechutan's claim based on the Tefila we say in Shmoneh Esrei during Aseres Yimei Teshuva.

זָכְרֵנוּ לְחַיִּים. מֶלֶךְ חָפֵץ בַּחַיִּים. וְכָתְבֵנוּ בְּסֵפֶר הַחַיִּים

We have already asked Hashem to remember us for life, why do we then say to inscribe us in the book of life? Hashem does not forget and is equally devoted to His dear children. Nevertheless, we ask to have it in writing. From here we see, said R' Elchonon, that as honorable a person may be... always get it in writing!

Understanding the Pomegranate Omen



There is a universal custom on Rosh Hashanah to eat foods that are considered auspicious signs for the year ahead. Many people are accustomed to eat pomegranates while expressing a tefillah: **שירבו זכויותנו כרמון** – that our merits should increase like a pomegranate".

This is commonly understood as a reference to the fact that pomegranates have many seeds, as we petition Hashem to enable us to do many mitzvos in the coming year.

However, if that were the intention of the request, we should ask: **שירבו זכויותנו כגרעיני רמון** – that our merits should increase like the seeds of a pomegranate".

The wording we employ suggests that our focus is on the fruit itself, not its seeds?

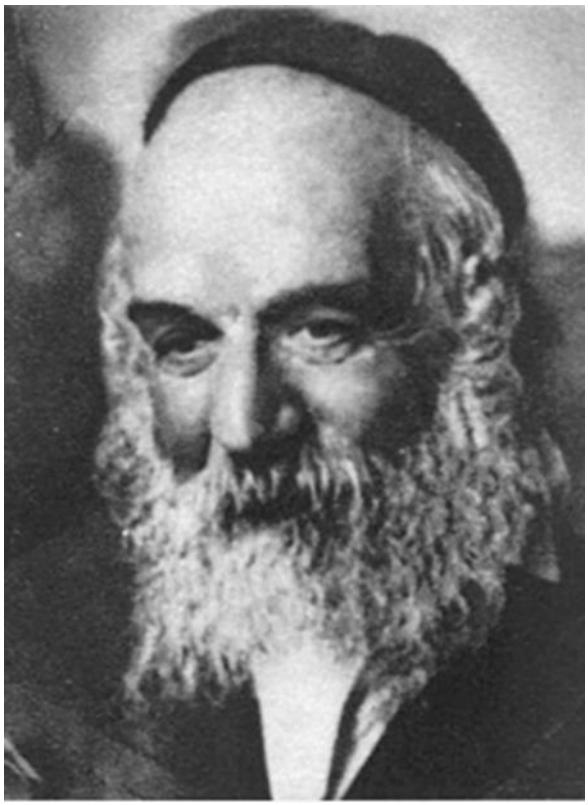
R' Ozer Alport quotes his friend Michael Kopinsky who says that he was troubled by this question for many years, until he travelled to Eretz Yisroel and learnt in a yeshiva with pomegranate bushes on the grounds. As he observed the growing fruits, he noticed that as the seeds expanded, the skin did not. Instead, the peel hardened, and

the developing seeds eventually cracked through, thereby enabling them to break out and propagate.

With this insight, he posits that our tefillah is not that we should have many merits, but rather that they should continue to grow and expand until they break through our self-imposed limitations and spread out around the world to propagate further.

The Forbidden Shofar Blast

Rav Gamliel Rabbinowitz, Shlit"a relates, "I heard a story about the **Munkatcher Rebbe (Rabbi Chaim Elazar Spira)**, whose grandson asked him every day in the month of Elul to blow the Shofar for him, and so, every day in Elul, he took out the Shofar and blew for him.



On Erev Rosh Hashanah, the grandson again asked to hear the Shofar as he had every day for the last month, however, we do not blow the Shofar on Erev Rosh Hashanah, for several reasons. But the grandson did not want to hear that we do not blow the Shofar on that day, and he burst into tears, which tore at the heart of his grandfather, as he urged him to blow the Shofar for him.

The Munkatcher Rebbe could not take the crying of his grandson, and since he had no other way to silence the cries of the child, he said that he would blow just one blast, and no more, just to stop his crying, and that is what he did.

On Rosh Hashanah, before Shofar blowing, the Munkatcher Rebbe stood to give his arousing Drashah before the blowing, and he said,

"I sinned a great sin before Rosh Hashanah," and he told the congregation about what he did, because he could not take the crying of his grandchild who wanted to hear the Shofar.

And then the Tzadik started crying himself. He lifted his eyes to Shamayim and made his request, "Ribono Shel Olam! Please, also hear the sound of our crying, and may You blow one blast of the Shofar for us, as we say in the weekday Shemoneh Esrei, 'Sound the great Shofar for our freedom!' Please redeem us already, your Nation of Klal Yisroel, from this long exile!"

Rav Gamliel continued and said, "Immediately after I heard this story, a young man came to see me. He was brokenhearted from the pain and distress that his wife was causing him, to the point that he decided to leave her, since he could no longer bear being with her.

I told him the story of the Munkatcher Rebbe, and I told him that if he goes back home, I promised him that it would be a great salvation for Klal Yisroel. I told him, "If you control your emotions, Hashem will have mercy on His people!"

He immediately accepted this, and he went back home, of course, with direction and encouragement on how to continue, and today, Baruch Hashem, they are living in harmony and peace!" (*Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg's Torah U'Tefilah.)*

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

If someone prays to Hashem for something out of a sense of entitlement – that is a defective prayer, for one's merits are limited. If, however, a person prays to Hashem for something due to Divine mercy – that is proper prayer, for His mercy is limitless! (**Harav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev**)

Parsha Potpourri, by R' Ozer Alport

וַתֵּלֶךְ הָאִשָּׁה לְדַרְכָּהּ וַתֹּאכַל וּפָנֶיהָ לֹא־הָיוּ־לָהּ עֹוד (Haftorah Day 1 - Shmuel 1 1:18)



The Haftorah that is read on the first day of Rosh Hashana tells the story of the birth of a child to the heretofore barren Chana. When Chana's husband Elkanah ascended to the Mishkan in Shiloh to offer sacrifices, he gave the best portion to his beloved wife Chana. Nevertheless, she was unable to enjoy it, as Elkanah's other wife, Penina, provoked and angered her, leaving her crying and unable to eat. Instead, Chana went to the Mishkan to beseech Hashem to see her pain and suffering and grant her a child.

When the Kohen Gadol, Eli, observed Chana praying silently at great length, he was suspicious of her conduct and accused her of being drunk and not displaying the appropriate respect for the Mishkan. Chana corrected him and explained that she was completely sober, but was in intense anguish over her plight, and she was pouring out her heart to Hashem in prayer. When Eli heard Chana's reply and realized that he had been mistaken in his judgment of her, he gave her a beracha that her request should be fulfilled, at which point she left the Mishkan with her depressed appearance gone and her appetite restored.

The Brisker Rav points out that we see here the tremendous emunchas chachamim - trust in the Sages - of Chana, as Eli had not guaranteed her anything, but had simply given her a blessing that Hashem should answer her prayers. Yet even though Chana entered the Mishkan feeling broken and despondent, she had so much

confidence and trust in the beracha of a tzaddik like Eli that she viewed his blessing as if it was already fulfilled, and she left full of joy and optimism.

This is even more remarkable in light of the fact that Chana had just experienced Eli making a tremendous mistake in assuming that she was drunk, leaving her humiliated and forced to correct him.

If this happened today, somebody in her shoes would be tempted to conclude that this individual isn't as righteous as he's reputed to be and wouldn't put much faith in a beracha from such a person. However, Chana was able to understand that everybody is human, and the blessing of the Kohen Gadol who had just made a major error was still as valuable to her as if it was already actualized.

Rav Chaim Kanievsky notes that if Chana had such tremendous faith in Eli's blessings, she could have gone to him at any point to ask for one. Why didn't she ever approach him directly ask him for a bracha prior to this incident? He explains that the Gemora (Berachos 31b) derives from this episode that somebody who falsely suspects another person is required not only to appease him, but to give him a blessing. It wasn't just the raw power of a beracha from the Kohen Gadol that made Chana optimistic, but the fact that it was a beracha that he was obligated to give her, which gave it more strength and a better chance of being fulfilled. Since this would not be the case if she simply requests a blessing from him, she never did so.

"If one finds it difficult to become a talmid chacham, do not give up and quit. All beginnings are difficult, but nothing stands in the way of one with a strong will to accomplish. The esssential thing is to be sincerely resolved to be successful." ~ The Chazon Ish.

Rabbi Elimelech Biderman - Even the Last Momment

On Erev Rosh Hashanah (and every day of the year), in Minchah we say, בָּרֵךְ עָלֵינוּ אֶת־הַשָּׁנָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־כָּל־מִינֵי תְבוּאָתָהּ לְטוֹבָה "***bless this on our behalf... this year...***"

Why, a few moments before the year ends, do we ask Hashem to bless this year? Why could this help us at this time?

The Sar Shalom of Belz zy'a answered simply, that this isn't a question because Hashem can bring a salvation in an instant.

Honey - דבש



Rabbi Yonassan Eibeshitz says that the word **דבש** is the same gematriah as the word **אשה** - 306.

Reb Chaim Kkanievski Zt'l brings a Chazal that tells the story of a married couple who after many years, unfortunately had not been blessed with children. They decided to separate and go and re-marry other individuals to give them both a chance of having children.

He married a woman that turned out to be wicked, and she married a man who also turned out to be wicked. After some time, he became wicked like his new wife. But his first wife turned the wicked husband into a good person. - We learn from this that the woman is the cornerstone of the house. And all goodness stems from her.

Reb Chaim says that if a sheretz would fall into honey, it would eventually turn into honey. This is meramez in this gematriah.

127 - Rabbi Dovid Heber



Rabbi Yaakov Ades points out that during Rosh Hashanah we lein 127 pesukim (i.e., both days of krias hatorah and haftaros), hinting to the number of years in the life of Sarah Imeinu who was remembered on Rosh Hashanah.

As is well known, 127 is the number of provinces ruled by Achashverosh in Megilas Esther. The Midrash Rabbah (Esther notes that when the talmidim of Rebbi Akiva were dozing off, Rebbi Akiva reminded them that the number of provinces Esther Hamalkah ruled over is the same number of years which her grandmother Sarah lived — 127.

The Chidushei Harim (Parashas Chayei Sarah) explains that Rebbi Akiva was showing his students the importance of time and how critical it is not to waste it (as the dozing students were doing). For every year Sarah lived and served Hakadosh Baruch Hu, Esther received a province, so for every week of Sarah's life, Esther received a city. Every hour has value and every moment of good brings s'char.

Like Sarah Imeinu, every moment of our lives should be utilized for Torah and mitzvos. The number 127 illustrates how time must be properly utilized, It is a reminder that when the coming year begins, the previous year with all its opportunities, like every year before that, is over — never to return.

It is interesting to note that in chutz laAretz, the maximum number of times we recite **יַעֲלֶה וְיָבֹא** in davening during the course of one year is 127 (e.g., in 5779). In this tefillah we daven to Hashem **וּפָקְדֵנוּ בּוֹ לִבְרָכָה**- Remember us, be pakeid like Hashem was pakad Sarah.

If with each passing month and year we utilize our time properly - lichvod Shamayim, we too will be zoche to the brachos bestowed upon Sarah Imeinu and we will all be granted a **כתיבה וחתימה טובה**.

Be Proud – Rabbi Joey Haber



There is a frum community in Passaic New Jersey. One day, a frum man pulls up to the gas station. He gets a tank full of gas. The attendant said to him, "I just want to tell you something, - one of your people was here before, and he got a tank full of gas, and he ran off without paying! I thought you religious Jews didn't do things like that."

The frum man thinks to himself, 'I can't believe this, what a chilul Hashem. Who would do such a thing? But I can fix it, I can make a kiddush Hashem.'

So he Tells the gas attendant, "I will tell you what, I will pay for my gas and I will pay for his as well!"

A few days later, he forgets about the whole episode. Three weeks later, he reads an article in a newspaper – ' ***Gas attendant found guilty of defrauding religious Jewish customers and embezzling their money***!'

The gas attendant knew that every one of us would feel bad and pay up for a brother or sister that we never met!

How proud are you of this story? The world knows who we are and what we stand for!

This time of the year, we are not sheep that are clueless. We are full of fear and pride. A soldier who is about to greet his King. We are privileged to be able to say "**הַמֶּלֶךְ הַקָּדוֹשׁ**" again, and again, and again. To be able to say **"אבינו מלכנו"** – my Father, my King. He is here. I get a chance to be part of His family. He is the King, and He is my Father.

Yes, we have restrictions. Yes, we live different because that's what it takes to be part of royalty.

Chizuk - Inspiration

There is a fascinating Mogen Avrohom (Orech Chaim 54:2) which cites the custom during the Aseres Yemei Teshuva (the Ten Days of Repentance) to say right after the Tefilah (prayer) of "Yishtabach", the Mizmor (psalm) of "MiMaamakim Krasicha Hashem" – from the depths I call out to you, Hashem.

What does this Mizmor have to do with the Aseres Yemei Teshuva?

Rav Yechiel Hindi, author of Talmei Yechiel explains **Rav Elya Lopian ZT"L** in his "Lev Eliyahu (Vol. I Shvivei Lev p. 262)" who cites **Rav Simcha Zissel Ziv of Kelm**, that MiMaamakim Krasicha Hashem teaches us that each and every Jew has within the inner depths of his soul, an immutable sense of truth that can never be dislodged. Some people can reach this sense of truth easily, but others have to dig deep to reach it. MiMaamakim Krasicha Hashem - we call out to Hashem from the depths, to reach that sense of truth which guides us to see that we should and must do Teshuvah.

We recite this Mizmor during the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah to remind us of this inner sense of truth that we all have and to use it to repent.



Giving tzedakah on erev Rosh Hashana is considered a great mitzvah. In fact, as a result of Jews giving tzedakah, the Heavenly Gates of Mercy are opened wide. For in the same measure that we take pity on the poor, Hashem takes pity on us. ~ Ohr Hachayim

Daven to Daven

Before every tefillah, I daven…that I will daven during the davening. ~ The Divrei Chaim of Sanz

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

לעילוי נשמת ר׳גרשון בן ר׳אריה ליב ע״ה

Where does the title **ראש השנה** – **New Year** come from? It is not found anywhere in the Torah. We can understand why **יום הדין** is called so- **יום הזכרון** or **יום תרועה** because we say **שופרות**.

Where does Chazal get this concept from?



Rav Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld says a phenomenal thing: If you break down the two main factors of what **ראש השנה** represents, you have - **יום הדין** (**בר״ה כל באי העולם עוברין לפניו כבני מרון**) and it is also a day when we celebrate the coronation of The Ribboino Shel Olam as our king.

So, there is the fear of the Yom Hadin, as well as the simcha of the coronation. Where do we see this?

There is one Pasuk in T'nach that encapsulates within it, these two concepts: **לְמִשְׁפָּטֶיךָ עָמְדוּ הַיּוֹם כִּי הַכֹּל עֲבָדֶיךָ** '***For Your judgments they stand today, for all are Your servants***.' (Tehillim 119:91)

The first part of the Pasuk is referring to the **יום הדין**. The last 3 words refers to the concept that we all **עבדים** to Hashem - **אין מלך בלא עם**. We accept Your reign over us, and we are subject to You.

Rav Yosef Chaim says in his amazing wisdom: If you add up the gematria of the words in this Pasuk, you get 861 which is exactly the gematria of the words **ראש השנה**!

So, this Pasuk has within it the essence of **ראש השנה**! And this is why we call it so.

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

סימני ראש השנה

On *Rosh HaShana*, everything we do is imbued with extreme significance. We stand in judgment before the Heavenly Court while each of our actions, words, and thoughts are scrutinized. To assist our efforts in currying Divine mercy, we employ various customs transmitted by our ancient *mesorah*.



Among them is the regimen of the *simanim*, literally signs or omens. These are the foods that we bring to the table at the beginning of the evening meal as auspicious indications of a propitious year to come. There is an amazing **סדר סימני ראש השנה** that we have. The Gemarah in *maseches Horayos (12a)* says that a person should do it in any language and any manner that he can. *Abbaye* goes as far as saying that the benefits are gained by merely 'gazing' at these items! For instance, the *Kaf HaChaim* writes that if one is concerned about insect infestation in one of the *simanim*, or if one does not enjoy eating a particular *siman*, he may fulfil the custom by placing the item on the table and looking at it.

The Chofetz Chaim writes that with each siman, one says a tefilla - **יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלוֹקֵינוּ וֵאלוֹקֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ** and some meforshim say that you can say the Shem HaShem whilst saying it.

The Chofetz Chaim writes in the Mishna Brurah that because of this, there is an inyan not to sleep on Rosh Hashana so that the mazal should be awake the whole year. (**The Arizal** says that this refers

to the first part of the day.) Because if somebody is sitting around doing nothing, it is akin to sleeping and then his mazel will do likewise. Therefore, we should stay active with Torah, Tehillim, Mitzvos and Gemilas Chasadim.

The Brisker Rav was known to say Tehillim in his spare time all through Rosh Hashana. One of his talmidim asked him, "Why are you not learning Torah?"

He replied – "Every moment of Rosh Hashana is so precious, and when you are learning, it is inevitable that you will have to get up to find a particular sefer to look something up. Of course this can be considered as part of the learning, but I am missing out on seconds – and every second counts and is so valuable towards the outcome of the coming year!"

The Chofetz Chaim writes in the Mishna Brurah that all these simanim are very valuable, but the most important siman is not to get angry on Rosh Hashana.

One of his talmidim was once sitting with him on Rosh Hashana, and the Chofetz Chaim said, "The most important and beautiful siman that we can do on Rosh Hashana is – the **הארת פנים** (the smile/light) of one's face of one Yid to another!"

On Rosh Hashana, a person should do whatever they can to be benevolent to others. A person who smiles, helps, gives bracha and encouragement to another Yid. This is the ultimate siman! - **כָּל הַמְרַחֵם עַל הַבְּרִיּוֹת מְרַחֲמִין עָלָיו מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם** – ***'Anyone who has compassion for Hashem's creatures will receive compassion from Heaven.'***

If we show* אהבה ואחוה ושלום ורעות *to others – than Hashem will radiate* אהבה ואחוה ושלום ורעות *back to us for a good judgement!

Rabbi Yechiel Emanuel- Leil Shishi Series

בטעם אמירת יהי רצון לפני אכילת הסימנים

Rabbi Shlomo Kluger 1786-1869 (Chochmas Shlome **סימן תקפג**) says that the simanim and the **יְהִי רָצוֹן** are not brought as a Tefillah, **דאין מקום לתפילה בשעת אכילה** - '***There is no place for prayer while eating. Only this is for reassurance and faith because it shows that he believes and trusts that it will be***.'

בטעם אמירת יהי רצון לפני אכילת כל סימן וסימן בליל ראש השנה כתב החכמת שלמה (סי' תקפ"ג סע' א') וז"ל הנה הטעם מ"ש בש"ס ובשו"ע לאכול דברים טובים ומתוקים אין הכוונה דרך תפילה דאין מקום לתפילה בשעת אכילה רק זה הוי לבטחון ואמונה כי מראה שהוא מאמין ובוטח שכן יהיה

The whole idea of the simanim is only for us to display our strengthening of our Emunah and Bitachon in Hakadosh Baruch Hu that this is what is going to be in the coming year!

דבר"ה יהיה האדם שמח ויאמר כל מה שעשה הוא יתברך הוי לטובה, ובזה יהיה נהפך באמת לטובה

On Rosh Hashana, a person should be happy and make others happy, and say," I believe that everything that Hashem has done for me until now has been **לטובה**, and that everything in the future, will also turn out to be **לטובה**.

ולכך מהאי טעמא נראה שיהיה אדם רגיל לומר בר"ה אחרי תפלת שחרית כל מה דעביד רחמנא לטב עביד - וגם זו לטובה

When a person has finished Schacharis, he should say, "Everything that Hashem has done for me, is for the good."

ולכן מה"ט תקנו לאכול מאכלים טובים ומתוקים ולומר עליהם כן כדי שאם ח"ו נגזר להיפוך יהיה נהפך ע"י אמירה זו לטובה אמן כי"ר

And to say about these foods that they are good and sweet, and they hint to good omens that will come about in the coming year.

When the **Sefer Hachinuch** talks about the mitzvah of Birchas Hamazon, **ס' החינוך מצ' ת'ל** - he says that he has a kabbalah from his

Rebbe, that anyone who is meticulous in bentching carefully, he will receive sustenance all his days!- **הזהיר בברכת המזון מזונותיו מצויים לו בכבוד כל ימיו**

It is guaranteed: We are never going to be lacking, **תָּמִיד לֹא־חָסַר לָנוּ וְאַל־יֶחְסַר לָנוּ מָזוֹן לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד** - '***we have never lacked and we will not lack food forever and ever.***' Because we believe that the source of all sustenance comes from Hashem, and He is The Benevolent One - **הַזָּן אֶת־הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ בְּטוּבוֹ בְּחֵן בְּחֶסֶד וּבְרַחֲמִים** - '***Who nourishes the entire world with His goodness, with favour, with kindness, and with mercy***.'

In Zemiros Kol Mekadesh we say - **סועדים בו לברך שלוש פעמים** - '***eating so as to bless three times***' ; We think that when we come to the end of a seudah, it requires us to say Birchas Hamazon – Wrong! – We have the seuda to enable us to say these beautiful tefillos. Because **שַׁבַּת קֹדֶשׁ מְקוֹר הַבְּרָכָה** -Shabbos is the source of all bracha! - So, by bentching with kavanah, with Emunah and Bitacon – this will guarantee us sustenance and bracha.

Blessing for Long Life

It is a wonderful practice of families to get into the habit of making their berachos out loud. Not only does this allow for the berachos to be made complete with the answers of the complementing Ameins, we also give our loved one the blessing of Long Life; for the Gemora says: "Whoever answers Amein will enjoy quality days and length of years." ~ **R' Moshe Meir Weiss**

Always remember that you are a Jew. Because the minute you forget, someone else will come along and remind you. ~ Torah Tavlin

Starting The New Year Right: A Guide to The Simanim On Rosh Hashana By Rabbi Moshe T. Schuchman



Introduction

On *Rosh HaShana*, everything we do is imbued with extreme significance. We stand in judgment before the Heavenly Court while each of our actions, words, and thoughts are scrutinized. To assist our efforts in currying Divine mercy, we employ various customs transmitted by our ancient *mesorah*. Among them is the regimen of the *simanim*, literally signs or omens. These are the foods that we bring to the table at the beginning of the evening meal as auspicious indications of a propitious year to come. What are the origins of this unusual custom? How can we be meticulous in its performance? How do we harness its power to usher in a year of prosperity?

Origins of the Custom

There are two different *Talmudic* passages discussing *simanim*. In both tractates, *Abbaye* deduces that it is worthwhile to interact with various foods on *Rosh HaShana* to effect a benevolent judgment in Heaven. The version in *maseches Horayos* quotes *Abbaye* as saying that the benefits are gained by merely 'gazing' at these items, while in *maseches K'risos* the text states that these items must be 'eaten'. A third variation of the *Talmudic* text is quoted by the *Ran*, 'to bring' these items to the table. The *Ran* reports that *Rav* Hai Gaon would have a basket of these foods brought to

the table, whereupon he would hold each item and recite an appropriate *bakasha*.

It is our custom to eat the *simanim*. Nevertheless, there are situations when one may merely 'gaze' at the items. For instance, the *Kaf HaChaim* writes that if one is concerned about insect infestation in one of the *simanim*, or if one does not enjoy eating a particular *siman*, he may fulfil the custom by placing the item on the table and looking at it.

Identifying the *Simanim*

Abbaye lists five significant *simanim*: *Kara,* gourd (such as pumpkin); *karsi,* leek; *silka,* beet; and *tamri,* date. The translation of the last item, *rubia*, is disputed. This word resembles the Hebrew term for abundance and increasing (*l'harbos*); therefore, it is associated with plants that produce many off-shoots. The *Mechaber* follows *Rashi's* interpretation of *rubia* as *tilsan*, a type of shamrock or clover, while others identify it as fenugreek, sesame seeds, or black-eyed peas.

Why have these particular foods been singled out? *Rashi* (*K'risos* 6a) explains that these foods either have quick growth cycles or possess a sweet taste. The *Geonim*, cited by the *Mordechai*, points to a linguistic significance of their names, which is suggestive of good omens. *Rubia* indicates that our merits or assets should increase in the coming year. *Karsi* suggests that our enemies should be "cut down"; *silka* and *tamri* refer to the removal and "obliteration" of our enemies.

The *Geonim* mention the age-old custom of eating additional items not mentioned in the *Talmud*. This includes eating the head of a sheep, as a request that *Hashem* place us in a position of leadership and not subordination. Another ancient practice is partaking of fatty meat and sweet beverages as a sign of a prosperous and sweet new year.

The *Geonim* trace this custom back to the second *Beis HaMikdash*, when *Ezra* and *Nechemia* instructed the people on *Rosh HaShana* to "Go and eat fatty dishes and drink sweet drinks."

The *Tur* remarks that Jews have always added to the list of *simanim*. In fact, regarding the *siman* of *rubia*, the *Magen Avraham* states that any food which sounds like the word for 'abundance' in any language may be used. For this reason, many individuals eat carrots since the Yiddish word for carrot is *mehren*, which is similar to the word *mehr* or 'more'. Accordingly, many years ago, *Rav* Heinemann *shlita* introduced a now famous Baltimore *siman* to take lettuce, half a raisin and celery as an indication to 'let-us-have-a-raise-in-salary'.

Apple In Honey

Any preschooler will tell you that the most important *siman* is the apple dipped in honey. Although it is not mentioned in the *Talmud*, the *Tur* records it as an old *Ashkenazic* custom. While some simply attribute its origin to the lack of availability of the items mentioned in the *Talmud* , the major commentators attach deep and esoteric meaning to this *minhag*. *Maharil* says that the *tapuach* is reminiscent of the sweet aroma that accompanied *Yaakov Avinu* when he appeared before *Yitzchok* to receive the *brachos*. Morever, honey represents an additional significance in that the numerical representation (*gematria*) of honey (*d'vash*) is equivalent to 'Merciful Father'.

The *Levush* mentions that there is also an *Ashkenazic* custom to dip *challah* in honey. The *Kaf HaChaim* notes that this *minhag* has also been adopted among some *Sefardim*. This *minhag* is commonly followed during all of the meals on *Rosh Hashana*, at the *seudah hamafsekes* before *Yom Kippur*, and on *Hoshana Rabbah;* others maintain the custom through *Simchas Torah*.

Related Prayers

From the *Talmudic* statement, it appears that the *siman* is effective alone simply by eating or gazing at it. Nonetheless, the *Ran* recounts that *Rabbenu* Hai recited an appropriate *tefillah* as he took each *siman*.

Rishonim and later *Poskim* both emphasize that eating the *siman* is secondary to the *tefillah* which accompanies it. *Abudarham* mentions two customs of how this is done. The first is to utter a short supplication with each *siman* i.e. on a pumpkin one says, "Our decree should be torn." The second custom proscribes an entire prayer, "*Yehi Ratzon Mil'fanecha*", complete with recitation of the *Shem HaShem*. It is permissible to use the *Shem HaShem* because it is in the context of a prayer. However, *Rav* Shlomo Zalman Auerbach would recite it for the first *siman* only, since one must have the proper concentration when uttering it. (If a particular *siman* is unavailable, the *Kaf HaChaim* notes that the *bakasha*, supplication,may still be recited.)

Brochos

Does one recite separate *brochos* on the *simanim* during the meal? Generally, the *brocha* of *Hamotzi* includes foods eaten during the course of a meal. However, since the apple dipped in honey is not a normal 'meal' food, it does require its own *brocha*. The *minhag* that places the apple at the beginning of the order raises a problem, since the *simanim* also include items belonging to the *Shivas Haminim* such as dates and pomegranates, which take precedence in the order of *brochos*. Therefore, some *Poskim* recommend keeping fruits of the *Shivas HaMinim* off the table or in a different room until after the *brocha* is made on the apple, while having in mind to include the other fruits with that *brocha*. There is *halachic* justification for those who leave the fruits on the table.

The foods used for the *simanim* requiring a *ho'adama*, such as pumpkin and carrots, are usually in a form of a regular 'meal' type food and therefore do not require their own *brocha*. Those who use candies, such as jellyfish, should make a *she'hakol* before eating them.

Another issue is when to recite the *bakasha*. If it is said between reciting the *brocha* and eating the fruit, this may constitute a *hefsek* (interruption) and invalidate the *brocha*. *B'd'eved*, if this was done, the *brocha* does not need to be repeated since the *tefillah* can be justified as relating to the *brocha*. To resolve this problem, the *Rema* writes that one should say the *bakasha* after eating the fruit. It is sufficient to eat only a small bit, less than a *k'zayis*. For those *simanim* that do not require their own *brocha*, it is proper to say the *tefillah* before eating them.

When to Serve the *Simanim*

Abbaye established having the *simanim* at the "beginning of the year." Some *Poskim* maintain that this means that these *simanim* should be eaten at all four meals of *Rosh HaShana*. *Elyah Rabba* and *Mateh Efraim* say that they should be eaten at both night meals, but not during the day. The *B'nei Yissosscher* derives from the words "*Reish Shata*" that the proper place is at the very beginning of the new year, on the first night only. *Rav* Shlomo Zalman Auerbach would also eat the *simanim* on the second night, but without all of the fanfare accorded to them on the first night.

***Simanim* or Sorcery**

The *P'risha* (16th century, student of *Maharshal*) raises a serious issue concerning the entire *minhag* of the *simanim*. The *Torah* prohibits any form of sorcery or divination. If so, how can we suggest that using certain foods can influence our

fortunes in the coming year? There are three different approaches to resolve this difficulty.

1) This problem was raised many centuries earlier by the *Geonim*. They were challenged by those who state that this *minhag*, as well as others (such as *kapporos* before *Yom Kippur* and gazing at the fingernails in the light of the *havdalah* candle) violate a *Torah* prohibition of divination. They responded that any action which is established in the written *Torah* or Oral Law cannot be considered *nichush*.

2) An opposite approach is taken by the *Meiri*. He holds that *simanim* do not have intrinsic power or benefit. The purpose of *simanim* is to simply awaken our hearts and inspire us to direct our goals for the new year along the proper path. To accomplish this, he explains that *tefillos* were instituted to accompany each *siman*.

3) A third opinion is offered by the *Maharsha*. He draws a distinction between *simanim* which are an omen for a positive outcome, and forms of sorcery where a negative result is understood to signify an ominous future. The latter may constitute *nichush*, interpreting a situation as a negative omen, something which is prohibited by the *Torah*. On the other hand, partaking of the *simanim* on *Rosh HaShana* is permitted since these actions symbolize a good future.

The *simanim* remind us that our every activity on *Rosh HaShana* is charged with meaning. If the foods we eat are so consequential, then certainly our conduct is critical. Accordingly, the *Mishneh Berurah* reminds us to spend these awesome days with a pleasant comportment in a mood of sublime joy. No less than abstaining from sour foods, any trace of anger or annoyance should be diligently avoided. Thus, we will be assured a favourable judgment for a pleasant and sweet new year.

למודי משה

על המועדים

The *Tur* at the beginning of *Hilchos* Rosh Hashanah (581) *paskens* that we should bathe and take haircuts in honour of the Yom HaDin, based on the following Medrash:

Yisroel are unlike the nations of the world. When there is a court case against them, they wear black, grow their beards, and grow their nails long because they do not know the outcome of their court case.

Yisroel are different. They wear white, cut their hair, eat and drink and are happy on Rosh Hashanah knowing that HaKodosh Boruch Hu will perform a miracle for them.

There is a problem, however. This Medrash seems to conflict with the Gemara in Rosh Hashanah (32b) which states, "Why don't Yisroel recite *Hallel* on Rosh Hashanah? Because when the Books of Life and Books of Death are open before Him, is it possible that Yisroel should sing?" - This appears to contradict the above Medrash of the *Tur*.

Many answers are given, one of them is that the *Tur* is talking about Klal Yisroel as a whole, whereas the Gemara in Rosh Hashanah is talking about individuals. Klal Yisroel as a whole are guaranteed to merit a good judgement on Rosh Hashanah, however, each individual isn't.

R' Elyah Lopian would say that the best way to merit a good judgment is to be part of Klal Yisroel, as Klal Yisroel are always going to be judged favourably. R' Elya would say, that there is a very simple way to merit a good judgement and to be written in the *sifrei chaim*

[book of life]. Klal Yisroel are always going to be around, and will always be written in the *sifrei chaim*, if one wants to merit to be written along with them, one simply has to make himself part of Klal Yisroel, one has to make himself someone that Klal Yisroel needs and benefits from.

The way to do this is by being *mezakei horabbim*, once Klal Yisroel needs him, then he will automatically merit being written in the *sifrei chaim*.

In a similar vain, **R' Yeruchom of Mir** would make sure not to get an *aliyah* on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, as he didn't want to be singled out, he wanted to be judged along together with the rest of Klal Yisroel. If one acts as part of Klal Yisroel, it is much easier for him to merit being written in the *sifrei chaim*.



ברוך ד' יום יום יעמס לנו הקל ישועתנו סלה ***Baruch Hashem yom yom yaamos lanu ha keil yeshuaseinu selah.***

Rosh Hashanah (unlike other Festivals) is celebrated for two days even in *Eretz Yisrael*. *Chazal* decreed the second day because the witnesses heralding the sight of the new moon arrived late, causing the *Leviim* in the *Bais Hamikdash* to chant the wrong daily *shir*, song. (At that time *Rosh Chodesh* was set by witnesses attesting to seeing the new moon.)

Horav Yosef Chaim, zl, m'Baghdad posits that Hashem caused this error as He wanted *Rosh Hashanah* to be a two-day *Yom Tov*. He waits to judge us on the second day, allowing the first day to be set aside for adjudicating the gentile population.

Understandably, the first day's judgment is harsh, while the second day is moderate in comparison. We are more likely to receive the seal of life on the second day.

Rav Yosef Chaim explains the above-mentioned phrase in the following manner: *Baruch Hashem*, we bless Hashem because *yom yom*, He gave two days for *Rosh Hashanah* in order for Him to judge us on the second day, so that *yaamos lanu*, for our benefit, so that we should receive a verdict for life. This is how *HaKeil yeshuaseinu selah*, the Almighty saves us. Everything is by design, even that which seems to be an error.



The Power of Speech

The power of speech is very significant, and saying positive things can cause good things to happen.

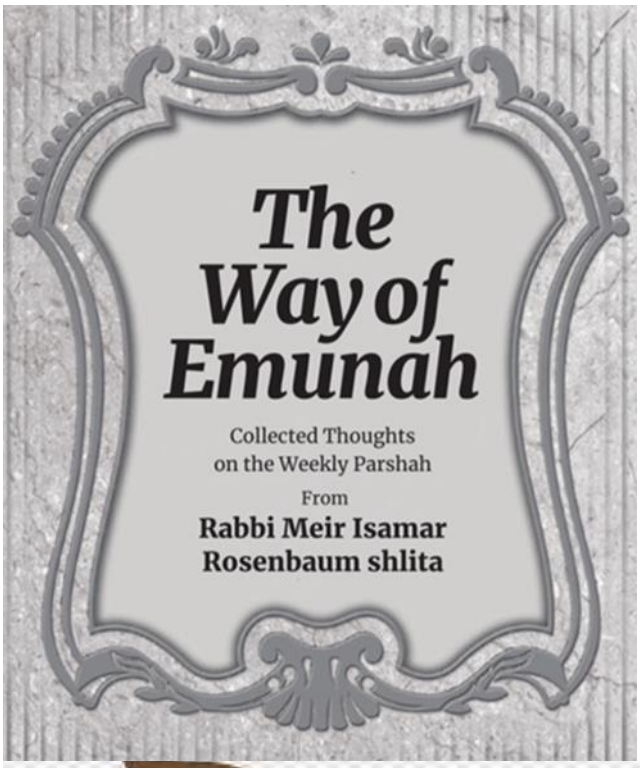
People tend to complain and say that things aren't going well. They would be wiser to get into the practice of saying that everything is good. Their words can cause change for the better.

Reb Shlomo Kluger zt'l says that this is the reason we say on Rosh Hashanah night the **יהי רצון** by the *simanim*. We verbalize that it will be a sweet year, and our words create that reality.

It states (Koheles 9:17) **דברי חכמים בנחת נשמעים** - "*The gentle words of the wise are heard*."

נחת is roshei teivos **נר חמור תרנגול** (candle, donkey, rooster).

Wise people speak like Reb Akiva, and say that everything is for the good, and then it becomes so.



Crowning Hashem With The Power of Achdus

The reason why increasing achdus is the best way to prepare for Rosh Hashanah is because the main avodah of the day is to crown Hashem as our king, and this can only be done through the power of unity.



The Karliner Rebbe (quoted in Bais Aharon) discerns this from the pasuk (Zechariah 14:9): "On that day, Hashem will be one and His name will be one." Everything depends on oneness. If we are one, we can crown him as the One.

The Bais Avrohom of Slonim zy"a sees this idea from the pasuk (Devarim 14:15) that states: "From amongst your brothers, you shall appoint a king over you." This means that when Yidden act like brothers who all love each other, we will merit appointing Hashem as our king. We see that when we are united, Hashem will emerge as our king, and He will mercifully annul all decrees against us.

Tefillos Accepted Through Achdus: Sefarim Hakedoshim say that the power of achdus is so great that it allows our tefillos to be accepted and for us to receive an abundance of goodness and blessing.

One Who Values His Friend Has His Prayers Accepted:

The pasuk states (Malachi 3:16): "Then the G-d-fearing men spoke to their friends, and Hashem listened and heard it."

The Aryeh D'Brei Ilai zy"a explains this to mean that when Yidden speak to each other as friends and value each other by considering every friend to be "G-d-fearing", then Hashem will listen and accept our tefillos.

Like One Body



Rav Yechezkel of Kuzhmir zy"a once went to visit **Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy"a**. When he went to take leave of Rav Bunim, the Rebbe escorted him for quite a distance, until they reached the outskirts of the city. Rav Yechezkel then turned around to escort Rav Bunim back towards his house. As they were walking, Rav Yechezkel took out his box of tobacco and gave it to Rav Bunim to sniff.

Rav Bunim asked, "How did you know that I needed 'a shmek tabak' right now?"

Rav Yechezkel answered, "When you pick up the tobacco to your nose, how do you know that your nose needs 'a shmek tabak'? Obviously, it is because it is part of your body, so you know what it needs. So too, when two people love each other they become like one body, and they feel what their friend needs."

The Malachim Speak Well of Us

Whether or not our tefillos are accepted depends on how we bless each other and wish all of our friends a "kesiva v'chasima tova." It is very important to give this blessing with a full heart, as it is very powerful in Shomayim.

The angels who carry our tefillos bring these brachos directly to Hashem's throne and they serve to create fiery malachim who speak well of us. This is as the **Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch zy"a** (quoted in Sefer Sichas Mahariyatz 5705) said: "There are two angels who accompany us. When they hear everyone telling their friends on the night of Rosh Hashanah: 'L'shana tova tichasev v'seichasem' with a pure heart, they ascend upwards as defenders of the people to ask that they be granted a good year."

Most People Do Teshuva at The Beginning of The Day This is especially important because on the night of Rosh Hashanah, the time when everyone blesses their friends with a good year, it is an auspicious and opportune time.

The Bluzhever Rebbe zy"a (Sefer Tzvi L'Tzadik) writes that the vast majority of Jews do teshuva immediately when Rosh Hashanah starts. Therefore, it is certain that this is a holy time when we can create a tremendous nachas ruach for Hashem.

If you say, I won't bother Him (Hashem) for such a small thing; I'll try to catch the bus myself, without Him, you're off the tracks already.

In everything you try to do, remember to include Hashem; He doesn't mind being bothered. ~ R' Avigdor Miller

Why 'Rosh Hashanah' Is Called So



The name given to each Yom Tov is intrinsically linked to the theme of the day. As such, it is curious to note that the upcoming Yom Tov is called Rosh Hashanah ("Head of the Year"). Why was this name selected to encapsulate the essence of the day instead of a seemingly more appropriate name, such as Yom HaDin [the Day of Judgment] or Yom Teruah [the Day of Blowing the Shofar], the name by which it is referred to in the Torah (*Bamidbar* 29:1)?

Rav Shimshon Pinkus explains that Rosh Hashanah is the most crucial day of the year, and everything that happens to us throughout the year is dependent upon this day. Every important event in our personal lives and in Jewish history – both triumphs and tragedies – was conceived on Rosh Hashanah, regardless of the calendar date when it actually took place.

This unparalleled significance is alluded to by the name "Rosh Hashanah," as the head is different than every other limb and organ in the body.

If a person stretches his hands skyward, he can extend his reach by approximately two feet. If he raises up his legs by climbing to the top of a tall building, he can add several hundred feet, but by definition, all parts of the body have finite power, with one exception: The head is effectively unlimited in its abilities.

The nose can perceive distant scents, the ears can hear sounds like thunder that come from many miles away, and the eyes can see the light of distant stars that are thousands of light years from earth.

Even more powerful is the brain, which can produce thoughts that reach all the way to the *Kisei Hakavod* (Throne of Glory). Even while standing on earth, a person's mind can be completely connected to Hashem. Thus, just as the head is more far-reaching than every other part of the body, so too Rosh Hashanah – the Yom Tov named for the head – is more influential than every other day of the year. Just like the head, the potential inherent in Rosh Hashanah – into which we are able to tap – is boundless and infinite.

While this explanation is inspiring, it begs the question: Why in fact is this Yom Tov so powerful?

Rav Pinkus explains that Rosh Hashanah is the anniversary of the creation of Adam. Adam was so spiritually great that he was capable of altering the future of the entire world through one transgression.

In the positive direction, had he refrained from sinning, he would have brought the universe to its ultimate rectification, and the final redemption would have arrived immediately.

On Rosh Hashanah, the entire universe is recreated, and just as at the time of the original Creation, Hashem's Omnipotence is on full display, with no limitations, and just like Adam, each of us possesses the ability to build worlds or destroy them.

The name of the Yom Tov alludes to this phenomenon by telling us that just as the reach of the head is unbounded, so too on Rosh Hashanah – the "head" of the year – anything is possible.

The Gemara (*Yevamos* 64b) teaches that Sorah was not only barren, but she did not even have a womb. Nevertheless, her *tefillos* were miraculously answered and she conceived and gave birth to Yitzchok.

When were Sorah's supplications answered? On Rosh Hashanah (*Rashi* to Rosh Hashanah 11a), the day when the world is recreated with no restrictions. Just like Sorah, we have the opportunity on Rosh Hashanah to reinvent ourselves with new strengths and

abilities for which we have always longed, no matter how impossible it may seem.

Unfortunately, Rav Pinkus notes that most people do not take advantage of this unparalleled opportunity to change because we do not truly believe that it could happen, and we limit our *tefillos* to things we view as within the realm of possibility.

On Rosh Hashanah, one has to realize that for one day, there are no laws of nature and the sky is the limit. Just like the force possessed by the head, the "head" of the year is a day of unlimited potential, just waiting for us to recognize and utilize it as we begin life anew.

Through our *tefillos*, *teshuvah*, and *mitzvos*, we must demonstrate to Hashem our intention to take advantage of this opportunity to remake and elevate our lives and provide Him with affirmative justification to grant us another year. (**R' Ozer Alport**)

Why We Don't Say B'Ahavah

The Taz (Orech Chaim 582:3) writes that we do not say the word "b'ahavah" (with love) during davening davening on Rosh Hashanah because the teruah represents "din" (strict judgment) and "there is no ahavah in din."

Sefer Zichron Shmuel notes that this is difficult to understand. It would seem that we should say "b'ahavah" as a prayer to sweeten the judgment with love.

He answers that the halacha is that someone who loves or hates someone else is not allowed to judge him. The reason we don't say "b'ahavah" is because the blowing of the shofar represents judgment. When Hashem sits to judge Klal Yisroel and he wants to show mercy to us, the Satan could complain that because He loves us, He is not a valid judge. Therefore, we do not recite "b'ahavah" so that the Satan should not come to complain about this love.

The truth is, however, that Hashem does love us, and He will have mercy upon us. He will judge us favourably and grant us a good year. May we all merit a year of blessing and may we see the ultimate redemption speedily in our days.

Run in Fear From Him, To Him



Rabbi Dr. Avraham Twerski once recounted a telling incident: He was sitting in the office of a pediatrician. In the waiting room there was a mother with her child. A happy child. Bubbly, playing, smiling.

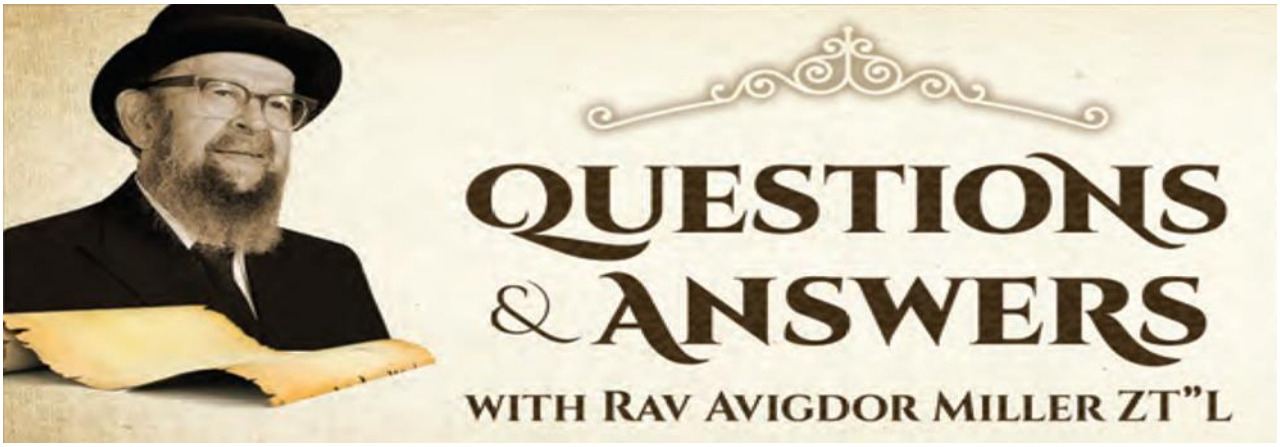
The mother had brought him in for his third vaccination. As soon as the doctor came out in his white coat, the child took one look at the doctor and let out a shriek. 'Yah! Yah!" He knows what's going to happen with this guy. This guy's up to no good. He goes around stabbing little kids. So, he holds tightly on to his mother. His mother picks him up and walks him into the treatment room, with him kicking and screaming. And he can't understand. What happened to my mother, why's she doing this to me?

He has no way of understanding that this pain that he is going to go through is somehow going to save his life.

The interesting thing is that after the doctor stabs him and gives him the shot, the child grabs the mother. So, I thought, why is he holding on so tightly to the mother? Isn't she the one who collaborated with the monster? - The child can't figure that out, but he knows that his security is the mother.

This is our attitude on Rosh Hashanah. The Books of Life and Death are open before us. It is a frightening feeling, like we recite in

unesana tokef. We are being judged over our very lives. We are petrified of the Heavenly Judge and want to run away. - Where can we run? Run from Him, to Him. He is our security. He is our *bitachon*. He is our hope.





Why do we wish people a 'ksivah vachasimah tovah'? What's a brachah going to help? Doesn't the judgment of Hashem on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur go according to a person's deeds?

Absolutely a man is judged according to his deeds. But the answer is, that's part of your deeds, to bless the Am Yisroel. And that's why when we pray, we say *kosveinu* and *chosmeinu* – *b'lashon rabbim*. "Write *us* in the book of life." And we're thinking, "Hashem, remember *us*. All the members of our shul. All the people who come to our *shiurim*. Our wives. Our children. Our grandchildren. All the *bnei yeshivah*. Satmar Yeshivah. Mir Yeshivah. Chaim Berlin. Bobov. Torah Vodaas. Passaic. The Slabodka Yeshivah in Eretz Yisroel. And Chevron. And Mir. And Ponovezh. And all the girls' schools too. Beis Yaakov, Yeshivah of Brooklyn, Prospect Park, all the *frum* girls.

Then, you think about all their fathers and mothers. All the Jews who keep *kashrus* and Shabbos and *taharas hamishpachah*. All the

Jews who are busy keeping the Torah. We say, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu, bless them all!"

Think of the Jewish nation in general, but also think about the details. You can think of your father-in-law and your mother-in-law, besides your own parents. Think of your cousins, your children, your grandparents, your grandchildren. Think about *all of them*. This is very important what I'm telling you now. It's not a small matter. We want a good year for *kol Yisroel amecha*, the whole Jewish people.

We love the Jewish nation. I love the Jews in *Teiman*. I love the *Sefardi* Jews in America. I love the *chassidisheh* Jews in Williamsburg. We love all the *frum* loyal Jews. - Some of them are much better than us. And we love them anyhow. We love Boro Park. Say that. Say, "I love Boro Park! I love all the *frum* Jews in Boro Park. Ribono Shel Olam, watch over all of the Boro Park *frum* Jews and all of the Flatbush *frum* Jews." Say it!

And Hashem says, "Oh; now I see that you mean business. You're blessing My children. And now I'll get busy blessing you."

Yiras Shamayim

Chazal say, "Everything is in Heaven's hands, except for yiras Shamayaim." **The Rebbe of Kotzk zt'l** explains that when one prays for material matters, Heaven decides whether it is good for him to receive this or not. But when one prays for Torah, mitzvos, and yiras Shamayim, his requests are always answered, because that is unquestionably a good thing.

Chazal hint to this when they say, everything is up to Heaven to decide whether to give it or not, the exception is when one prays for yiras Shamayim, because Hashem will certainly give it to him. ~ **R' Elimelech Biderman, Shlita**

A True Prince Thinks Big

In our *tefillos* on Rosh Hashanah we repeatedly proclaim Hashem as our King. Using a parable told (in a different context) by **R' Nosson Zvi Finkel, R' Shlomah Niman *shlita*** (Baltimore) explained what we should take away from this fact:

A king was hiring a tutor for his son, and many candidates touted their expertise in different areas. The candidate who was ultimately hired claimed to be an expert in horses, diamonds, and human nature.

One day, the prince and his tutor attended a horse show. The prince saw a handsome and powerful-looking horse, and he wanted to buy it. "Don't!" the tutor whispered. "It throws its riders."

Wanting to test the tutor's claim, the prince asked the seller to ride the horse. Sure enough, the horse threw the seller. Grateful, the prince gave the tutor ten dollars.

Another day, the prince and his tutor attended a gem show. The prince saw a sparkling diamond, and he wanted to buy it. "Don't!" the tutor whispered. "It's a fake covered with a shiny veneer."

The prince tested the tutor's claim by applying something sticky to the stone, and sure enough, the shiny coating of the diamond peeled off. Grateful, the prince again gave the tutor ten dollars.

Some time after, the prince said to the tutor, "You've shown your expertise in horses and diamonds. What about human nature?" asked the prince.

"I hate to break this to you," the tutor answered, "but you are not from the royal line; you're a foster child." -Furious, the prince ran to the king and repeated what the tutor had said.

"It's true," the king admitted. "But how did you know?" he asked the tutor. The tutor responded: "Each time the prince wanted to thank

me; he gave me a mere ten dollars. He thinks small; he doesn't think big like a real prince would."

R' Neiman continued: On Rosh Hashanah, we proclaim that Hashem is King. And, says the Torah (*Devorim* 14:1), we are Hashem's children. It follows that we are princes, a fact that obligates us to "think big," to expect more of ourselves, and to set higher goals for ourselves in the coming year than we might do otherwise. A true prince would do no less.

L'Maaseh

A young avreich once came to **Rav Moshe Feinstein** to ask him for his advice. He had been offered a job to serve as chazan for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur in a certain shul but was concerned because the Shulchan Aruch and poskim write that one who serves as shaliach tzibur for the yomim noraim must be chozer b'teshuva (repent).

Scared by the thought of violating this directive, the yungerman suggested that perhaps then, he shouldn't take the job.

R' Moshe heard his question and began to chuckle.

When asked for an explanation, the rosh yeshiva answered: 'and so if you don't take the job, you don't have to do teshuva?'

What Makes our Tefillah So Special

Regarding tefillah, it is difficult to daven properly in this world that is full of distractions. One must struggle to have kavanah. But this is what makes our tefillos most precious of all. **~ R' Elimelech Biderman**

Torah Fax by Rabbi Zalmen Marozov - Montreal, Canada



Q. One reason for sounding the Shofar on Rosh Hashana is to recall the Giving of the Torah at Sinai. What connection does the Giving of the Torah have with Rosh Hashana?

A. Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Barditchev gives the following parable: A king got lost in a forest. He wandered deeper in the woods, until he lost all hope of ever finding his way out. One day, he met a man who led him out of the forest and helped him back to his kingdom.

The king rewarded the man greatly and made him one of his closest friends. One day, the man sinned against the king. Knowing that he was about to be severely punished, the man asked of the king to grant him one last wish--that he be allowed to wear the same clothes that he wore when he saved the king. The king agreed. As soon as the king looked at him, he remembered how the man saved his life. This invoked feelings of affection by the king and he forgave the sinner and restored him to his position.

The same is with the Jewish people when we stand before G-d in judgment on Rosh Hashana. When G-d wanted to give the Torah He approached many nations, but no other nation was willing to accept the restrictions and responsibilities of the Torah and mitzvot. Only the Jewish people accepted the Torah and crowned G-d as their king.

Sounding the Shofar on Rosh Hashana recalls the giving of the Torah when only the Jewish people were there for G-d. We remind G-d that we were there for Him when no one else was. So too, we ask that He will be merciful to us and grant us a happy and healthy New Year.

10 Degrees of Elevation: A Shofar Primer



There is a Torah commandment to blow the Shofar on Rosh Hashana, and thus, of course, we must do so irrespective if we understand the reasoning and the depth behind this exalted Mitzvah or not.

However, the commentaries often provide more depth into understanding the Mitzvos, to help give us a better taste and understanding into some of the complexities built into the Mitzvos that we are fortunate to have been commanded to fulfil by our Creator, the Melech Malchei Hamelachim, Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

The Mitzvah of Shofar is no exception, and indeed, there are 10 ideas taught to us by **Rav Sa'adia Gaon**, and quoted by the **Abudreham**, to help us better relate to the Mitzvah of Shofar, and why we were commanded to blow it on Rosh Hashana, in a way that will make this simple yet lofty Mitzvah more understandable to our often shallow minds.

1) Rosh Hashana is the beginning of creation. It was customary at the beginning of the reign of a new king to blow trumpets and other horns to herald the new reign of the ruler and to ensure that all the subjects of the kingdom "heard" about this important milestone. So too, we blow the shofar to herald the "new" reign of Hashem, our King at the new "beginning" of his reign.

2) Rosh Hashana is the beginning of the 10 days of repentance, which culminate with Yom Kippur. The Shofar is blown as a proclamation to all to do Teshuva, and all who fail to get the message and fail to do

Teshuva have only themselves to blame for not heeding the call of Teshuva. This was also common at the beginning of the reign of a new king; they would announce the edicts of the king and give everyone a chance to fall in line, or else.

3) The shofar blasts remind us of "Ma'amad Har Sinai", the tremendous display of Hashem's power that was evident at Sinai. There, there were strong Shofar blasts and our forefathers proclaimed "Na'aseh V'Nishma". So too on Rosh Hashana when we hear the blasts of the shofar, we must reaffirm our commitment to uphold the Torah at all costs, Na'aseh V'Nishma! 19:16 Shemos – **וְקֹל שֹׁפָר חָזָק מְאֹד וַיֶּחֱרַד כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר בַּמַּחֲנֶה**

4) The Shofar reminds us of the words of our holy prophets, whose penetrating rebukes and chastisements are likened to Shofar blasts. When we remember their words, it is supposed to bring us to repent. 33:4 Yechezkael - **וְשָׁמַע הַשֹּׁמֵעַ אֶת־קוֹל הַשּׁוֹפָר וְלֹא נִזְהָר**

5) The Shofar reminds us of the Churban Bais Hamikdash, the destruction of our holy temple (May it be rebuilt speedily in our days), and the battle cry of our enemies who destroyed it and exiled us. When we hear the blasts, we should beseech Hashem to rebuild our Bais Hamikdash to its eternal glory. 4:19 Yirmiyahu - **לִבִּי לִי אַחֲרֵישׁ כִּי קוֹל שׁוֹפָר שָׁמַעַתְּ נַפְשִׁי תְּרוּעַת מִלְחָמָה**

6) The blasts of the Shofar, the ram's horn, remind us of Akeidas Yitzchok, where our forefather, Yitzchok Avinu was ready to sacrifice his life for Hashem, and the ram that was stuck by its horn, which was sacrificed in his stead. We too must be ready to give our lives for Hashem, and to live our lives in a way that brings Kiddush Hashem. Invoking the zechus of Yitzchok is also a tremendous benefit to us on Rosh Hashana that our judgement will be a good one.

7) Hearing the shofar blasts naturally cause trembling and fear to grip us and thus a vehicle to bring us to broken-heartedness before Hashem, and make us reach out to Hashem to save us. 3:6 Amos – **אִם־יִתָּקַע שׁוֹפָר בְּעִיר וְעָם לֹא יֶחֱרָדוּ**

8) The Shofar blasts remind us of the upcoming Yom Hadin Hagadol, the ultimate judgement day, with the arrival of Mashiach, and bring us to teshuva, for fear of still having unresolved sins when he arrives. 1:14-16 Tzfaniah - **קָרוֹב יוֹם־ה' הַגָּדוֹל.. יוֹם שׁוֹפָר וּתְרוּעָה עַל הֶעָרִים הַבְּצֻרוֹת וְעַל הַפִּנּוֹת הַגְּבֹהוֹת**

9) The Shofar blasts remind us of the impending "Kibutz Galuyos", the ingathering of all of Klal Yisroel from all four corners of the earth, as a precursor to Mashiach's arrival, and to cause us to yearn and crave for this to happen already.

This event will take place with great fanfare and with Shofar blasts. (See text of the 10th bracha of Shemona Esrei, Teka B'Shofar Gadol…. 27:13. Yeshaya - **וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִתָּקַע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל וּבָאוּ הָאֹבְדִים בְּאֶרֶץ אַשּׁוּר וְהַנִּדָּחִים בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוּוּ לַה' בְּהַר הַקֹּדֶשׁ בִּירוּשָׁלָם**

10) The Shofar blasts remind us of Techiyas Hameisim, the resurrection of the dead which will happen during Yemos Hamashiach, may it be soon, and hearing the shofar should strengthen our belief in Hashem and our firm belief that He will awaken the dead when He deems it the right time to perform this ultimate miracle displaying His complete and total control over every aspect of His universe. Shofar blasts will be part of the awesome display of the no-longer-concealed Oneness of Hashem at Techiyas Hameisim. 18:3 Yeshaya - **כָּל־יֹשְׁבֵי תֵבֵל וְשֹׁכְנֵי אָרֶץ כִּנְשֹׂא־נֵס הָרִים תִּרְאוּ וּכְתָקְעַ שׁוֹפָר תִּשְׁמָעוּ**

Ain Od Milevado! If we study and internalize all of the aforementioned ideas and incorporate them into our fulfilment and understanding of the Mitzvah of Shofar, we will have no choice but to be moved and elevated to a better spiritual place on Rosh Hashana, and hopefully for the entire New Year, and New Days of Mashiach ahead!

Only One Request - Rabbi Moshe Michoel Halberstadt



The Medrash in Tehillim relays that when Dovid Hamelech made his impassioned plea of **אחת שאלתי וגו' שבתי בבית ה' כל ימי חיי וגו'** - ***I have one request… allow me to dwell in the house of Hashem my entire life***," Hashem questioned how he could preface his Tefillah with the words **אחת שאלתי** – "I ask for one thing" and then go on to present an entire list of requests?

Dovid Hamelech responded that as a servant of Hashem, he learned from his Master. "Initially, You said, **ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך כי אם ליראה** – And, now, Yisroel, what does Hashem ask of you but to fear Him,' and You concluded with many commandments, as it says, **ללכת בכל דרכיו** – to go in all of His ways."

Dovid Hamelech's response is hard to understand. Did Hashem preface His many commandments with the words **אחת שאלתי**– I have one request? No! He simply gave several commandments. How can Dovid Hamelech compare this to his list of requests which he prefaced with the words "**אחת שאלתי**?"

The Gemara in Berachos (33b) states: **הכל בידי שמים חוץ מיראת שמים וכו'**, everything is in the Hands of Heaven besides for fear of Heaven, as it says **ועתה ישראל מה ה' אלקיך שואל מעמך כי ליראה אם** – that Hashem asks that we fear Him, indicating that it's in our hands. Why doesn't the Gemara also cite the rest of the list mentioned in that verse? Doesn't this indicate that everything is in our hands – not just fear of Hashem?

It appears from this Gemara a great chiddush, that all one needs to do himself is to achieve **יראת שמים**, and the rest of that list will

automatically follow! All Hashem asks of us is to fear Heaven. Fear of Heaven will result in **הליכה בדרכיו** and the rest of the list.

Dovid Hamelech understood this and in turn made one request – only one – from Hashem - **שבתי בבית ה' כל ימי חיי**, let me remain in the house of Hashem, and the rest of his requests will come along automatically.

One who has Torah has everything. Our job is to arm ourselves with Torah and Yiras Shamayim. Through that, we are sure to be **זוכה בדין**.



Memories Of The Chofetz Chaim by A. Ben-Yitzhar

There are certain times and moments that cannot be described in words. Rather their contents speak for themselves. Hours, which by virtue of your having lived them, can take you back at any time to generations past.

This was the feeling we had when interviewing one of the Chofetz Chaim's early talmidim. His name is HaRav Kalman Farber. For ten years he studied under the tutelage of Maran, the author of Chofetz Chaim and Mishna Berurah, zt'l.--Ten years of life spent on a different plane, one of holiness, ruchniyus, otherworldliness. - This can be understood by those for whom the very name Chofetz Chaim elicits a certain tremor, for whom not a day goes by without reaching for one of the tens of his holy seforim.

Are there any among us who can remain impassive when sitting in the presence of an elderly man, who retains a clear, bright picture, of his esteemed rebbe, Maran the Chofetz Chaim, and who is able to reenact his many conversations, sayings and mannerisms?

Rav Kalman Farber is more than willing to share his wellspring of memoirs; all one has to do is sit and absorb his every word uttered

in his inimitable deep voice, a voice whose clarity has not been marred by advanced age.

"So it's the Chofetz Chaim you came to hear about?" Rav Farber opens the interview. "Ahh, three generations have passed since then. Three whole generations separate us from those days, that era. Today nothing is the same. Different concepts, a different generation!" He becomes lost in thought but quickly shakes himself out of his reverie. "O.K. I'll try to tell you stories that have not yet been published in all the books about the Chofetz Chaim," begins Rav Farber.

"For two years I had the privilege of participating in the limited minyan of yeshivaleit who davened Shacharis together with the Chofetz Chaim in his tiny room.

When I had just arrived at the yeshiva, the Chofetz Chaim was still able to get around independently, albeit slowly, and with two bochurim supporting him on either side. Later on though, this too was difficult for him and he would come to the yeshiva with "Avrumke, the baal agola." [In eastern Europe at that time the main means of local transportation was a horse and wagon. Avrumke had a horse and would take the Chofetz Chaim wherever he needed to go.] However, he continued to daven at home and a steady minyan of bochurim was arranged.

Shemiras Hayodayim

"I noticed that whenever the Chofetz Chaim saw a fly or some other pest that he wanted to chase away he would hold the corner of his tallis or his handkerchief, but he would never use his bare hands. Also he never touched his face with his hands.

"For many years I could not understand the reason for this; the face is considered a naturally-exposed area of the body which one may see and touch. Recently, after having read the stories written by his son, HaGaon HaRav Leib zt'l I finally understood.

Rav Leib told about the time that the Chofetz Chaim fled with the yeshiva and his family from Poland to Russia. It came time to daven Mincha and they entered a shul.

`Before davening,' Reb Leib said, `I washed my hands as prescribed by the Shulchan Oruch but I noticed that my father began davening right away. Afterward I asked my father about this and he answered, "I guard my hands at all times!" '

"Now the reasons for the Chofetz Chaim's holy actions finally became clear to me," Rav Farber says. "The Chofetz Chaim was simply cautious that his hands remain tohor at all times and therefore he did not touch anything. Just as he guarded his tongue [from evil speech] he guarded his hands! Therefore, when he had to chase away a fly, he would use something to cover his hands.

"From this we can gain an inkling of how the Chofetz Chaim became what he was; just as he guarded his hands he guards his eyes, his tongue-- everything!"

"Operation Rickshaw"



"If I already told you how the Chofetz Chaim would come to the yeshiva, then I will tell you something that is almost unprintable--but I'll tell you anyway. As I mentioned before, the Chofetz Chaim had a wagon driver called Avrumke who transported him to yeshiva at regular times. Sometimes, though, the Chofetz Chaim would let us know that he wanted to come to the yeshiva in the middle of the day. We were then faced with the problem of finding Avrumke and his horse.

"The Chofetz Chaim had his own wagon which stood outside his house. It was padded and constructed in such a way that he would be able to travel in relative ease and comfort. When we were unable to locate Avrumke, one bochur would simply take the place of the horse, while another would sit in the driver's seat with his back to the Chofetz Chaim. Other bochurim would then seat the Chofetz Chaim in his place in such a way that he would not be able to discern the nature of the "horse" or the identity of the driver! "In this fashion they travelled the approximately 200 paces from the Chofetz Chaim's - house to the yeshiva!

When they arrived at their destination, a group of bochurim would block the Chofetz Chaim's view of the "horse" and "driver" as he was escorted into the yeshiva so that he would never suspect the truth. A few bochurim were in charge of this operation'.

" They're Watching! "

If we are already discussing Avrumke the wagon driver, I recall an interesting meeting I had with him, many years later, in Eretz Yisrael.

Once on Shabbos between Mincha and Ma'ariv, I walked into a shul, here in Tel Aviv, in the Kiryat Shalom section. I saw a group of elderly men sitting around the table listening to one old man telling them about his personal experiences with the Chofetz Chaim:

`Once I was driving the Chofetz Chaim to the train station, and I saw an orchard on the side of the road. One of the trees' branches, laden with apples, extended over the road. Nu, so I stepped down from the wagon and went to take some apples, when all of a sudden I heard a shout from behind me, "They're watching! They're watching!" - "`Needless to say I hurriedly jumped back on the wagon and drove away as quickly as I could. I could get in deep trouble for taking those apples. As I drove away I looked all around, but there was not a living soul in sight! I turned to the Chofetz Chaim and said,

"Rebbe, what did you mean, they're watching? There's no one around!"

"Ahh," answered the Chofetz Chaim, "of course they're watching, they're watching from Above!"'

"I was understandably very curious to know who this old man was," continues Rav Kalman, "so I edged closer to the table, and I was amazed to see that it was none other than Avrumke, the Chofetz Chaim's wagon driver! He was sitting there recounting stories of his travels with the Chofetz Chaim.

He continued: " `On one of his trips the Chofetz Chaim said, "Let's learn a perek mishnayos Reb Avrumke." " `Nu, so how do you think we learned? The Chofetz Chaim would recite the mishna by heart, word for word, and I would repeat after him.

"You see?" the Chofetz Chaim would say after a while. "We learned a perek mishnayos!"'

Rav Kalman interjects, "He would treat these plain people with such simplicity and so naturally that they felt he was one of them.

I remember, that when I would return to the tiny village where my parents lived for bein hazmanim, they would ask me, `Nu, so how is Reb Yisroel Meir doing?' That was how close they felt to him. On the other hand, there is no denying the great admiration they had for him. All the villagers would crowd around me waiting to hear any story or saying or hanhogah from the Chofetz Chaim. They wanted to hear more and more. "His humility and simplicity were absolutely incredible,"

Rav Kalman continues. "In his house there were no chairs, just some long, rough-hewn benches and a plain, long table that opened out at both sides. That was the extent of his furniture.

"Now, when his son-in-law, **Rav Mendel Zaks, zt'l** was appointed rosh yeshiva of Radin, an unpleasant situation developed. Rav Mendel

lived on the second floor of the Chofetz Chaim's house. Now that he was rosh yeshiva, bochurim wanted to come to him to talk in learning, but there was nowhere to seat them.

Not everyone felt at ease sitting on the benches shoulder to shoulder with their friends; they wanted a degree of privacy when speaking to the Rosh Yeshiva. So, they ordered twelve chairs. Some were put in the kitchen, some on the ground floor where the Chofetz Chaim was, and the rest upstairs by Rav Mendel.



That's what was missing in the house--chairs!

"Then when the Chofetz Chaim came home and saw all the "new furniture," he was aghast. `What is all this doing here?' he asked, whereupon his family explained to him the reason for the purchase.

"The Chofetz Chaim was still incredulous. `Twelve chairs? Twelve? One I can understand, for the head of the household. A second chair is also necessary for the lady of the house. Let's say a guest comes, so, okay, the guest also needs a chair. But twelve chairs? For what? "Hashem's Name is not whole, and His throne is not whole." The Ribono shel Olom doesn't even have one whole chair, and here there are twelve chairs?!'

The Chofetz Chaim was simply unable to comprehend the purchase, and you must know that every word of his was spoken with absolute truth and sincerity, with no embellishment or exaggeration."

Faith That Can Be Felt

"Along with his tremendous astuteness and remarkable genius, the Chofetz Chaim possessed a simple faith that is almost impossible to describe. Everything was obvious and simple to him, with absolutely no chochmos. He would speak to Hakodosh Boruch Hu as if he were speaking to a king who was standing right in front of his eyes, like a son speaking to his father.

Whatever happened to him, or whomever he met -- he deemed nothing as coincidental or without cause. For him, all events had their root in spirituality, and he was able to learn a lesson from them. Whatever he heard held deep significance for him, and he did not believe that there existed anything that was devoid of meaning.

"When he was in Russia, during the time that he fled with the yeshiva from Poland, a certain Jew came to him to ask for a brochoh. The Chofetz Chaim placed his hand on him and asked, `Reb Yid, where are you from?' `From Minsk,' was the answer. `And what is your occupation?' the Chofetz Chaim continued to inquire. `I deal in animal hides,' the Jew replied. `And how's business? Is it going well?' The Chofetz Chaim asked. `Boruch Hashem business is very good,' he answered.

"The Chofetz Chaim couldn't understand how a Jew could be prospering under the tyrannical rule of Czar Nikolai, and he voiced his puzzlement. `I work with the royal ministers, they buy my hides,' the Jew explained. `Oy, you work with the Czar's ministers?' the Chofetz Chaim asked. "How can you work with them, they're murderers! How do you manage?'

`I bribe them,' the Jew explained simply. `Bribe?' continued the Chofetz Chaim. `And without a bribe they won't purchase your merchandise?' `Rebbe, if I wouldn't bribe them they would start checking every single piece, finding all kinds of flaws and defects, and in the end they might not even agree to buy anything. What

would I do then? So, I bribe them and then everything goes smoothly; they take everything without checking or examining too much.'

"The Chofetz Chaim immediately answered, `Aha, that's exactly how things work with us! A person davens, does mitzvos, but the prosecuting angels testify against him: Here his prayer was not the way it should have been, there, while learning he fell asleep or chatted, etc., in short, everything is blemished. So what does Hashem do in order to help this Jew? He calls over the good angels. They immediately begin to defend him saying, `What do you want from this Jew's prayer, look how steeped he is in suffering! His wife is ill, his son was conscripted to the Polish army, he has problems with his parents. What do you want from him? This man also does chessed, he gives charity to those who are alone and destitute!'

"And then HaKodosh Boruch Hu takes this Jew and saves him from all the prosecuting angels. This is the "bribe" that we give to HaKodosh Boruch Hu! The charity we give and the chessed we do - - that is what saves us!" concluded the Chofetz Chaim.

"Whenever you walked into the Chofetz Chaim's house you would hear a chiddush about some posuk or other. Every day after davening we would hear from him a gutte vort -- after Shacharis and also after Mincha and Ma'ariv.

"He knew the entire Tanach by heart, backwards and forwards. As soon as you would walk into his house you would acquire a treasure: an interesting explanation on a posuk. Afterwards the bochurim would come to the yeshiva and tell over what they had heard: such and such a commentary, or some story or interesting fact. Some of these vertlach I remember till today," says Rav Kalman Farber.

"One of the Chofetz Chaim's famous adages was: `***People worry about having with what to live, and I ask, do they have with what to die?***'

"Another one of his pet sayings was his commentary on the verse, **מִי הָאִישׁ הֶחָפֵץ חַיִּים אֹהֵב יָמִים לִרְאוֹת טוֹב**, `Who is the man who desires life, loves days to see good.' *Whoever really loves his days, must make sure that he has good days. For we will meet our days [from this world again] in Olam Haboh when everything will be shown to us, and we will see for ourselves exactly how we spent our days. We will be shown all the days in which we wasted our time and did not learn, spoke forbidden speech, looked at what we were not allowed to see -- everything will be displayed to us as we undergo judgment. So the person who really wants life and loves his days, and indeed wants his days to be good ones, that person must see to it that his days are good -- so that they will be good for him*!

"He would quote: `*In olam habo who jumps first? Theft jumps first. Who is the prosecutor? Theft is the primary prosecutor*' (Bereishis Rabba, 80). " `Why theft, of all sins?' asked the Chofetz Chaim and answered with a story.

`There once was a successful merchant who had a store but went bankrupt. Those who had supplied him with merchandise came demanding the money he owed them. The merchant said that he had no money left since he went bankrupt. As long as the merchant continues arguing with his creditors all is well and good, and no action is taken. But what if one of the creditors is bold and impudent? He will demand his money back and when he sees that the merchant is not able to pay up, he does not continue to negotiate with the merchant as the others did, but rather simply takes whatever merchandise he can seize from the store shelves. " `As soon as he begins, all the other creditors follow suit until the merchant is stripped of his last belongings.

This is how it works with us,' the Chofetz Chaim explained. `When a person arrives in Olam Haboh he is met by all the sins he committed during his lifetime, but none can do anything yet to harm him. Theft, however, jumps to the forefront and begins to accuse and prosecute,

because the angel that is created from a person's sin has the same attribute as the sin itself.

Since the nature of theft is such that it is done with force and chutzpah, naturally this is the sin that jumps forward to prosecute. It shouts and does not give any peace, and then as soon as it begins, all the other sins immediately begin to shout as well.' "

Reb Kalman is quiet for a moment as he becomes immersed in his thoughts and memories. "The Chofetz Chaim's approach to everything was with total simplicity, but with a profound understanding. When he would speak, his words were palpable."

Do You Think that with a Brochoh you can create a Ben Yeshiva?

"He was so open and spoke at great length, seemingly effortlessly. He would tell us about incidents that happened to him and then teach us the lesson to be learned. Once he told us about a Jew who had come to him from the farthest reaches of Poland for a brochoh. This man had a son whom he wanted to see grow up to be a good Jew, a ben Torah.

`That is a wonderful thing, a truly wonderful thing,' responded the Chofetz Chaim. `And what did you do in order to realize this desire of yours?'

`That's exactly why I came, to ask for a brochoh,' the Jew answered.

The Chofetz Chaim was annoyed. `What?! You think that with a brochoh you can create a ben yeshiva? Don't you know, that these days you must be moser nefesh?! Chinuch today demands mesirus nefesh! Not brochos. With brochos you won't get anywhere!'

" **When You Cry Out to Hashem You Will Be Answered.**"

Another time he told us that he was walking in the street when he saw a man with a wagon full of apples, hawking his wares in order to

attract customers. The Chofetz Chaim noticed, though, that not a soul came to buy from him.

`I came back two hours later,' the Chofetz Chaim continued, `and I saw that the man was still standing in the same place crying out to people to come and buy, but still no one came to him. I went over to him and asked what he was shouting about since he was not making any sales. The man answered me, "Look Rebbe, it's true that I shout all day, but when I come home in the evening and make an accounting of what I have earned I see that boruch Hashem I have with what to live."'

"`Do you understand?' the Chofetz Chaim asked. `A person must cry out. When we cry out to Hashem once, twice, three times, and then once again and yet again, Hakodosh Boruch Hu answers! There is no question about it. We are certainly no worse than that Jew. All we have to do is cry out, to beg Hashem to answer us.'"

The Essence of Teshuva

"He was known to say, `What do you think a baal teshuva is? Do you think a baal teshuva must put on sackcloth? A baal teshuva does not need to put on sackcloth.

When a witness stands under the chuppah he must be a kosher witness. How is this done? The rov says to the witness, `You must do teshuva.' And what does the Jew do? He turns to the side and says: `I regret the past and request [Heavenly assistance] for the future.' And that is what teshuva is all about, with no chochmos or odd exterior trappings. A person who knows that he is lacking in a certain area must work on himself to rectify this. No more. That is teshuva.'

" Heavenly Reckoning "

In those days paralysis was extremely prevalent, and many people fell victim to it with no relief in sight. I remember how the Chofetz

Chaim would relate to this when speaking to us: `Where does the disease of paralysis originate?' he would ask rhetorically. `Why has this disease spread to almost epidemic proportions during the last few years?

If we would examine it we would observe that this is indeed a very strange affliction: A person has a mouth, a palate, lips, a throat, everything, but he cannot utter one word from his mouth! What happened? Paralysis! A person has legs, knees, feet, everything, but to walk? Not even one step. What happened? What does Hakodosh Boruch Hu want from us?

`Every human being has an account, an allowance of sorts. For example, a person might be allotted a million steps in his lifetime. After he has used up those million steps, there are no more! Finished! And from then on the person can still have feet and all the rest -- but to walk? Not one more step. His allowance is depleted.

Moreover, this person must know that each and every footstep is written down. Every step is reckoned. Guard your steps. Don't go to places of wrongdoing. Don't waste what you were given. "

` A person has a mouth. Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave a person a certain number of words in his lifetime. As soon as he has used up all his words -- finished! He can have all the organs of speech but not one word will he be able to pronounce. Keep this in mind and guard your speech! Know that every word is written down; each word is subtracted from your allowance. Don't waste them!

" `The same goes for the eyes, the hands and all the other organs of the body.'

"This was the Chofetz Chaim's explanation to us regarding paralysis. And he said everything with such conviction and vitality; you could see that he felt the truth of his words with all his senses, and you could not remain indifferent.

Ruach Hakodesh

"Whenever he spoke of yeshivaleit he would say, `When will we receive true gedolim? When? Rabbonim we have plenty of, but who will bring us the genuine gedolim?' "He wanted and demanded that bnei Torah be true gedolei Torah. Even from the older students he constantly demanded more and more.

"**HaGaon HaRav Aharon Kotler zt'l** was once speaking to **HaGaon HaRav Elchonon Wassermann Hy'd** and told him that once he spoke to the Chofetz Chaim when all of a sudden, in the middle of the conversation the Chofetz Chaim said, `When you begin a maseches you must always finish it. Don't leave it in the middle.'

Rav Aharon later thought about what the Chofetz Chaim had said and realized that he was guilty of doing just that. On many occasions he had begun a masechta, learned a little, and then left it there.

`How did he know that?' Rav Aharon asked Reb Elchonon.

Reb Elchonon answered, `The same thing happened to me! I was discussing something with the Chofetz Chaim when suddenly he interrupted me and said that after beginning a maseches one must finish it. - `Genuine ruach hakodesh!'

כל השונה הלכות בכל יום

One should not daven (Shemonah Esrei) with one's heart (i.e. eyes) alone, but must enunciate the words with his lips, such that he can hear himself quietly. If one did daven without enunciating the words, he might not have been **יוצא**, according to the Magen Avrohom.

On Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, in order to enhance Kavanah, it is also permitted to raise one's voice slightly, but not if others will be disturbed (**או"ח** 101:2-3)

Rosh Hashana - Are You Ready? Are You Prepared? What's Your Plan?

The Mishna (Sotah 8b) teaches us - **בְּמִדָּה שֶׁאָדָם מוֹדֵד בָּהּ מוֹדְדִין לוֹ** "***The way you treat others is the way Hashem treats you.***"

Do you want Hashem to judge you favourably? ***Judge others favourably!***

Do you want Hashem to look away from your sins? ***Look away from things people did to hurt you.***

Do you want Hashem to inscribe you in the book of life? ***Wish a good life for others.***

Do you want Hashem to proclaim that He is Mochel You? ***Verbally be mochel others.***

Do you want Hashem to give you Parnassah? ***Support fellow yidden's businesses.***

Do you want Hashem to be charitable with you? ***Give tzedakah with an open hand.***

Do you want Hashem to listen to your prayers? ***Make time to listen to others in need.***

Do you want Hashem to give you yet another chance? ***Give people second chances!***

Do you want Hashem to focus on your good deeds? ***See the good in others always!***

Do you want Hashem to help you? ***Help others!***

Do you want Hashem to smile down upon you? ***Smile at others!***

Do you want Hashem to feel your pain? ***Help others through their pain.***



Reb Moshe Chaim of Slonim *zt'l* tell people who were excessively afraid of the Yomim Norai'm, "It isn't a band of thieves who are seated in the court, up in heaven. It is our Father in heaven, and we can trust He will save His children."

There was a *bachur* who was very afraid of the judgment of Rosh Hashanah. **The Chazon Ish *zt'l*** asked the *bachur*, "Why don't we say Tashlich when Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbos?"

The *bachur* repeated the reason written in the *Mishnah Berurah* (583:8). It is because people carry their *machzorim* to *Tashlich*, and on Shabbos, one isn't permitted to carry.

The Chazon Ish told the bachur, "For you, the problem isn't only carrying the *machzor*. For you, it is also that you are carrying your sins. Because I see you're carrying a heavy burden on your shoulders."

In this witty way, the Chazon Ish taught this bachur the proper attitude for Rosh Hashanah.

Joy

It is appropriate to shed tears on Rosh Hashanah, but those tears should result from profound joy.

Sadness attracts strict judgment on oneself. Therefore, according to the Chasam Sofer, it is important to be happy on Rosh Hashanah, and then we will be judged with compassion and mercy.

The Chasam Sofer says (Tehillim 89:17) **בשמך יגילון כל היום** - "***With Your name they rejoice every day***," is roshei teivos **בכי"ה** , crying, because these are the tears of joy.

In All Situations



In many communities the custom is that on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur the chazan for shacharis begins chanting the word 'HaMelech' – 'The King' - from his seat, and only after that word, does he go to the amud.

There are people who tend to say – "If only I was in a better situation", "If only I had better parnassah", "Better community" etc. "Then I would be able to become close to Hashem and serve Him."

The message here is – '***In your place, wherever you are standing, you can (and must) accept Hashem a king***.'

That is what Hashem wants – Serving Him from the situation in which He put you. That is true **קבלת עול מלכות שמים –** accepting the yoke of heaven.

Simanim

One of the reasons it is important to be happy on Rosh Hashanah is because it is a good omen, a good siman, for the new year.

On Rosh Hashanah night, we eat simanim, such as an apple dipped in honey, and we daven for a good, sweet year.

Reb Shlomo Kluger (*Chochmas Shlomo*) writes, "Eating these foods isn't a tefillah. Eating is never a tefillah. Rather, we eat these foods to illustrate our trust that Hashem will give us a good year…and we

say on them [that it should be a good year], so if *chas veshalom* there was a harsh decree, it will be turned over for good by our words. Amen, so shall be His will." - Words are powerful. Say it will be a sweet year is like a prophecy, which has the power to be fulfilled.

Reb Shlomo Kluger adds, "On Rosh Hashanah, after *shacharis*, one should say, ***כל מה דעביד רחמנא לטב עביד - 'Everything Hashem does is for the good.' וגם זו לטובה 'And this is also for the good.'***

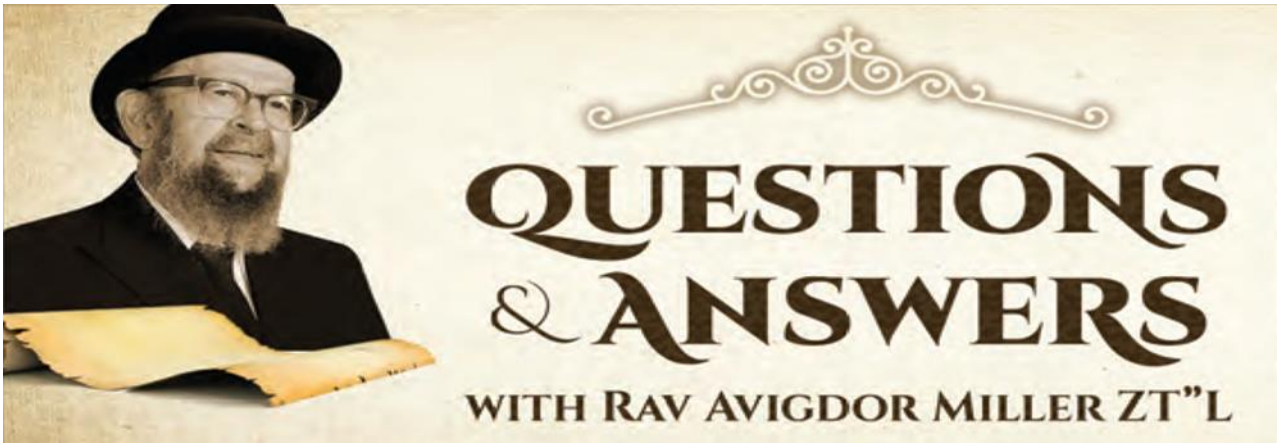
Such words turn things over that everything will indeed be good." - The ultimate *siman* is to be happy on Rosh Hashanah.

The Mishnah Berurah writes, "We do *simanim* as a good omen. Therefore, it's obvious that one must be cautious not to become angry on these days. In addition to the severe sin, one must make a good sign for the new year. He should be happy and trust in Hashem."

People in Yerushalayim would say, "If an apple dipped in honey is a sign for a sweet year, certainly, if a person is a 'sweet Yid,' by keeping a smile on his face and by greeting others warmly, what better omen can there be for a sweet new year?"

Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer *zt'l* explains that we don't eat sour foods on Rosh Hashanah to avoid making a sour face on Rosh Hashanah. We don't want to show a bitter face on Rosh Hashanah, for it will *chas veshalom* set an example for bitterness throughout the year. Because the most important siman is happiness, stemming from bitachon that Hashem will grant us a good year.

Torah Treats sincerely wish all Yidden a year filled with fulfilment, alive with life, brimming with health and happiness, overflowing with parnassah…and Hashem should grant you the same!





Every year, before Rosh Hashana comes along, I make kabolos, resolutions, about improving myself in various areas of my service of Hashem. But here I am a week before another Rosh Hashanah, am I the same schlepper I've always been ?

Let me tell you something. You're not the same. Don't think you're the same - ***You're getting worse***! As time goes on **עבר אדם עבירה ושנה בה נעשית לו כהיתר** – *One who does a sin, and then repeats it again and again, it becomes permissible in his eyes* (Yoma 87a). So, if you're not improving, you're getting worse.

When you make a kabalah bli neder you have to have something specific; at least one specific thing that you're going to work on changing. **תפסת מרובה לא תפסת** – If you try to grab too much at one time, you're going to grab nothing at all. It's all going to fall out of your hand. To say in general, "I'm going to be good this year," is better than nothing, but not much better.

You have to specify something clear cut. Say, "This year, no matter how mean my wife is to me, and how much she'll bother me and criticize me and nag me, I won't say anything impolite to her. I'll keep my mouth closed." That's already something specific, something you

can grab on to. **תפסת מועט תפסת** – *It's something limited, it's something that you can grab onto.*

And actually, even though it's something specific, it's not so small in Hashem's eyes. The *possuk* says **תולה ארץ על בלימה** – "*The world hangs on nothing*" (Iyov 26:7). And Chazal tell us that it means the following: **אין העולם מתקיים אלה בשביל מי שבולם פיו בשעת מריבה**– *The world exists only on account of the person who keeps his mouth closed at a time of provocation* (Chulin 89a).

The zchus, the merit, of keeping your mouth closed when people are insulting you is a very big zchus. So, start with your wife. You can start with somebody else as well. Let's say you have an employer who insults you, keep quiet. You want to keep your job don't you? So, keep your mouth closed. Make a kabalah, "I'm going to keep quiet. I won't answer back." It's a tremendous thing to do that.

So, you have to pinpoint something clear cut. And then you'll be able to carry it out. Don't talk in general. General means nothing at all.

Let's say you want to daven with kavanah. You can't just say, "This year, I'm going to daven with kavanah." It's too much to grab onto at once. Make up your mind that you're going to fight to get that first bracha. Every word in **מגן אברהם**, that first bracha you're going to get down clearly. And don't let go of it. Hold on to it. **תפסת מועט תפסת**– Take a little bit at a time and hold on to it. **תפסת**, means that you're grabbing on to it. Hold on to that little bit very tightly.

Let's say you made a kabalah to learn Torah. So don't say, "I'm going to start learning more seriously this year." It's too big, too vague. Do it like this: "Bli neder, I'm going to learn fifteen minutes every day no matter what." And then, do it. Learn every night, fifteen minutes; it's better than nothing. At home, fifteen minutes. No matter what! Take out a sefer and learn for fifteen minutes. You want to learn for an hour, very good, I'm not stopping you. But every night, learn fifteen minutes. Or go to a shiur every night. That's even

better. Every night no matter what. That's a kabalah that's clear-cut, it's something you can sink your teeth into.

Now, even though sometimes there's so many more things that you should be doing that you're not doing, but at least there's one thing you are doing. And Hashem sees that you're headed in the right direction. And if you're headed in the right direction then **הבא ליטהר מסעיין אותו** – *If you're trying to get better, He'll help you go further and further* (Menachos 29b). But you have to at least do one thing! And then you'll get siyayta dishmaya to do more and more.

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky - Cry High

וּתְשׁוּבָה וּתְפִלָּה וּצְדָקָה מַעֲבִירִין אֶת רֹעַ הַגְּזֵרָה "And Repentance, Prayer, and Charity will nullify the evil decree!"

These words are prayed, uttered, and sometimes screamed by Jews around the world on the two days of Rosh Hashana and on Yom Kippur.

Seemingly this passage is based on the gemara (Rosh Hashana 16b) which tells us "Rabbi Yitzchak said: A person's sentence is torn up on account of four types of actions. These are: Giving charity, crying out in prayer, a change of one's name, and a change of one's deeds for the better."

The gemara uses the term, "tze'akah" – meaning "crying out" instead of the regular "praying."

Why does crying out have a greater impact on one's sentence than simply praying?

Rabbi Dovid Ashear tells this story in his masterpiece, "Living Emunah" in the name of Rabbi Fishel Shachter. A man living in Israel had a daughter who became ill. The illness brought him even closer

to Hashem, but the situation looked bleak. The doctors told him that medically there was nothing they could do.

There was, however, a certain specialist in the United States who had developed a method of treatment that proved to be successful. The problem was that it was impossible to reach this doctor, and there was a very long waiting list to see him.

One day, a person who was involved in connecting patients with doctors called Avraham and told him that this doctor was visiting Eretz Yisrael and would be in his office in Tel Aviv.

"Come right away," he said. "If he sees you and hears about your daughter's situation, maybe he'll have mercy and give you an appointment. This is your only chance to get through the red tape and get to see him. Be here in a half-hour."

"A half-hour!" Avraham asked. "How do you expect me to get from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv in a half-hour?"

"I don't know, just do it. It's your only chance."

The man quickly flagged down a cab and told the driver he needed to be at the Tel Aviv address in a half-hour, urgently. They took off, and the driver took every shortcut imaginable, and even drove through fields. The car came to a screeching halt in front of the office building, and Avraham looked at his watch. They had gotten there in 29 minutes flat- a miracle! He charged up the steps, knocked on the door, and he saw the man with whom he had spoken.

"I am sorry," the man said. "The doctor left exactly one minute ago. You just missed him." - Avraham's heart sank. There was nothing left to do. He suddenly began feeling very lightheaded, and he looked like he was about to faint. The people around him quickly brought him a cup of water, and he began reciting the brachah.

After saying the first three words, "Blessed are you, Hashem," he realized something. "My Father in heaven," he said to himself, "I

don't have to make an appointment with You, I don't have to meet You only at a certain time and place. I don't have to rush by taxicab to see You. Whenever I want, at any time during the day or night, I am standing right in front of You and You listen to what I am saying. You are right here; I can speak to You at any time. Forget the doctors and cabdrivers. This is between me and You."

After he drank the water, the people asked him if he was O.K., and he said, "I was never this O.K. in my entire life."

Several weeks later, he brought his daughter back to his original doctor. After examining the girl, the doctor said, "It's one in a million. The medication appears to be working, and your daughter should have a complete recovery!" Later, Avraham's wife asked him what it was that helped their daughter. He told her that it was that brachah he recited over the cup of water in Tel Aviv!

"But why did you have to rush to Tel Aviv in a taxi and pay 300 shekels to say a brachah?" she asked. "You could have made the same bracha right here in Meah Shearim!"

"Without that taxi ride," Avraham said, "I could never have come to the realization that it's only Hashem, and Truly Hashem who will heal our daughter, and I could never have made that brachah."

The Maharal explains that praying through crying is on much higher level than regular prayer. Sometimes, one can pray to Hashem, yet still have a small inkling in his mind that his salvation can come from natural sources, or even more foreign, from another human.

Yet when one cries out to Hashem, he shows that he truly believes that Hashem is his only G-d, his only hope, and his only salvation. He knows that he has no other hope but to cry out to his father and King – Hashem. This realization, which develops into his crying, is what rips apart the bad decree.

The Best Defence Attorney - When Rosh Hashanah Falls on Shabbos by Rabbi Akiva Niehaus



Some of the worst years in Jewish history occurred when Rosh Hashanah fell on Shabbos, such as the years when both of the Bais Hamikdash were destroyed. On the other hand, some of the best years also transpired in years when Rosh Hashanah fell on Shabbos, such as the year when the sin of the Golden Calf was forgiven, and the building of the Mishkan. Is it a sign for a good year – or the reverse (Gemara Rosh Hashanah 16b)?

The Aruch L'Ner (Minchas Ani, Parshas Ha'azinu) explains with a parable. There was once a minister who sinned towards the king. The king decreed that he stand trial and the minister began to search for someone to defend and protect him. However, after much searching, he was unable to find a suitable defence attorney. When his wife saw his anguish, she offered to testify in his defence.

The day of the trial arrived, and his wife arrived to try and save him and sure enough – the court was impressed by her words and the minister was pardoned.

Soon afterwards, another minister sinned and was faced with a trial. Remembering that the first minster was saved by his wife, the second minister asked his wife to testify on his behalf as well. However, there was one difference. Whereas the first minister was kind to his wife – the second wasn't, and she was covered with bruises. When she got up to testify about her husband, the king immediately noticed the bruises and inquired about the source. She

tried to avoid answering but the truth came out – the bruises were from the cruel husband.

The king was shocked – the minister asked his wife to defend him when he treated her so horribly! He was summarily taken out and punished.

When Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbos, we are unable to blow the Shofar due to Rabbinical concerns that one may carry the Shofar in the street on Shabbos. We don't blow the shofar in order to protect Shabbos.

In the absence of the shofar blowing, who will stand in our defence and protect us from the prosecution of the Satan?

The answer is that Shabbos comes to protect us – but it depends how we treat Shabbos. If we treat Shabbos with dignity and respect, she will stand in our merit and defence, but if we don't respect Shabbos, to the contrary, she will be the prosecutor.

As we approach Rosh Hashanah this year which falls on Shabbos, it is especially important to strengthen ourselves with Shabbos observance, for this will stand in our merit and protect us in the coming year.

The Meiri (Pirkei Avos 13:4) says that a person should not belittle the significance of performing even the smallest mitzvah, for every good deed creates a defending angel. Every action that we do, makes a difference!

Let's make a commitment, NOW, to improve in one area, even a small one. That determination will jettison us into the category of "those who repent". It will give us a better chance to have a wonderful, new year!

Fear - Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein Zt'l

'Fear' is not a good relationship. If a wife 'fears' her husband, that is not a good relationship. If a husband 'fears' his wife, that is definitely not a good relationship. If kids fear their parents, that's not a relationship. It's very easy to tell someone, "If you do this, I'm going to punish you." That doesn't mean that they love you.

יִרְאָה does not mean 'fear'. יִרְאָה means 'Awe'. Hashem doesn't want you to fear Him. Dovid Hamelech says עִבְדוּ אֶת־ה' בְּשִׂמְחָה - '***You should serve Hashem with happiness***'.

He also says עִבְדוּ אֶת־ה' בְּיִרְאָה '***You should serve Hashem with fear***'.

How can that be? How can you do both?

'Fear' means -The 'fear' of hurting the person that you love. The 'fear' of hurting the person that loves you. It's not a fear of getting punished. Hashem who gives me life, who gives me everything – I am afraid (fear) to do something that's against what You want.

Here's the Proof

If I'm still alive, it can't be too late. The biggest proof that He, the Ribbono shel Olam, hasn't given up on me is that I woke up this morning. It means he believes that there's work for me to do. There's a purpose for me.

I can still forgive. Forgive myself for all the disappointments, for the mistakes in my marriage, with others, the way I've been. So help me, Ribbono shel Olam, realize that it might be late, but it's not too late. If He trusts in me, that helps me trust in me. - Help me, Ribbono shel Olam, to change the only person I was put in this world to change. ~ **R' Jonathan Rietti**



חֲמֹל עַל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ וְתִשְׂמַח בְּמַעֲשֶׂיךָ. וְיֹאמְרוּ לְךָ חוֹסֶיךָ בְּצַדֶּקְךָ עֲמוּסֵיךָ תְּקַדַּשׁ אָדוֹן עַל כָּל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ: ***Have compassion upon Your works and rejoice in Your works; and let those who trust in You say— when You justify those borne by You— "Be sanctified, [our] Master over all Your works." (Musaf)***

One of the wealthiest men in Kovno, Lithuania, was **Reb Shraga Feivel Frank**. He owned a tanner factory, a leather goods store, and a great deal of real estate. He was also a *talmid chacham* who was blessed with four exceptional sons-in-law; **R' Moshe Mordechai Epstein *zt"l*, R' Isser Zalman Meltzer *zt"l*, R' Boruch Hurwitz *zt"l*** and **R' Sheftel Kramer *zt"l***.

A businessman once approached Reb Shraga Feivel Frank for a substantial loan, naming a date by which he expected to repay it. Reb Shraga Feivel cheerfully lent him the money. When the loan came due, however, the man did not come to repay it. Reb Shraga Feivel said nothing about it, but at one point, when he himself required a loan, his wife Golda recalled that this businessman owed them a large debt. She approached the man and asked him to repay the loan as they really needed the money. The man refused her request, answering with such impertinence that the insulted woman returned home very upset.

With much effort and deliberation, her husband calmed her down, but the incident was far from over.

Some time later the businessman appeared at the Frank home, but not with the money he owed. Instead, he told Reb Shraga Feivel that he wished to borrow more money, which he promised to pay back

together with the first sum by a certain date. Taken aback by this brazen request, Reb Shraga Feivel told the man he would have to consider the matter before replying, and would inform him of his decision.

When Golda heard of the man's temerity, she asked her husband incredulously, "How can you even consider such a thing after he was so unreliable the first time, and behaved with such ingratitude and impudence! I am sure you'll never see this money either."

"My dear wife," replied Reb Shraga Feivel, "are we any better than this man? Every year on *Rosh Hashana* we ask *Hashem* to forgive our sins and accept our prayers. We tell Him, 'This year we will be good!' But we backslide and sin again the next year. How, then, can we come to ask Him once again to forgive us? What happened this past year - didn't we come to Him last year with the same request and the same promise?"

Golda nodded her bowed head.

"But now I can really say it!" exclaimed Reb Shraga Feivel. "This Jew borrowed money and also promised to pay it back, but instead of repaying us he asked to borrow more - and we will give it to him! We will extend ourselves even more even though he really doesn't deserve it! We will now have some merit in the eyes of *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*, so that He should do the same for us, measure for measure, just as we have done for this man."

We say, "Al cheit shechatanu lifanecha" – "For the sin that we committed before You." Rebbe Asher of Stolin zt'l explained that people can regret their sins for several reasons, but our primary regret should be "shechatanu lifanecha" that we sinned before You; that we caused Hashem distress. ~ R' Elimelech Biderman.

A PENETRATING ANALYSIS OF THE WEEKLY HAFTORAH BY R' TZVI HIRSCH HOFFMAN תורת הצבי על הפטרות

והיא מרת נפש ותתפלל על ה' ובכה תבכה (שמואל א' א-י) - הפטרה ליום ראשון של ראש השנה

Chazal chose the story of the infertile Chana who miraculously gave birth to her son, *Shmuel HaNavi* as the *Haftorah* for the first day of *Rosh Hashana*, because Shmuel was born on *Rosh Hashana*. As Chana stood in them *Mishkan davening*, the *Navi* writes; **וַתִּתְפַּלֵּל עַל־ה'** – *"She spoke 'upon' Hashem."* The wording seems strange. Chana was *davening "to" Hashem* – not upon Him.



R' Dovid Feinstein *zt"l* (Kol Dodi) explains that Chana cried continuously during her prayers since she knew that **שערי דמעות לא ננעלו** - the "Gates of Tears" are never sealed - as *Chazal (Berachos 32a)* emphatically declare. It was her tearful prayer which had the ability to evoke Hashem's infinite attribute of mercy – **מִדַּת הָרַחֲמִים** - and by extension His Divine mercy.

The words of the Navi imply that Chana was forceful in the manner in which she was pleading with Hashem to act with this Attribute of Mercy to help her. She davened "***upon***" Him – imploring the Almighty with all her strength and all her might – to answer her prayer and give her a son whom she would consecrate to divine service.

On Rosh Hashana, we have the ability to tap into Chana's prayer and not just daven to Hashem to grant us a good year, but rather daven "***upon***" Hashem, which has the potential of a better outcome.



Two of the most famous simanim (signs and good omens) we eat on Rosh we eat on Rosh HaShana, are the apple dipped in honey and the pomegranate. They have an interesting commonality. Both are red on the outside but white on the inside (not including the seeds.)

Red represents passion and sin, and white purity. We are to remember that even when we sin, it is only superficial and does not ruin what lies within us. Our holy sparks of G-dliness do not leave us, and we need only to discard the peel or shell to reach the purity that remains inside and live up to our righteous potential.

The Haftarah of the first day of Rosh Hashana is about Chana, the mother of Shmuel HaNavi, who had been barren but was answered on Rosh HaShana because of a heartfelt prayer. It is from this woman we learn many laws of prayer, including the fact that one may pray quietly.

This underscores that tefilla to Hashem is an intimate act which brings closeness between us and our King. During the ten days from Rosh HaShana to Yom Kippur, Hashem comes down to earth, so to speak, and is listening closely for us to whisper to Him.

"Tefillos are always powerful, but the uniqueness of the tefillos said at the beginning of the year is that such tefillos are always answered. Therefore, let's take advantage of the tefillos on Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Aseres Yemei Teshuvah. Our tefillos can make the difference." ~ R' Elimelech Biderman quoting the Aruch L'ner (Torah Wellsprings)



"When Rosh Hashana falls out on Shabbos, Hashem can't write us in the book of death, because to do so would violate the Halachos of Shabbos. – He can however write us in the book of life because we are in a state of sakanos nefashos." ~ Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

The Arizal taught that if one does not cry during the Yomim Nora'im, his Neshamah is not complete. **The Sh"la Ha'kadosh** explains that someone whose heart does not allow tears to flow naturally, should make sounds as if he is crying. This must be done with a broken heart, and not just by making noises without any feeling. His proof for this is the Posuk in Tehilim (6:9) that says, "Ki Shama Hashem Kol Bichyi", *Hashem has heard the sound of my cries* (Piskei Teshuvah, Orach Chaim 584:2).

However, in the Maaseh Rav, we find that the **Vilna Gaon** says that one is not permitted to cry on Rosh Hashanah, as the Pasuk in Nechemia says (8:9,10), "Do not mourn and do not cry, go eat delicious food." Apparently, Rosh Hashanah is a day of happiness and celebration. How do we explain the difference between the Vilna Gaon and the Arizal?

Rav Moshe Shternbuch (Teshuvos 2:268) says that they do not argue. The Vilna Gaon is referring to crying from the fear of Yom HaDin and having the overall mindset that Rosh Hashanah is a serious day. However, if one's tears come automatically from inspiration and longing to be close to Hashem during Tefilah, not only is this permissible, but it is praised!

Outside of Davening, the mood one should have on Rosh Hashanah must be of happiness and celebration of the Yom Tov!

Putting The Satan Out of Business

The Gemara in Rosh Hashana (16a-b) asks, why do we blow so many tekios, far exceeding the amount mandated by the Torah? The Gemara answers, **כדי לערבב השטן**– "***in order to confuse the Satan***." Rashi explains that the Satan becomes confused when he sees our immense love for Mitzvos. The famous question is, can we really confuse a malach? And how does our love for Mitzvos confuse him?

The Hafla'ah, in his introduction to his Sefer Hamaknah, offers a beautiful explanation. The Gemara in Yuma (86b) tells us that when one does **תשובה מאהבה**– he returns to Hashem out of love, **זדונות נעשות לו כזכויות**– *his wilful sins convert to merits*.

Seeing us lovingly embrace the mitzvah of Tekias Shofar (or any other mitzvah!), leaves the Satan terrified that we did teshuvah mei'ahava. This traps the Satan in a confusing quandary, for if he does his job and "digs up dirt on us", he only bestows us with zechusim!

This is a power we can harness even this year when we don't blow shofar on the first day of Rosh Hashanah (since it falls on Shabbos). By running back into Hashem's arms **כביכול**, like children in the arms of their father, we have the power to silence the prosecutor!

Be Prepared By R' Meir Simcha Sperling

When Rosh Hashana comes, and we greet and crown the King, it is extremely important that we prepare for this auspicious occasion. (Clean the streets, paint the buildings etc.) The same is with everything in life – We must prepare. We must be ready.

If we just turn up to shul for davening on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur without having first prepared, then there is little to gain, however, if you prepare, it changes everything.

The gematria of the words "**כתיבה וחתימה טובה**" equal 928, which is the exact same total as the words **אלול - ראש השנה** .

Do you want to have a 'Gut G'bentched a Yar' – You need to prepare for Rosh Hashana already in Elul. If the Elul is not there, then you are missing all the preparation. The whole year is going to be a different year.

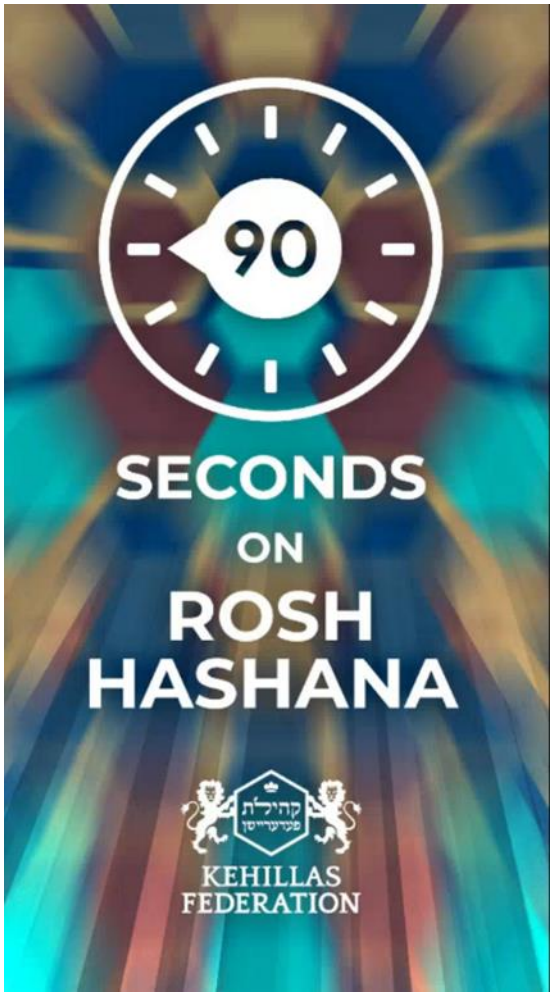
Real Nachas

An old woman stood in shul Rosh HaShana night, eagerly awaiting the end of the prayers. Not because she was anxious to get home, far from it. Her husband had passed away and her children didn't live close by. Instead, she was waiting to wish people a sweet new year. Alas, as the people smiled and wished each other well, no one took notice of the solitary woman, until she was left alone in the shul.

Biting her lip, she bravely said, "Master of the world! If I can't wish anyone else a good year, I can wish You one." "But what can I wish you? Everything is Yours."

She paused a moment, and then her face lit up with joy. "***Riboino Shel Olam," she cried out, "Zolst du hoben nachas fun deine kinder! May you have pleasure from Your children!"***

Rav SF Zimmerman



The Gemarah in Rosh Hashana asks, "Why do we repetitively blow shofar when we are already yoitzer the first time. The Gemarah answers - **כדי לערבב את השטן** – ***to confuse the satan.***

The question is asked, "What is it about repetitive blowing of the shofar that confuses the satan, and why does it confuse the satan?"

Rashi says that when the satan sees that Klal Yisrael has a love for mitzvos, that is what confuses the satan. Why does that confuse the satan?

Rabbi Akiva Eiger explains as follows – When we do teshuvah, we mitigate our aveiros. But when we do teshuvah out of love, the aveiros turn into mitzvos.

Now, the satan is coming on Rosh Hashana to do his job, by bringing a sack full of aveiros that we did the whole year, but when we repetitively blow shofar, this shows that we love mitzvos, which leaves the satan to believe that we love Hashem and will do teshuva with love, and all these aveiros that he is bringing, will be turned into mitzvos! And that's why he gets confused!

Our avodah is to show our love for Hashem and His mitzvos.

"Hashem's ways are hidden from us, but His love and guidance are ever present." ~ Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi.

סגולה נפלאה לערב ראש השנה



הגאון רבינו חיים פלאג'י זצ"ל הביא בשם המקובל רבי דוד שירירו ז"ל שכתב: שיזהר האדם לקרוא בערב ראש השנה בחומש 'דברים' – פרשת 'כי תבוא' מפסוק "והיה כי תבוא"

ולדבריו "כל הקורא פרשה זו הקב"ה מעביר כרוז ברקיע ואומר גביתי חובי מאדם זה כל החובות, ומוחל על כל חטאתיו"

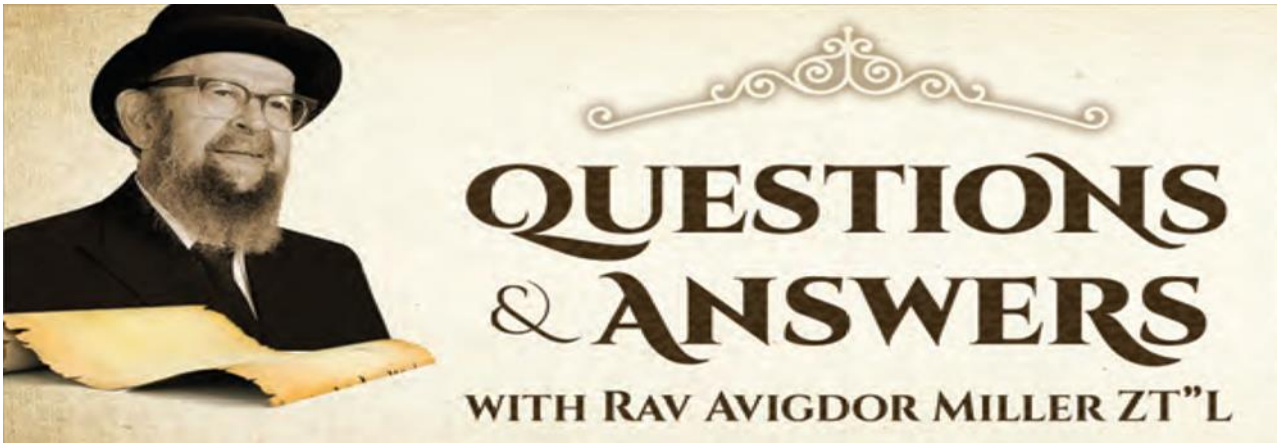
וְהָיָה כִּי תָבוֹא אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ נֹתֵן לְךָ נַחֲלָה וִירִשְׁתָּהּ וְיָשַׁבְתָּ בָּהּ. וְלָקַחְתָּ מֵרֵאשִׁית כָּל פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר תָּבִיא מֵאַרְצְךָ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ וְשַׂמְתָּ בַטֶּנָא וְהָלַכְתָּ אֶל הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר יִבְחַר ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ לְשַׁכֵּן שְׁמוֹ שָׁם. וּבָאתָ אֶל הַכֹּהֵן אֲשֶׁר יִהְיֶה בַּיָּמִים הָהֵם וְאָמַרְתָּ אֵלָיו הִגַּדְתִּי הַיּוֹם לַה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ כִּי בָאתִי אֶל הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר נִשְׁבַּע ה' לַאֲבֹתֵינוּ לָתֶת לָנוּ. וְלָקַח הַכֹּהֵן הַטֶּנָא מִיָּדֶךָ וְהִנִּיחוֹ לִפְנֵי מִזְבַּח ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ. וְעָנִיתָ וְאָמַרְתָּ לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ אֲרַמִּי אֹבֵד אָבִי וַיֵּרֶד מִצְרַיְמָה וַיָּגָר שָׁם בִּמְתֵי מְעָט וַיְהִי שָׁם לְגוֹי גָּדוֹל עָצוּם וָרָב. וַיָּרֵעוּ אֹתָנוּ הַמִּצְרִים וַיְעַנּוּנוּ וַיִּתְּנוּ עָלֵינוּ עֲבֹדָה קָשָׁה. וַנִּצְעַק אֶל ה' אֱלֹקֵי אֲבֹתֵינוּ וַיִּשְׁמַע ה' אֶת קֹלֵנוּ וַיַּרְא אֶת עָנְיֵנוּ וְאֶת עֲמָלֵנוּ וְאֶת לַחֲצֵנוּ. וַיּוֹצִאֵנוּ ה' מִמִּצְרַיִם בְּיָד חֲזָקָה וּבִזְרוֹעַ נְטוּיָה וּבְמֹרָא גָּדֹל וּבְאֹתוֹת וּבְמוֹפְתִים.

וַיְבִאֵנוּ אֶל הַמָּקוֹם הַזֶּה וַיִּתֶּן לָנוּ אֶת הָאָרֶץ הַזֹּאת אֶרֶץ זָבַת חָלָב וּדְבָשׁ.

וְעַתָּה הִנֵּה הֵבֵאתִי אֶת רֵאשִׁית פְּרִי הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה לִי ה' וְהִנַּחְתּוֹ לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִיתָ לִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ. וְשָׂמַחְתָּ בְּכָל הַטּוֹב אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְךָ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ וּלְבֵיתֶךָ אַתָּה וְהַלֵּוִי וְהַגֵּר אֲשֶׁר בְּקִרְבֶּךָ".

Timeless Truths – Rabbi Moshe Bamberger

"Raise your voice like a shofar" (Yeshaya 58:1) – 'A person's voice is compared to a shofar. Just as a shofar has no sound of its own, just what is put into it – so should a person feel that he has nothing to say on his own, only what has been taught to him…' ~ The Maggid of Mezritch.





Now that the judgment is coming, what can we do in order to find happiness as we approach Rosh Hashanah?

The truth is I'm not interested in making people happy in facing the Day of Judgment. I'd like to make them afraid. Happiness is something that you'll get if you'll go to a doctor who wants to give you some pills in order to distract you. But we *want* you to face it! We want you to be very much afraid! - And that's the best thing that I can give you right now – *eimas hadin,* fear of being judged.

Old-time Jews told me they remembered in Europe years ago, way back, a hundred years ago, they used to weep on Rosh Hashanah. They used to weep. Everybody wept on Rosh Hashanah. So don't look for any special ways of being happy on Yom Hadin.

That's why I started out the lecture tonight with these pesukim, **סָמַ֣ר מִפַּחְדְּךָ֣ בְשָׂרִ֑י** – '***I shudder at the fear of Your judgment.***' (Tehillim 119:120), because it's important for everyone to put foremost in his mind, the fear of the Yom Hadin.

סָמַ֣ר means inflamed; sometimes if a person is very much frightened then he has gooseflesh on him, as if he's inflamed on his skin. To actually shudder, that's the healthiest thing you can do for yourself to prepare and that's going to give you a good start in the year ahead.

Of course you can eat meals tomorrow, on erev Rosh Hashanah, if you want. Some people don't but you can eat meals if you wish. You can sleep soundly tonight. I don't think my words will make you lose any sleep. I'm sure you won't tremble that much. But if once in a while you can give yourself a little artificial shudder, it pays to try it; it pays to shudder a little bit when you think of the Yom Hadin.

On Rosh Hashanah, the more your mind is bent over and humbled, the better off you are (Rosh Hashanah 26a). Because Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "Oh, this man is humbled before Me; there's some chance that he might make a change in his lifestyle." But if a man breezes through Rosh Hashana with a happy mind, then I'm afraid he has no intention of changing.



If on Rosh Hashanah Hakodosh Boruch Hu decrees my parnasa for the upcoming year then why do I have to go out and work hard to make a living?

If a person's parnasa is decreed on Rosh Hashanah, then why does he have to go out and work? Let him lie in bed all day. And the answer is as follows. This is how it works – it's decreed on Rosh Hashanah that if you'll do this and this in the upcoming year, then you'll get this and this. And if you do so and so, you'll get so and so. That's what's decreed. And if you do something else, you'll get this and this.

We think it's a simple thing; we think that a certain amount is inscribed and that's all. No! Hakodosh Boruch Hu does things in a subtle way and it's far beyond the ability of a human being to understand. - Certainly it's decreed. Certainly! But what is decreed?

If it's decreed that a person is going to have a full year of happiness for the upcoming year and then he decides to go and bang his head

against a brick wall just for fun – he wants to bang his head three or four times against the wall – so what are you going to say? That since it was decreed that he'll live happily this year, the brick wall will be as soft as mush? No! It'll be as hard as brick. So the decrees are decreed only under certain conditions. And if you go with those conditions, then that's what you're going to get, exactly as Hakodosh Boruch Hu decreed. And if you choose a different path, then you will get exactly as He decreed under those conditions. And Hakodosh Boruch Hu has all the decrees prepared for whichever path you might choose.

However, you must also know, that if a man tries to outdo what was decreed, then he's going to be disappointed. And that's because there are maximums that are decreed as well.



What's the main kavanah we should have by tashlich?

Tashlich is for the purpose of doing a certain act by means of which we demonstrate that we understand that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the One who forgives our sins. We have to know that the kaparas avonos is not merely a result of things we do, of rituals.

Some people think they do certain things, and it wipes out their sins. Some think that if they're shlugging kaparos, it wipes out their sins. No. It's what you do in your mind that causes Hashem to wipe out your sin. It's your mind! And therefore, when you go to tashlich it's just a demonstration that **ותשליח** – that **You**, **Hashem**, will throw away our sins, **במצולות ים** – into the depths of the sea.

All the great ideals that are mentioned in tashlich, **תתן אמת ליעקב, חסד לאברהם** and that You should remember the **ימי קדם** are all for that purpose.

And throwing the sins into the water? That's what an am ha'aretz thinks, that he throws his sins into the water. No. That's amaratzus. What we're doing is we're throwing into the water our foolishness, our ignorance, and we're becoming aware that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is the One who is going to purify us when we do teshuva.

Who is purifying you? – **אשריכם ישראל לפני מי אתם מטהרים ומי מטהר אתכם** - It's only the chessed of Hashem that purifies you. We say **ותשליח** – You will throw into the sea all of our sins. Not we. We can't throw our sins into the sea - **You** should throw them into the sea. And therefore it's nothing but one more exercise in the great principle that Hashem is **נושא עון ועובר על פשע**, that He will forgive us for our sins. And that's expected to be part of our thoughts, our frame of mind, on Rosh Hashanah.



How does a person know when his repentance is accepted?

Nobody knows. He can never know. But one thing I'm going to tell you. When Rosh Hashanah comes, we must look back and retrospect and see that Hakodosh Boruch Hu granted us a year of life. At least in this sense, He accepted our teshuva and gave us another year of life. It's such an egregious lack of gratitude, every year to come again and ask for another year without looking back and giving thanks for the previous one that Hashem gave us.

How much time did you spend looking back on the past year? Look back: after Rosh Hashanah it was a beautiful season. The best weather is between Rosh Hashanah and Succos. Did you thank for all those glorious sunny days when the sun wasn't burning, when it wasn't as hot as in the summertime? All of nature was still in its full

glory; all the foliage of the trees and all the green of the bushes were there. And it wasn't hot and you enjoyed life.

Look how many times you ate breakfast during the past year, how many times you ate supper, maybe lunch too. How many times you functioned normally during the year; most people weren't in the hospital at all during the past year. Most people never broke a bone in the past year. Many people didn't have a toothache in the past year. Even a headache! There are blessed people who didn't have a headache throughout the entire year.

Look how many times you walked through the street safely. How many times you came home at night, and everything was in order. How many times your turned on the electric lights and you didn't find any intruders in your house. How many times you went to sleep all night and you slept soundly, sweet slumber. - A whole year! 365 days of happiness.

Of course you'll say, 'It's not happiness. I didn't strike the jackpot. I didn't win the sweepstakes.' Fools never realize what life it. But the wise man must look back and thank Hashem. And therefore is it enough merely to come and ask for the next year? We have a job that we have to accomplish before we ask. We have to show we are worthy of another year by appreciating the past one. And therefore, how does a person know that his teshuva was accepted?

You know it at the end of the year of last year's teshuva. At least that much you know. You made it till now and so get busy thanking Him for every day of this past year. For the year to come nobody knows except Hashem.

A sure way to uplift yourself is to uplift someone else. Reb Yisrael Friedman of Ruzhin (1796-1850)

Gedolim Be'Masayhem



Stories & Anecdotes

Rav Yisrael Perlow the Yanuka (Tishrei 2) - The Cigarettes That Saved The Day

The traveller simply couldn't understand the bizarre behaviour of the rebbe's gabbaim. Surely they understood that he had travelled from far away expressly to see the tzaddik, but no matter what he said, they barred his entry and, smiling, informed him that his room and lodgings had been prepared for him, as if they knew he was to arrive! But if the rebbe had ruach hakodesh like he'd been told, then room and board was not what had brought him there. Surely the rebbe knew the true terrifying reason that had brought him to Stolin.

Earlier that week, the dreaded missive had arrived; it was none other than an official letter requesting his presence before the Russian Military Committee that would surely seal his bitter fate and induct him into the army. A fate from which few Jews ever returned, and those that did were never the same. It was practically impossible to keep Torah and mitzvos in the Russian army. Surely the rebbe must be aware of this and if so, why was he barred entry?

The rebbe, in fact, did know. The Yanuka of Stolin had told his gabbaim a few hours earlier that a bachur would arrive and request to see him regarding his conscription papers into the Russian army and that although they should greet him warmly, receive him well and prepare food and lodgings for him, under no circumstances should they allow him in to see the rebbe.

Once the bachur showed up just a few hours later, the gabbaim, although accustomed to witnessing the rebbe's powers, were astonished at this clear display of ruach hakodesh, and complied with

the rebbe's explicit instructions. The bewildered bachur had no choice but to sit and wait to be called in for an audience.



One evening, his wait finally came to an end. The rebbe invited the bachur in, and if the boy was bewildered before, what happened next caught him completely off guard. The rebbe turned to the bachur and said: "There is no time for long discussions – time is of the essence. Here, take this," he said, and handed the bachur a pack of cigarettes.

The tzaddik withdrew his pocket watch, glanced at the time and exclaimed, "Hurry, the train leaves the platform in just a few minutes! Run and catch the train!"

Without having a chance to explain any of this bizarre behaviour, he urged the bachur to obey. The bachur took the proffered pack of cigarettes and broke into a run to catch the train. As the rebbe predicted, the train was about to pull out from the station. The bachur hurried onto the train and sat down, his head spinning with questions: Why did the rebbe rush him so? What did he need the cigarettes for? Where was this train headed? What would he do when he got to wherever it was that he was going?

Eventually his emunas chachamim calmed him down and he resolved to put his blind trust in the tzaddik. Having placed himself in the rebbe's holy hands, he was finally able to relax.

He was awoken from his reverie by the conductor's call, "Last stop, everybody off!" When the train arrived at the last stop, he realized this must be his destination. He alighted the platform and proceeded to ask of the gentiles if there were any Jews in the town. They replied in the affirmative and directed him to a nearby, well-lit Jewish inn.

Tired, hungry and as puzzled as before, he knocked and was welcomed by the Jewish innkeeper. He explained that he was looking for a place to spend the night. The Jewish innkeeper was more than happy to give him free room and board and put him up for the night, explaining how overjoyed he was to be able to properly fulfil the mitzvah of hachnasas orchim.

As the bachur sat eating his evening repast, a bunch of loud and raucous guests entered the inn. As was their custom, the three goyim ordered drinks and proceeded to enjoy the fare amid loud peals of laughter and drunken camaraderie. "Innkeeper! We want a smoke!" they called out after their hearty meal and some more drink.

"I am sorry," apologized the Jewish innkeeper, "but I don't smoke myself and I seem to be out of cigarettes for the guests." But his continued apologies fell on deaf and drunk ears. "We want a smoke, get us some cigarettes now! If you haven't got any, go out into the night and get some! And don't come back until you got them," added the drunks who had become belligerent.

The poor innkeeper was at his wit's end. Helplessly he turned to his guest, and asked the bachur: "Perhaps you happen to have some cigarettes for these customers?"

At first the bachur was afraid to give away the cigarettes that the rebbe had entrusted him with, who knew for what lofty purpose? But after the innkeeper realized that his guest had salvation in his pockets, he pleaded with the bachur to at least part with half a pack.

The bachur reluctantly agreed and the innkeeper returned with relief to his guests with the cigarettes they had requested earlier. As plumes and clouds of smoke covered the now relaxed forms of the drunken goyim, they turned once again to the innkeeper, but this time with words of wonder and praise, "Wherever did you get such excellent high-quality cigarettes from?" they wanted to know. The innkeeper apologized and explained how he had gotten them from

another guest and had no idea where they originally came from. "Bring him here at once!" they ordered.

When the bachur appeared before the drunks they questioned him as well. "Wherever did you get such excellent high-quality cigarettes from?" they wanted to know. "To tell you the truth I got them from my rabbi, the Stoliner Rebbe."

The bachur proceeded to tell them the whole strange story from his conscription letter, to his travels to Stolin for a bracha and yeshua, to the rebbe's parting gift of cigarettes in lieu of a bracha and the veiled mysterious instructions to hurry and board the train.

"You mean to tell us," sneered one of the three drunks, "that you believe in this rabbiner so much that you travelled to him from so far away and just like that boarded a train to who knows where, all so he can magically somehow get you out of the military service?!" They laughed incredulously at those silly Jews and their silly rabbis! What a novel notion indeed!

"How much for the cigarettes?" they asked.

"Please accept them as a gift, I did not pay for them either; the rebbe gave them to me." This was to their liking, so they thanked the bachur, paid the innkeeper and left.

A few weeks after that strange episode, the bachur found himself in the Russian military offices about to enter before the committee that would decide his fate: conscription or exemption.

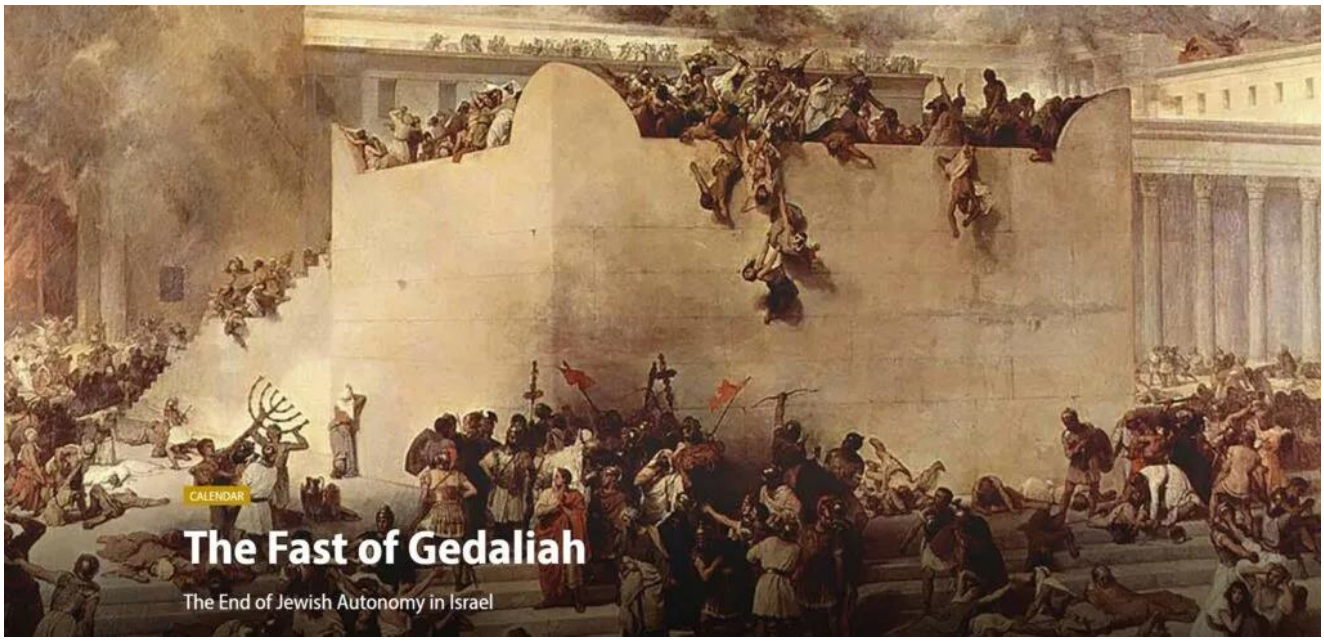
"Before you come before the committee," explained the bored officer in charge of bureaucratic procedures, "you need to go for a short medical examination. It is just perfunctory as you seem to be in good health. Come back with the doctors' letter in hand."

He showed him to the office next door where three Russian military doctors sat with clipboards in hand and stethoscopes at the ready to perform the obligatory examination.

The room swayed and the bachur's vision went out of focus. It was utterly bizarre, it simply could not be! But it was! Here stood the same three goyim who had been drunk at the inn and enjoyed his prize cigarettes; the doctors stood before him open mouthed with shock, just as shocked as he was to see them.

They began to laugh with one another and dispensed with the exam. "No exam needed for you," they explained and proceeded to ask no questions and write up an exemption letter, which they handed to him signed and stamped - "***You are not fit to serve in the army***." They laughed and gave him the letter that saved his life. (Maasei Tzaddikim)

Tzom Gedaliah



Tzom Gedaliah is a fast day that commemorates a tragic time in our people's history, one that the Gemorah (RH 18b) ***equates with the destruction of the Beis HaMikdash itself*** ! – a jarring thought. After the destruction of the first Bais HaMikdosh, the Babylonians left a group of Jews in Eretz Yisrael. Gedaliah, the governor of that group and the leader of Klal Yisroel at the time, refused to take protective measures against Yishmael, when he was warned by Yochanan Ben Korayach of Yishmael Ben Nesanya's malevolent intent

(Yirmiyahu 40:16). The consequences were quite grave indeed. Gedaliah and all his men were brutally murdered (Yirmiyahu 41:2). Gedaliah was actually murdered on Rosh HaShana, but the fast was set aside to the day after Rosh haShana because of the Yom Tov.

Gedaliah Ben Achikam was one of the Gedolei HaDor of his generation. It is a perhaps little-known fact, but he was also a Navi. Indeed, the Gemorah (Rosh HaShana 18b) explains that Hashem Himself (Zechariah 8:19) equates the death of this great Tzaddik with the destruction of the Bais HaMikdash! Rarely if ever do we find such testimony as to the stature of any individual. Hashem himself is his character witness.

The words of the Panim Meiros on the Yerushalmi in Horios (3:5) are quite shocking. He writes that '***Gedaliah caused his own death***'. He was, himself to blame, not only for his death but for those of thousands of others.

When people erroneously forbid information from being disseminated on account of thinking that it is Lashon Harah and that it is absolutely forbidden to pass on the information, people cannot take protective measures. At times, this too can be quite devastating.

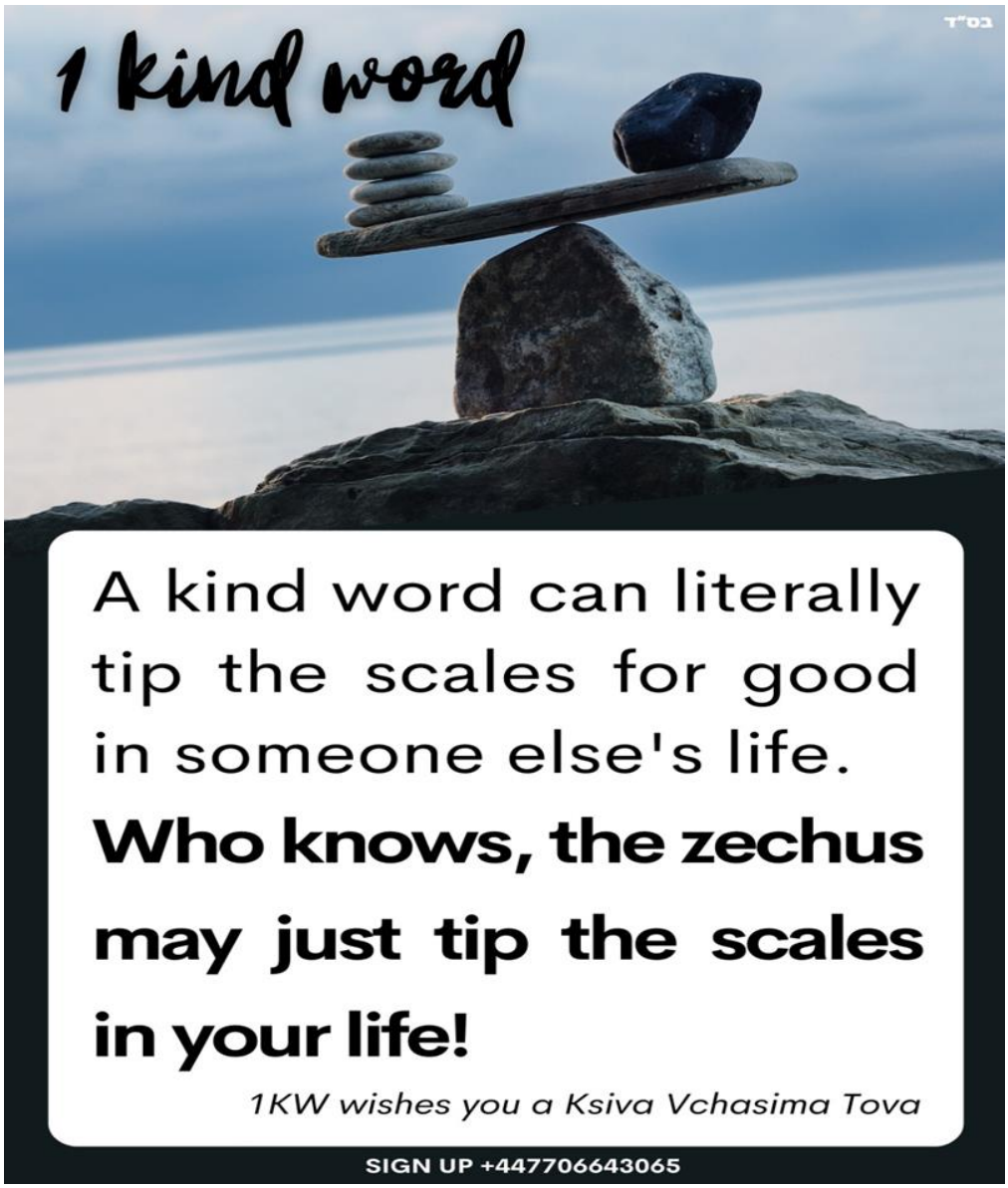
The future of Klal Yisroel was in the hands of this great Tzaddik and Gadol. His decisions were of paramount importance. Notwithstanding his greatness and piety and the fact that he was a prophet of Hashem, Chazal tell us that he made a crucial error in halacha and in its application.

The Gemorah tells us (Niddah 61a) that Gedaliah Ben Achikam misused the halachic concept of Lashon HaRah and applied it erroneously. It was a tragic error that resulted not only in his death, the scattering of the nation, but also in the loss of Klal Yisroel's independence as a nation. Indeed, the repercussions of his error are still felt to this day.

The results of Gedaliah's inaction were so grave that the Mesilas Yesharim (chapter twenty) notes that the Gemorah (Niddah 61a) considers it as if Gedaliah himself had killed all of his people!

To this day, there are many well-meaning people who misapply the notion of Lashon HaRah in ways that can cause Klal Yisroel to err and err again.

No matter what, however, the decision should be made in consultation with Talmidei Chachomim who are attuned both to the need to protect others and to the law of Lashon Harah.



Divrei Torah, Ba`er Heitev באר היטב פרש"י בע' לשון. דברי תורה, שמחה וחיזוק.

בס"ד ראש השנה תשפ"ד

ROSH HASHONOH 5784 Vol. 14 No. 49

On the second day of Rosh Hashonoh is the Yohrtzeit of **"The Frankfurter" - Rav Yisroel, the Yenukoh of Stolin ZY"A**. It is therefore very appropriate to tell stories of Tzadikim as their Zechusim should stand for us during these Yimei HoRachamim VihaSlichos, they shall stand for us to merit a sweet new year.

In the town of Stolin there were two partners who earned a living by selling fish for Shabbos. The rest of the week they engrossed together in the study of Gemoroh. The Baal Dovor [Satan] was not happy with this, so he sent them a lot of customers, they added their business days and eventually they were doing business a whole week and not learning at all.

One night Abayei came to one of the partners in a dream and said, "What is with my Gemoroh?" The fellow went back to sleep, as a dream is a dream. The next night the dream repeated itself, but the businessman did not take heed to it. On the third night Abayei came once again and said, "This is the third time I am coming to you in a dream and as proof that this is a real dream, I will give you a "Knip – pinch" on the top of your wrist".

The fisherman immediately awakened and ran to the Frankfurter and showed him the Knip of Abayei.

Concluded **The Pinsk Karliner Rebbe ZY"A** that his grandfather **Reb Yehoshua Heshel Haltovsky ZT"l** was then in Stolin at the Frankfurter and he saw the Knip of Abayei. He therefore demanded those at the one Shalosh Seudos that he led in the USA, that they strengthen in Torah learning.

A similar story is said about someone who came to **Rav Chaim Volozhiner ZY"A**, and complained that his father had a business and

was very successful. When he inherited the business, it took a turn to the negative.

Rav Chaim Volozhiner asked the person, "What did your father do between customers"? To which the man answered, "He said Tehillim" and what do you do, asked Rav Chaim Volozhiner. "I read the newspaper," was the answer.

Said Rav Chaim, "That is the answer to your problem. As your father said Tehillim, the Satan sent him a lot of customers, but you, as you are anyway reading the newspaper why would he send you customers?"

From this we see, that from the study and observance of Torah and Mitzvos we shall merit all we need in Ruchniyus and Gashmiyus.

The Power of Kugel

Someone once asked the **Belzer Rebbe**, "What is the significance of eating kugel on Shabbos?"

Explained the Rebbe, "You should know that kugel has the power of turning middas hadin (the Devine attribute of strict justice) into middas harachamim (the attribute of Mercy).

The questioner retorted, "If so, why do we have to blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana to turn the middas hadin into middas harachamim, when the same result can be achieved by eating kugel!?"

Replied the Rebbe with a twinkle in his eye, "That's why we don't blow the shofar when Rosh Hashana falls on Shabbos – The kugel that we eat on Shabbos, has the same effect in Heaven, as blowing the shofar – It turns middas hadin into middas harachamim !" (Divrei Baruch – Rosh Hashana)

למנצח לבני קרח



Even if a person is on a real "low," he nevertheless can gain lofty levels with teshuvah in a minimal amount of time. This was derived from the **Maggid from Trisk**, who said an incredible explanation for why we say the kapitel Tehillim about the sons of Korach prior to blowing the shofar.

He explains that the message of the sons of Korach is that although they were in middle of being swallowed in the ground due to a terrible sin, yet at the last second, they did teshuvah and were therefore spared a great portion of their punishment.

We too, even if at the last second, can come back and return. We'll be saved and be granted great reward.

"In the palace of the king there are many chambers, and each one needs a different key. There is one key, one instrument, however, which can open all the doors - the shofar." ~ Baal Hatanya, Reb Shneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812)

The Weekly Vort - Judging Favourably

Dovid and Betzalel were brothers who lived in the same community. They were both expert *baal tokeah's*. The shul wanted them both to blow the shofar, but what to do? They decided that Dovid would blow before Mussaf, and Betzalel would blow during the silent *Shemone Esrei* and *Chazaras HaShatz*.

One year, as Betzalel took the shofar to blow during the *Shemone Esrei*, no sound emanated. He tried different positions, he tried to clean out the shofar. Nothing worked. He felt utterly humiliated and embarrassed. Finally, the gabbai snapped his finger and signaled to pass the shofar to Dovid. And Dovid blew it beautifully.

For a few days after Rosh Hashanah, the two brothers did not speak to each other. Finally, Betzalel paid Dovid a visit. Dovid thought Betzalel was very angry at him. Until Betzalel spoke. "You probably think that I'm angry with you. But I'm not. Those few minutes when I tried unsuccessfully to blow the shofar, when all eyes were upon me and I failed, were the most embarrassing moments of my entire life.

I thought to myself that a person who is embarrassed has the power to give *brachos* to others. So I silently gave you a *brocha*, my dear brother, that your three daughters who have been waiting a while for *shidduchim*, should find their *shidduchim* easily this year. That's what was going through my mind – not any hard feelings against you for your success in blowing the shofar in the face of my failure."

Dovid couldn't believe it! The two brothers hugged. That year, Dovid's three girls got engaged and married!

We say in the Mussaf Shemoneh Esrei of Rosh Hashanah, that each person is judged in accordance with "**מַעֲשֵׂה אִישׁ וּפְקֻדָּתוֹ**," – '***everyone's deed and mission***'. What is the meaning of deed and mission? A person should be judged according to what he does or does not do. What is the meaning of one's mission?

Horav Shraga Feivel Mendlowitz, z.l., explained that a man has a Gd-given purpose in life. We are judged not only by the quality of our deeds, but also by the extent to which we fulfil our personal purpose in life.

Parsha Pearls

The Shulchan Aruch tells us that one should not walk out of shul after davening in a rushing manner (for exceptions, see Shulchan Aruch and commentaries ibid.) This applies on any day of the year. Matteh Efrayim teaches that one should be extra careful to fulfill this halacha on Rosh Hashana, because on this day we are judged, and if one is rushing out of a shul, the kitrugim (prosecuting forces) will use this against him.

But what exactly is a person doing wrong by rushing out of shul?

Matteh Efrayim explains that by rushing out of shul, a person is showing that Avodas Hashem is difficult for him. Matteh Efrayim says that the source which teaches us that Avodas Hashem should not feel like a heavy burden for a person is a verse in Yeshayahu (43:22): וְלֹא אֹתִי קָרָאתָ יַעֲקֹב כִּי יָגַעְתָּ בִּיִשְׂרָאֵל "***But you did not call out to Me, O Yaakov; because you toiled with burden for Me, O Yisroel***."

Hence, based on the words of Yeshayahu, we learn a fundamental life lesson in Avodas Hashem: Even when Avodas Hashem requires toil, it should feel light and enjoyable for you. This can be achieved by internalizing in your heart that what you are doing now is the most important and productive thing in the world that you can do at this time.

יוֹם טוֹב שֶׁל רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה שֶׁחָל לִהְיוֹת בְּשַׁבָּת (ר״ה פ״ד מ״א)

The Kedushas Levi ZY"A, says when Rosh Hashonoh falls out on Shabbos it is especially a Yom Tov. As only good can be written on Klall Yisroel, as it is Pikuach Nefesh. **The Izhbitzer, Divrei Chaim, Sefas Emes**, etc, all expound respectively. As the reason is that since it is Shabbos and we cannot blow the Shofar, as one who is not a Boki (known) may come to carry it in Reshus Horabim to a Chochom to blow the Shofar for him. So, since we cannot blow the Shofar, what happens to all the great Midas HoRachamim and Hashpa'os Tovos that transpire by doing this great Mitzvoh of Shofar.

Rather more so, Hashem Himself gives us the greatness that transpires through accomplishing the Mitzvoh of Shofar.

The great **Chozeh of Lublin ZY"A** was once honored to be the Sandik at a Bris. As he was delayed, he arrived when the Bris had already taken place. To this he exclaimed, "***Kol haneness vilo osohu maleh olov haKosuv ki'eilu asohu*** - that he who is an Oness - not at fault, it is said on him as if he did the action. And that is much more than he could have done by himself.

Sometimes the harshest criticism comes from within. We set unrealistic expectations, compare our journey to others, and begin to stress over imagined deadlines. But the truth is, spiritual growth is deeply personal. There is no single timeline for success; everyone's path unfolds differently – and that's not a flaw, it's the design.

Quiet the inner critic. Don't measure your progress with someone else's ruler. You are not behind. You are not late. Compare yourself only to who you were yesterday, not to who someone else is today. Trust in your journey, stay in your lane, and run your own race. ~ Reb Zusha of Anipoli (1718-1800)

R' Eizik Chaver *zt"l*, writes that one of the reasons we blow the *shofar* on *Rosh Hashana* is to be *mazkir* the *zechus* of the *Torah* that was given to us **בקול שופר**. - We truly do not have to go to the heavens or across the sea to learn *Torah*; it is readily accessible to all who just put a modicum of time and effort into it.

Let us make some *kabbalah* in this area to strengthen ourselves in *Limud HaTorah* and thus be *zoche* to a **כתיבה וחתימה טובה**!

Reb Yisrael Salanter taught us that the superior way to ensure us with a good new year is by becoming an "ish ha'klal," someone who busies himself with others. It's a great investment to support us during the judgment for the coming year. All look for zechusim to add to our account, and the best zechus is to help others. By helping others, we are viewed as someone Klal Yisroel depends on, thereby fortifying ourselves with the zechus ha'rabim — a worthy zechus.



Have A Sweet Year
(Adapted from the Ta'amei ha'Minhagim)

The Head of a Lamb

It is customary to eat a sheep's head on the night of Rosh Hashanah as a sign that we will hopefully become 'heads and not tails' (a wish that is appropriate today as it ever was), and also to remind us of Akeidas Yitzchak, which figures so prominently during these days (Orach Chayim).

The Minhag to eat a fish head instead, goes admirably with the first reason. As for the second, there may be a problem in finding anything in common between the Akeidah and a fish head!

When to Dip the Chalah in Honey

To avoid interrupting between the B'rachah over the bread and the eating, it is advisable to first dip the Chalah in salt (like one always does) and only then, after having eaten the first bite, to dip the remainder of the piece into honey and to recite the 'Yehi Ratzon', as was the custom of the Rebbe from Olesk.

The Simanim on the Second Night

The B'nei Yisaschar disagrees with the Taharas ha'Kodesh, in whose opinion one eats the various species and recites the corresponding 'Yehi Ratzons' on the second night too.

The Simanim on the First Day

The Mateh Efrayim (in Si'man 583) initially seems to confine dipping one's Motzi in honey and reciting the 'Yehi Rotzon' to the first night of Rosh Hashanah. Later however (in Si'man 597), he says that one repeats it during the day, to which he adds that it is appropriate to do the same regarding all the other Simanim that one ate and recited on the first night, if they are available and one feels so inclined.

Sleeping on Rosh Hashanah

Citing the Yerushalmi, the Taz writes that one should avoid sleeping on Rosh Hashanah during the day, because then his Mazel sleeps too (and does not work on his behalf, to earn him a good year).

The Arizal however, adds that it is in order to do so after mid-day, since by then, the relevant Angel has been aroused through one's Tefilos and Teki'os. It is even said that the Arizal himself used to take a nap on Rosh Hashanah afternoon (though it is worth remembering that the Arizal is purported to have attained great levels of understanding whilst he slept - and one should not be too quick therefore, to cite him as an example).





"I've been hearing that you can only buy honey with a hechsher... how true is that?"

ANSWER: As you know, bees produce honey by extracting pollen from flowers etc. There is another Honey called "Forest Honey" or "Honey Dew" (or "Miel Des Arbres" in French), which is also from bees. However the pollen is sourced differently! There are certain trees that have some sort of pollen deep inside them, and bnifloas haBoreh, little mites eat this pollen and secrete it on the leaves of the tree. Bees then come, and eat this sweet thing, and make honey through it. This honey many Hechsheirim hold is not Kosher (which Rav Vozner also said).

Today, with shortage of normal honey (from flowers) in the world, some add/mix this Forest honey, either to normal honey, or with water (to lighten colour) and sell it as 'Pure Bees Honey' (which it is). So although it's not so common, it's something to bear in mind.

Wishing you a Lechtiga Shabbos, and a SWEET GeBentched Year, full of Mazel Brocha Hatzlucha Gezint and of course Parnosa Bshefa Rav. – Rabbi Chanoch Bleir.

The 48 hours of Rosh Hashana are very holy and precious

The most we make out of these 2 days maximizes our chances of meriting to a year full of Hashem's blessings. Here are a few Halachot and thoughts to think about:

1. One should not eat any sour food or unripe fruits. Only sweet and delicious food, as a sign for a sweet new year.

2. One should not get mad or angry on Rosh Hashana, no matter what.

3. Rosh Hashana is the day we crown Hashem as King over ourselves and over the world. We should strengthen that point within ourselves that Hashem is our King and we are His servants that want to do His will.

4. On Rosh Hashana we get judged. Hashem judges us on how we are at the time of judgment. So if at that time we have thoughts of doing better in our **עבודת ה'**, then Hashem already calculates those thoughts of doing better into the judgment to our advantage.

5. It's important to make a **קבלה** on Rosh Hashana. (An acceptance upon oneself to improve in a certain area of his **עבודת ה'**.)

6. On Rosh Hashana we have mixed feelings: Internally we're scared and awed at the awesomeness and immensity of the day, how we are standing on trial for all of our actions that we have done until this day and today is going to be decreed our future in all aspects of our life. But externally, we are happy, wear nice clothes and have festive meals because we are confident that Hashem will grant us a beautiful year.

7. We don't mention any of our sins on Rosh Hashana. Rather, we mention our hopes and aspirations to strengthen ourselves to do the will of Hashem.

8. Every second is gold! When you have "free time" try to make the most out of it by praying, learning Torah, saying Tehilim etc.

9. When we pray for **חיים**- life- in **זכרנו לחיים** and throughout the day, we are asking to be granted a life of meaning, life of serving Hashem.

10. In our prayers we should try to concentrate on every word and mean what we say. It's not lip service. It's better to say less and mean more than to say a lot and not mean anything.

11. Every **אמן** we answer is big, whether for Kaddish or Berachot.

12. **כל העונה אמן יהא שמיה רבא מברך בכל כחו (=בכל כוונתו. רש"י) - קורעין לו גזר דינו** – Our Rabbi's taught us (Tractate Shabbat 119b): Whoever answers **אמן יהא שמיה רבא מברך** out loud and with concentration, his bad decrees are ripped up. That's every day, all the more so on Rosh Hashana when we're being judged. This is a very powerful part of the prayer.

13. The main request we have on Rosh Hashana is "**ימלך ה' לעולם**". That Hashem will quickly reign over all of His creations...that He will reign forever... We want everyone in the world to know that Hashem is the Creator and the King of the world.

There are no guarantees. It is up to us. The more we maximize these 2 precious days with our prayers from the depths of our hearts, the more beautiful will be our upcoming year B"H.

These are just a few thoughts we should think about on Rosh Hashana.

May Hashem bless us with a beautiful holiday full of meaning and accomplishment in our prayers, and may all of **עם ישראל** be written in the book of life, and merit to always do the will of Hashem.

Rabbi Yaakov Mizrahi - **כתיבה וחתימה טובה ותזכו לשנים רבות**

Besamei HaTorah …Beneath the Surface By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם – *'May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year.'*

We have the custom on Rosh Hashanah to bless everyone individually with " **לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם לאלתר לחיים טובים ולשלום** "- May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year immediately for good life and peace".

It is interesting to note that the custom of the author of the Tur (Orach Chaim 586) was to express this statement in this way: **נוהגין באשכנז כל אחד מבקש לחברו ואומר לו: תכתב בשנה טובה** - We Ashkenaz are accustomed that one person wishes one another: May you be inscribed in a good year.

Why does he change the format of the blessing from **לשנה טובה** to **בשנה טובה**? The 'Perisha' explains that in Shamayim there is a book entitled "**שנה טובה**", and all those that merit life are inscribed in it, and so one should bless his fellow that he be inscribed in this book.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

When it comes to eating the Simanei Milsa, the foods that have special significance at the Seudah of Rosh Hashanah, the **Sh"lah Ha'kadosh** says that eating foods just because they have names that connote good fortune is a waste of time and does not help us at all. The real reason we eat the Simanim, he explains, is solely in order to say the Yehi Ratzon, the Tefilah that accompanies eating these foods. When eaten like this, it provides us with a reminder and a means with which we can Daven to Hashem in the beginning of our first meal of the year for things that are important!



Inspired by Time – Rabbi Yehoshua Frankenhauis

Standing Before the Judge—Who Is Our Father

This is Rosh Hashana. The heavenly court is convened. The prosecutors list our failings. The case against us is strong. And then... we lift our eyes and say Avinu Malkenu - The Judge is our Father.

He does not overlook responsibility—He expects honesty, sincerity, and accountability. But He loves us. He cherishes us. He believes in us more than we believe in ourselves. His deepest desire is to bless us, to guide us, to help us become who we are meant to be.

That is why we enter this day with gilu bi'r'ada—trembling joy. Trembling—for the judgment is real. Joy—for the Judge is our Father.

Yes, He is Malkenu. Yes, He sits on the Throne of Judgment. But first—He is Avinu.

The Secret of Rosh Hashana

And this explains so much. On Rosh Hashana, there is no viduy. No ashamnu, no al chet. The focus is not on sin but on sovereignty. Not on guilt, but on relationship. We proclaim: Hashem Melech! Hashem reigns! We are not merely defending ourselves. We are crowning Him anew as King. And the coronation is not fearful submission. It is an act of love, of trust, of closeness.

And here lies the secret: when we approach Hashem not only with awe but also with love—when we say Avinu before we say Malkenu—we awaken His mercy in ways we cannot fathom. We are not criminals begging for leniency. We are children returning home.

The Joy of Judgment

This is why Rosh Hashana is filled with simcha. We feast not because the trial is trivial, but because we know Who sits on the throne. We dress in our finest, because we know we are not standing before a stranger—we are standing before our Father. We wish each other Shana Tova with joy, because we believe, with unshakable faith, that His love will carry us into a year of blessing.

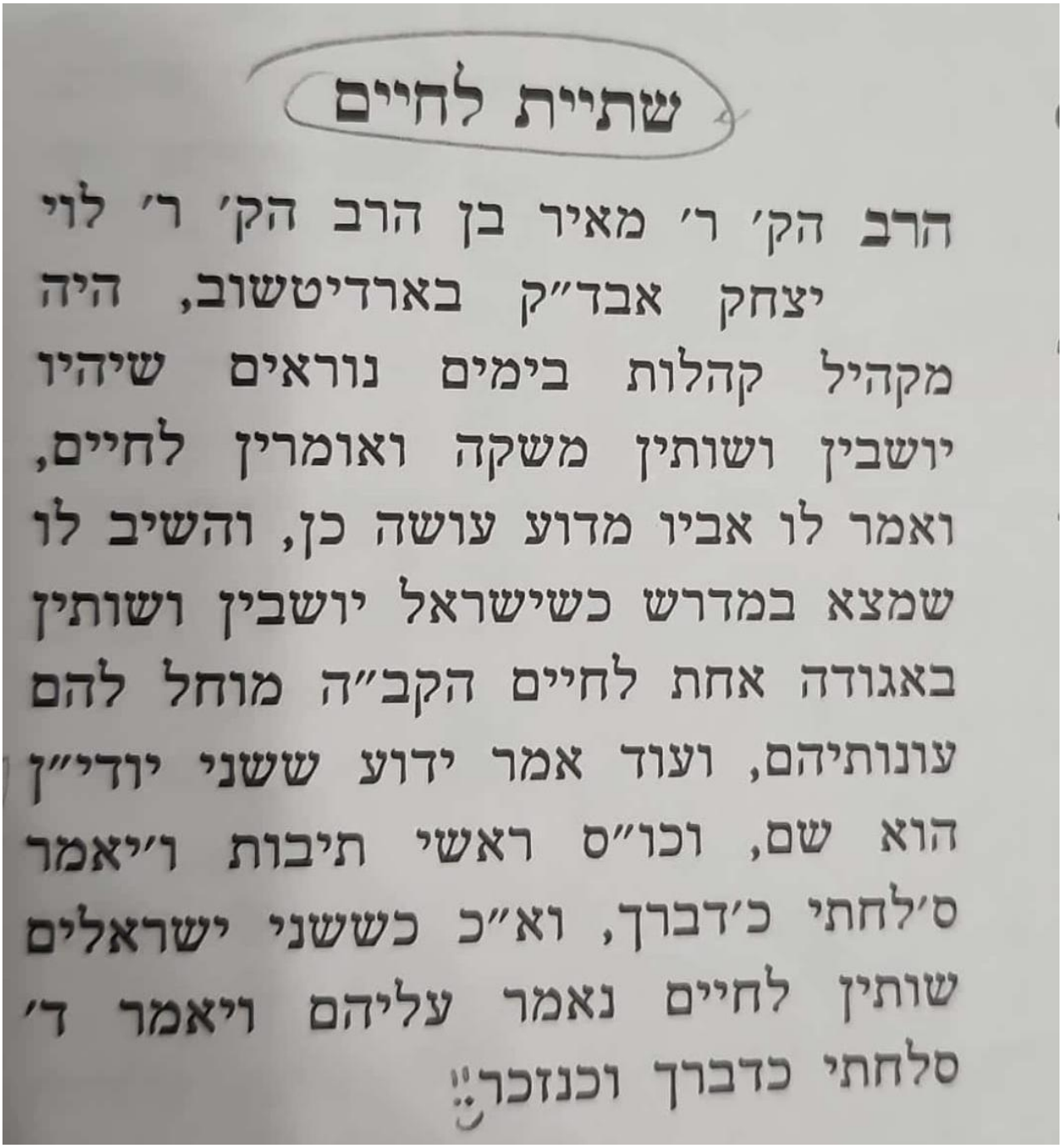
So let us stand in shul this Rosh Hashana with trembling hearts and uplifted eyes. Let us pray with sincerity. Let us reflect honestly. Let us commit to grow. But above all, let us trust in His love. And when we do, the shofar's cry will pierce the heavens, shattering barriers, opening gates. And the King—who is also our Father—will smile upon His beloved children and grant us life, blessing, and peace.

Malchus Shamayim

Every child learns about Hashem long before they can read a siddur - they learn it from us. **Rav Shlomo Wolbe zt"l** explained that a child's first sense of Malchus Shamayim comes from how they experience authority at home. When parents live with dignity, consistency, and a sense of higher purpose, children naturally begin to grasp what it means to accept Hashem as King.

Rav Wolbe emphasized that Rosh Hashana is not about fear of punishment, but the awe and joy of recognizing Hashem's Malchus. The most powerful chinuch during these days is letting children see that Rosh Hashana changes us - in deeper tefillah, greater patience, and more thoughtful words.

What children witness in us can speak louder than any lesson - a glimpse of yiras Shomayim, kavanah, and the presence of the Melech Malchei HaMelochim in everyday life.



שתיית לחיים

הרב הק' ר' מאיר בן הרב הק' ר' לוי יצחק אבד"ק בארדיטשוב, היה מקהיל קהלות בימים נוראים שיהיו יושבין ושותין משקה ואומרין לחיים, ואמר לו אביו מדוע עושה כן, והשיב לו שמצא במדרש כשישראל יושבין ושותין באגודה אחת לחיים הקב"ה מוחל להם עונותיהם, ועוד אמר ידוע ששני יודי"ן הוא שם, וכו"ס ראשי תיבות ו'יאמר ס'לחתי כ'דברך, וא"כ כששני ישראלים שותין לחיים נאמר עליהם ויאמר ד' סלחתי כדברך וכנזכר.

Rav Isser Zalman Meltzer, zt"l, once told his Talmidim, "Perhaps you should put a 'gartel' around me, just like we wrap around a Sefer Torah that is pasul, and is unfit to use. We do this to warn everyone about its imperfections so that no one will come to false conclusions and lessons. I too may not have fulfilled my role properly, and I may require a caution sign to alert others of this!"

In the kriyas HaTorah on the second day Rosh Hashanah we read Akeidas Yitzchok.

וּפִילַגְשׁוֹ וּשְׁמָהּ רְאוּמָה וַתֵּלֶד גַּם הִוא אֶת טֶבַח וְאֶת גַּחַם וְאֶת תַּחַשׁ וְאֶת מַעֲכָה

We know that **מַעֲכָה** can stand for **מֶלֶךְ עַל־כָּל־ העולם** - but **וְאֶת מַעֲכָה** can also be a mnemonic for **ווידוי אחר תשובה מגיע עד כסא הכבוד**

Why do we say **ה׳ מֶלֶךְ, ה׳ מָלַךְ, ה׳ יִמְלֹךְ** — that Hashem *is*, *was*, and *will be* King — in that order? Shouldn't it start with the past, then the present, then the future?

Rabbi Shimshon Pincus explained: when life feels hard, it's easy to believe Hashem *was* there in the past and *will be* there in the future — but hard to feel Him *now*. That's why the tefillah begins with **ה׳ מֶלֶךְ** — Hashem *is* King *right now*, even in the struggle. He's ruling this moment too, doing what's best for us.

STORIES TO inspire



Saying Lamnatzeiach and Blowing Shofar With No Preparations

The same sefer goes on to relate the following story that he heard from **Rav Mordechai Chaim of Slonim zy"a**:

On Rosh Hashanah, **Rav Moshe Leib of Sassov zy"a** would make a long break in between Shacharis and tekias shofar to give himself enough time to prepare for this mitzvah by going to the mikvah, reciting from the Zohar, etc.

One year, when he left the bais medrash after Shacharis, he heard one of the mispalelim telling his son, "The Rebbe will now make a long break before the blowing of the shofar. I don't have the strength to wait. I am so hungry."

When Rav Moshe Leib heard this, he went right back to his seat and said, "Ribono Shel Olam. Your children are hungry." He immediately began reciting Lamnatzeiach and blew the shofar with no other preparations.

Why was the Brisker Rav so machmir in shofar?

The Brisker Rav was known for his extraordinary attention to the mitzva of shofar. He examined every detail, was choshesh for every slight possibility of a chashash, and learned the halachos intensely.

Someone once approached him and asked, "Rebbe, why are you so nervous? Why so careful about every detail? Why is every tiny doubt treated like it matters so much?"

The Brisker Rav answered as follows: "Imagine a person walking around with a large sum of money in his pocket — a hundred thousand dollars. He leaves his home, walks down one flight of stairs, and immediately checks his pocket. He takes a few more steps and

checks again. He walks down the street and keeps touching his coat to make sure the money is still there."

"Is he strange? Is he obsessive? Is he overdoing it? No. He's acting exactly as anyone would. When something valuable is in your pocket, you keep checking to make sure it hasn't slipped away."

"That's me with shofar. For me, this mitzva is worth far more than a hundred thousand dollars. How can I not check, and check again, and make sure I'm fulfilling it properly? If something is precious, you guard it."

It's all about our priorities. Do we value our gashmiyus more — or our ruchniyus?



A Blow from Above

Rabbi Yechiel Zucker *of Yeshivas Torah B'Tiferes shared an extraordinary story — one that reminds us that when a person does all that is within his ability, Hashem sends exceptional* siyata d'Shmaya *to complete the rest.*

For over fifty years, **Reb Shmulik Yungreis** has served as the devoted *gabbai* of a central *beis haknesses* in Bnei Brak. Besides his *gabbai* responsibilities, he volunteers for Ezer Mizion. Every Rosh Hashanah, immediately after his brief *yom tov seudah*, he heads straight to Beilinson Hospital to blow *shofar* for those confined to their beds.

To appreciate what he does, picture this: The hospital has eight floors. Each floor has two wings, each wing has two sections, and

each section holds nine rooms. That's rows upon rows of *cholim* waiting, hoping, and yearning to fulfill the mitzvah of *shofar*.



By the time Reb Shmulik arrives, some patients have not heard a single *kol*. Others may have heard nine and long to complete thirty. And so, with patience, warmth, and superhuman stamina, Reb Shmulik goes from room to room until the entire building resonates with the *shofar's* ancient cry.

His son, Asher Tuvia, would accompany him on this sacred mission, helping him cover half the hospital. By the time they returned home each year, they had blown an astonishing average of 5,000 *kolos*!

To manage such a task, Reb Shmulik required many *shofaros*. But unlike what most people would do, he never reused a *shofar* from previous years. Instead, he purchased ten new ones annually — and not just ordinary *shofaros*, but ones chosen with care and *kedushah*. After using each *shofar* for several sets of *tekios*, he would place it in a bag and after *yom tov* gift them to *bachurim* as a *bar mitzvah* present.

"This *shofar*," he would tell the young *bar mitzvah bachur*, "has absorbed countless cups of tears. Keep it for the day when *Mashiach* comes — and blow it before him."

Five years ago, Reb Shmulik fell ill. His strength waned, and he could no longer make the rounds as he once had. His son was determined to continue his father's holy mission. He tried to cover what his father had done — but he knew it was impossible.

He asked his *rav* for guidance.

"Try your best," the *rav* advised gently. "If in the past you covered half the hospital, then aim for half. Do what you can."

As Rosh Hashanah approached, Reb Shmulik remained weak, unable to lift a *shofar*. Asher Tuvia begged Hashem for help. "Please show me that You are pleased with the work we're doing," he whispered. "That will give me the stamina — the strength and resolve — to continue this holy mission."

When the day arrived, he began moving through the building, floor by floor. But halfway through the third floor, he collapsed onto a chair, drained and trembling — no *koach* left.

He whispered a quiet *tefillah*: "Ribono Shel Olam, I'm doing this for You. Please help me!"

Remembering the words of his *rav*, he pushed himself to attempt at least "half." He forced himself toward the end of the fourth floor, mustering whatever energy he had left.

When he pushed open the heavy iron doors of the fourth floor, ready to return home, he froze.

Two teenage boys were standing there — each holding a *shofar*.

They looked somewhat lost and unsure.

Asher Tuvia stared at them. "Who are you? Where are you coming from?"

The boys exchanged a glance and answered simply, "Our grandfather told us that since we received these *shofaros* from Reb Shmulik Yungreis, and since he used to come here every year to blow for the hospital patients, and now he can't, so…we should come do it instead of him."

The words struck him like lightning.

These were *bar mitzvah* boys who had received one of Reb Shmulik's tear-soaked *shofaros* — and they had come without his knowledge, wanting to repay the kindness and continue the legacy of the man who had given them the mitzvah of a lifetime.

With tears in his eyes, Asher Tuvia led them through the remaining floors. Together, they completed what Reb Shmulik had done for so many years. Every patient heard *shofar* — not only because of Reb Shmulik's legacy, but with the very *shofaros* he himself had used.

To Asher Tuvia, the message was unmistakable: *When a Yid does all he can, Hashem Himself steps in to finish the rest.*



A Taste Of The Year Ahead - Steps to the Throne with Joy by Rabbi Nosson Muller

תִּכְלֶה שָׁנָה וְקִלְלוֹתֶיהָ, תָּחֵל שָׁנָה וּבִרְכוֹתֶיהָ - '***May the year and its curses cease, may the year and its blessings begin***.' (See Megillah 31a and the piyyut, Achos Ketanah, recited by many congregations on the first night of Rosh Hashanah)

R' Yaakov Moshe Twerski reads novel meaning into the above blessing commonly shared in advent of the new year. Instead of reading tichleh as addressing the previous year itself, he reads it as a directive to us all to shift perspective from negative to positive. Tichleh — stop talking about the troubles you have experienced in the past year. Tachel — start expressing appreciation for all the gifts you have received!

Replace your complaints with gratitude by focusing on all the positive blessings the last 12 months have brought to your door. Chazal

inform us that simana milsa hi — symbolism has a tangible effect. We are therefore instructed on Rosh Hashanah to partake of simanim, specific foods whose names allude to the blessings we hope will be included in the new year ahead. (Kereisos 5a)

The Sfas Emes adds depth to this custom and its meaning. It is not for naught that we engage in this practice of symbolism specifically with food. Eating fuels the body but provides no nourishment for the soul. It is seemingly unspiritual, a totally unremarkable and earthly pursuit. Only people connected to Heaven while on Earth have the insight to turn base pleasure into a vehicle for prayer. Ingesting pomegranates becomes an appeal for our merits to increase and consuming the head of a fish or a lamb is an entreaty for a seat at the head of the table. Dates, leeks, and beets declare war on our enemies, and simple carrots invoke a deep-seated wish for Hashem's abundant merit.

Everything in this world can be made holy, and eating the simanim on Rosh Hashanah relates this even to food.

The Mesillas Yesharim strikes a similar chord. He famously writes that when a Jew cleaves to his Creator, he is not just uplifting his own soul. The entire world, and all that is within it, ascends along with him. He points to the stones on Har HaMoriah that fought over the privilege of having Yaakov's head rest on its surface. Even stones are rooted in holiness and strive for perfection. Every action we make influences the entire gamut of creation.

All these interesting foods are not placed on the table tonight in the interest of expanding the menu. Instead, they invite us to understand the true purpose of eating, and by extension, the true purpose of all earthly pleasure. When a Jew eats with the proper intent, he is indulging in a spiritual feast. He uplifts the world with every prayer-infused bite!

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

אם כבנים רחמינו כרחם אב על בנים וכו' (תפלת מוסף)

One *Rosh Hashanah*, when his congregation was waiting for him to join them for the blowing of the *shofar*, the **Chozeh of Lublin, R' Yaakov Yitzchok ZT'L**, remained in his study for a very long time. The Chozeh had seen that a dire verdict was threatening *Klal Yisroel* in the Heavenly court and he was trying to intercede. Suddenly, he emerged and walked right over to a young boy, an orphan, who was standing reverently waiting for the *Rebbe*.

The Chozeh turned to the child and asked him what he was learning in *cheder*. The boy answered that he was studying the *gemara* in *makkos* that discusses **עדות** - *testimony*. 'And what questions seem to bother you about this *gemara*?' asked the Rebbe.

With some hesitation, the boy finally answered. 'I don't understand why the testimony of a relative is considered inadmissible in *beis din*, whether it comes in defence or in prosecution. In the case of defence, it is understandable that the court would not allow it, for fear that a witness may lie in order to clear his relative and get him off when he is really guilty. Such testimony is therefore outlawed to start with. But why should the testimony of a relative be inadmissible in the case of prosecution if it is going to prove that he is guilty?'

The Chozeh nodded and asked, 'Have you come up with an answer?'

"Well, I was thinking possibly," replied the boy, "that concerning **עדות**, the Torah states **ועמדו שני האנשים - (שופטים יט-יז)** - *'The two people shall stand'*. From this we see that witnesses must be considered 'people'. However, a person who can offer evidence that will convict his relative, his very own flesh and blood, does not fall under the category of a 'person', and will therefore be considered invalid as a witness."

When the Chozeh heard this, he sighed with relief and said, "With your words, my son, all the accusations that had threatened us in the Heavenly court, have now been nullified. For we are the sons of the Almighty, and He is our Father. We are indeed close relatives, as close as a father is to his son. How then otherwise, will He be able to tolerate any incriminating evidence against His own sons and relatives?"

With that, the Rebbe joined his waiting congregation for the blowing of the *shofar*.

R' Moshe Chaim Luzzato ZT'L would say:

'תשובה is a miraculous phenomenon. It enables a person to undo the spiritual effects of what is already done. Repentance can erase a misdeed or even turn it into a good deed. That is the miracle of all miracles!'

R' Naftali of Ropschitz ZT'L would say:

'I do Tashlich right after my great Rebbeim, so as to retrieve for myself the 'defects' that those masters have just thrown away!'

Taking Stock of the Soul

One must stop and think, what kind of life am I really living? A businessman takes stock of his business; should a Jew not take stock of his soul? ~ R' Shalom Mordechai Schwadron zt"l.

Torah Priorities - Rabbi Avrohom Benovos

Rosh Hashona, the time when we appreciate the gift of life, is also the time to reassess our priorities in life and clarify for ourselves the purpose of the upcoming year. Yes, we cannot dream – as of yet – of dedicating the next year purely for *avodas HaShem*, with every action calculated with the sole purpose of bring a *nachas ruach* to HaShem. That is the *avoda* of supremely lofty *tzaddikim*. But we *can* – and we must – attempt to sharpen in our own minds the definition of what we're seeking in life. What are our priorities?

We live in a world of *hester;* we experience and sense the physical, tangible world, while we *believe* that the unseen spiritual dimension exists – and not merely exists, but actually is far more real than the illusionary *olam hazeh*. This is part of our mission in life – seeing through the deception.

The Chofetz Chaim (*Toras Habayis* chap. 12) observes that a Jew is not instinctively filled with joy at having merited to say *Birkas Hamazon*, and is not distraught over having committed an *averiah*, while over gaining or losing a few rubles he does react strongly. This is not because he lacks *emunah*, writes the Chofetz Chaim, but simply because he is not paying attention! We fail to put enough thought into the meaning of what we are doing.

The degree to which we succeed in penetrating through the fog of *olam hazeh* and illuminating our paths with the light of *emunah*, is the degree in which we will be able to set our priorities straight. This year in particular, when we sadly witnessed the value of *limmud Torah* disparaged in public, gives us an added impetus to reinforce our understanding of what is genuinely meaningful, and what truly brings blessing upon Klal Yisroel and the entire world.

Again – the fact that we struggle so much to achieve clarity is not coincidental. It is a critical part of the human mission in *olam hazeh*.

Changing the perspective will not happen by itself. It requires an investment into *emunah* and *yiras Shomayim*.

The Chazon Ish had a *talmid* called Rav Shlomo Cohen. In the period leading up to the founding of the State of Israel, the friction between the Zionist militants and the Arab residents peaked and almost every day one heard of the tragic deaths of Jews.

Rav Cohen expressed to the Chazon Ish his deep grief over the situation. Surprisingly, the Chazon Ish replied: "Why are not as distressed over the fact that thousands of Jewish children are being educated for secularism? Is that mass murder any less cruel than the Arab attacks? It is *worse* – for besides for that it murders far greater numbers, Chazal tell us that bringing someone to *aveiros* is worse than killing him."

The response of the Chazon Ish, coming from one who manifested the epitome of *ahavas Yisroel*, was not intended to downplay the terrible murders of Jews, but rather to establish – for one ready to understand – the true Torah set of priorities. The inhumane terrorist monsters, blood dripping from their hands, appear to us as the very incarnation of evil (which they are). But in the spiritual sense – *the true reality* – the well-dressed, suave power-holders and politicians who play a direct role in starving millions of Jewish children into spiritual destruction are indescribably more horrific.

Of course, the same goes for the reverse. One Yid volunteers to help drivers stuck while travelling. Another raises money to marry off *yesomim*. Yet another gives of his time to help patients in hospital. Truly *mi k'amcha Yisroel*. Such *ahavas Yisroel*, such *chessed*. They deserve our appreciation and admiration (and emulation).

Other Yidden invest time and energy into *zikkui harabbim*. Spreading awareness of not talking in *davening*, or of *shemiras halashon*, or any of the countless other areas which need *chizzuk*. Or volunteering to

help others minimize the dangers posed by contemporary technology.

There are so many other examples, large and small, some with organization and some with individuals, some known about and some not. In *kashrus* and *shemiras Shabbos*, in *taharas hamishpacha* and in *kedusha*. Do we actually appreciate that helping others to *mitzvos* and avoid *aveiros* is actually important? That it can be at least *as* meaningful and impactful as helping people in more tangible forms?

May we merit to truly seek *aliyah* in *avodas HaShem*, and merit the help from HaShem to achieve our goals.

The Essence of Jewish Identity

The Izhbitzer Rebbe says that the name 'Jew' is derived from the tribe of Judah, as is the Hebrew name Yehudi. Why are all Jews known by the name of one tribe?

Because when the brothers stood accused of theft before Yosef in Egypt, the Torah tells us (Bereishis 44:18) that Yehudah "stepped up" to argue in their defence. When all seemed to be lost, when faced with the overwhelming weight of evidence against them, Yehudah never gave up hope.

That is the definition of a Jew, a person who knows that the Almighty will never abandon him. A person who never gives up hope.

"We are here in this world as messengers of Hashem. Our creator has not given up on us. He grants us life each day because we have a mission to fulfil. Hence, we have no right to ever give up hope". ~ Chazon Ish.



A Shofar has to have a curve. It can't be straight. If it's straight, like a little trumpet, like a little thing, it's not *kosher*. It has to be as big as a fist, but it has to have a curve.

And if you look at it, it's such a lesson for all of us because the *shofar* where you blow into is a teeny little round hole. And as the *shofar* goes, it gets bigger, bigger, bigger. If you blow from the other side, it's not *kosher*. You have to blow from the little hole and it goes out from the big side.

And the *shofar* has to have a curve, some type of a curve, a little curve, it has to have a curve. So I told these kids, I said, it's a lesson in life. The air, the breath, is life when you blow into the *shofar*, right? So you're blowing your life into the *shofar*. That's what you're doing, you're blowing your air, you're blowing your life into the *shofar*.

Because *Hashem* wants to teach us that even though you're starting off with a little teeny hole, right, I can't do every *mitzvah* in the world, but just a little blow, just a little sound. Even though it's going into a little teeny hole, when it comes out, it comes out of a huge hole with a huge sound. That every Jew needs to know that all you need to do is just blow in. Just do something.

Just start. You don't need to be a trumpeteer. It's not the big hole that you're blowing into, but the little teeny hole, little teeny round hole, right? And a person's life, but life is curved, life is not straight. You need to know that life's not perfect and we go through all kinds of stuff in life.

And the *shofar* represents life. So the *shofar* can't be straight. The *shofar* has to have a twist. And what's the most beautiful *shofar*? The *shofar* that has the most twists.

The *Sefardim* use that *shofar*, twist, twist, twist, twist, the long *shofar*, right? That's the big *shofar*. And I'm imagining that's the *shofar* of *Mashiach*. It's coming from an *ayil* or it might have been a unicorn, there's a whole *medrash* on that, whatever it is, but it's huge. And so I said to the kids, what's the beauty of the *shofar*? What's the beauty of the *shofar*? The *shofar* represents life.

It does. We know that *truah* is crying, each thing. *Shevarim* is a broken person. It represents life.

So it's telling us that it doesn't have to be straight is no good. Life doesn't go straight. The more twists, the more stuff you go through, the bigger the sound that comes out at the end. And that's what the *shofar* represents.

And that's what a person has to understand on *Rosh Hashanah* that even though I might have gone through a lot of stuff this year and a lot of pain and a lot of twists to my life, but at the end of the day, the sound that's gonna come out of my life, of my *shofar*, which is my life, is gonna be a huge *tekiah* which is gonna bring *Mashiach*.

"The judgment of Rosh Hashanah is not meant to break a person, but to awaken him. Hashem judges with love and waits for even the smallest movement toward Him." ~ Chafetz Chaim.

"The sound of the shofar is the voice of the Jewish soul calling out from its deepest place. It is the cry of the heart that cannot be expressed in words." ~ Rav Tzadok HaKohen.

Sweeter Than Honey - Being A Sweet Yid!

One Rosh Hashanah, in the home of a holy Tzadik, everything was going wrong, one thing after another. The Kiddush cup spilled on the tablecloth before Kiddush; the challah fell on the floor while he was trying to cut it; on and on, the problems just kept coming.

His Rebbetzin became worried. Maybe it was a bad sign for the coming year? But the Tzadik said, "The main siman is to be happy; the food is to get us to be happy, but if we are happy even when things can go wrong, then what can be a better sign for a great new year? (The Nesivos Sholom told this story.)

What's the Lesson: People in Yerushalayim would say, "If an apple dipped in honey is a sign for a sweet year, then for sure, if a person is a 'sweet Yid,' by keeping a smile on his face, even when things go wrong, and by greeting others warmly, what better sign can there be for a sweet new year?"

The Beis Aharon of Karlin said, "The way to get a good judgment is by being united with other Yidden." By being a "sweet Yid!" Smile at others, greet them warmly, be good to them, and don't forget to smile at yourself too!

In life, especially Rosh Hashanah, things won't always go exactly as planned. Remember that the BEST siman is to be HAPPY (at least try your best...!) even when things don't go our way, and be a SWEET YID!

One of life's greatest achievements is reaching the end of the day and knowing you made someone else's world a little bit brighter. ~ Inspired by the teachings of the Baal Shem Tov, Rabbi Yisrael ben Eliezer (1698-1760).

Even If You feel Like You Are Not Accomplishing...!

It was the first year that the **Pnei Menachem of Gur** became Rebbe, and there was an older chassid, R' Tzadok, who had been blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashanah for many years. Everyone was waiting to hear him blow.

R' Tzadok made the bracha with great emotion, but as he tried to blow, no sound came out. He tried again and again, but no matter how hard he tried, nothing came out. Someone else had to take over.

After davening, the Pnei Menachem thanked R' Tzadok and said, "The second person blew beautifully, but your blowing was even more beautiful!"

"But Rebbe, I didn't even end up blowing anything!"

The Pnei Menachem explained that Chazal (Berachos 6a) say that if a person **tried** to do a mitzvah and in the end wasn't able to do it, he is rewarded as if he actually did it.

And The **Noam Elimelech** says that a person who wanted to do a mitzvah but wasn't able to do it receives even more reward!

Q But the Pnei Menachem asked: Why could someone who didn't actually do the mitzvah deserve even **more** reward?

A Because when a person does a mitzvah, there can sometimes be thoughts of Look at me! I did such a great mitzvah! I'm such a tzadik," there is personal honor involved.

But when someone truly wants to do a mitzvah but isn't able to, there are no thoughts of honor, since no one even saw him do any mitzvah because he wasn't able to do it in the end; there was only the pure desire to do the mitzvah. - That's why wanting to do a mitzvah can even be greater than actually doing it!

"That's why your trying to blow the shofar was more beautiful than the actual blowing."

The Rebbe also thanked R' Tzadok for the bracha he made on the shofar, which was full of yiras Shamayim.

What's the lesson?

So many times in life, we try so hard to do the right thing, but we still mess up. But Hashem sees how hard we tried! If you try your best, you are the best! Even if you fail a test and feel like you didn't accomplish anything, if you really tried your best, you get a 100% in Heaven!

So when a new year is coming, and we think and try to accept how we will improve this year, even if we don't do everything that we actually wanted to do, if we really had in mind to try to be better, we will get rewarded for the good thought; again, we must try actually to do good.

Still, sometimes we are so busy that it feels almost impossible, but never give up on trying to become better! Your good thoughts are powerful! Sometimes the desire to be good is even greater than you can imagine!

This connects to Rosh Hashanah:

Why don't we blow the shofar on shabbos?

This year we don't blow the shofar on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, because it falls on Shabbos.

Why don't we blow the shofar on Shabbos?

The answer is because we are afraid that some Yidden who don't know how to blow the shofar properly may carry their shofar to ask a Rav how to blow it properly or whether their shofar is kosher.



So the entire Klal Yisroel doesn't get to do this special mitzvah because a few Yidden might make a mistake?! The shofar brings so many blessings with it! Why do ALL of us have to lose out because of them?!

Because Chazal (Berachos 6a) say that if we really wanted to do a mitzvah and in the end couldn't do it, like blowing shofar on Shabbos, Hashem considers it as if we did do it!

And as the Noam Elimelech explained, our desire to do a mitzvah can be even more holy when we truly wanted to do it but couldn't!

We never lose out by helping another Yid! By not blowing the shofar on Shabbos to protect another Yid from making a mistake, Hashem considers it as if we blew it. And according to the Noam Elimelech, our pure desire and wish to do the mitzvah, without receiving any honor from actually doing it, can be even more precious and accomplish more then the actual blowing!

Did you understand what you just heard? By not blowing the shofar this year, we actually accomplish more than we do in a regular year of Rosh Hashanah, all because we show our care for another yid!

R' Simcha Zissel of Kelm ZT"L would say:

"If one who attempts to seduce another into idol-worship is subject to the death penalty, whether or not he succeeds, imagine the reward for one who tries to bring another to Teshuvah, even if he does not succeed!"

On Rosh Hashanah, R' Avigdor Miller ztl used to say, "Let's first thank Hashem for the past year, and only then can we ask for another year!"

It's so important to be grateful for what we already have. Only then can we appreciate what we will be given in the future!

Before asking Hashem for more, let's first stop and say thank You for everything He has already given us!

Project Mesorah – Rabbi Paysach Krohn

א גוט ערב שבת, my dear friends of Project Mesorah. This is your friend, Rabbi Pesach Krohn, speaking.

The **אבודרהם** asks a great question and the answer is even better than the question.

The question is, if you go through the **דאוונינג** of **ראש השנה יום כפור**, there's one word that is repeated over and over and over and over again, and that is **וכן**. It says **וכן יתקדש, וכן תן פחדך, וכן תן כבוד, וכן צדיקים**. Why do we say it so many times? And he gives a fabulous answer. He says **וכן** is referring to **אסתר המלכה**, who said the word **וכן**.

And if you take a look in the **מגילת אסתר פרק ד פסוק טז**, Esther said to **מרדכי**, who wanted her to go into the king **אחשורוש**, and she was terrified to go in. So she said, listen, **כנוס את כל היהודים**, get everybody to **דאוון** and to fast for me, and then she says **ובכן אבוא אל המלך**. And in that way I'll come into the king. In other words, even though I'm afraid, but I have the confidence because you're all **דאוונינג** and fasting for me.

And that's what the **אבודרהם** says, that we're afraid to go into **השם ראש השנה יום כפור** because we don't know what we may have done this past year that might not merit us a good year. But we go in **ובכן** with Esther's **וכן**.

And what happened? The next **פרק** says that he gave her the **שַׁרְבִּיט הַזָּהָב**. And that's so appropriate for **תשפ״ז** coming up. He gave her the golden sceptre, and this is **תשפ״ז** coming up. **פז** means gold, so **השם** should give us the **שַׁרְבִּיט הַזָּהָב** in the new year.

And that's what all of **ובכן** is all about. And let us try that, and that's what I did in my **מחזור**, every single time when it says **ובכן**, I circled it and underlined it, I should remember Esther's **ובכן**. And that's

what we should do, and in that way hopefully we'll get, so to speak, the שַׁרְבִּיט הַזָּהָב, the great year in תשפ״ז.

And so to the men I say ישמך אלקים כאפרים וכמנשה, to the women ישמך אלקים כשרה רבקה רחל ולאה, to everyone יאר יברכך השם וישמרך, השם פניו אליך ויחנך, ישא השם פניו אליך וישם לך שלום.

You should have a פריילייכען שבת and a ליכטיגע שבת, and a wonderful new year.

Rabbi Yechiel Spero

It is Sunday morning, and שמאי הזקן is walking through the marketplace. He stops in front of a בהמה, a beautiful animal, healthy, whole, and he buys it and he says two words: זו לשבת, this one is for שבת קודש. On Tuesday, he's back in the שוק, and there is an even finer בהמה, a finer animal, and he buys that one too. The nicer animal is now set aside for שבת, and the first one he had, the beautiful one he had already designated, שמאי eats that one during the week.

And the גמרא in ביצה tells us that this was not one week, and it was not one month, but rather שמאי had this practice כל ימיו, all of his days. And רש״י there says something that can change our week into a special week. He says that the animal that שמאי eats in middle of the week is also being eaten לכבוד שבת, because he is eating it so that the finer one should be able to reach the שבת table on שבת.

שמאי הזקן was not eating leftovers on Wednesday; שמאי הזקן was eating the food of שבת.

And every one of us knows a different kind of week. Every one of us has our own challenges. Sunday is carpool, and then the bank, and then Monday and Tuesday are gone before they start, and Wednesday there's a form that the school needs signed, and Thursday night the cholent goes on, and somewhere around 4:00 on

Friday we are racing the clock, and **שבת** arrives while we can barely catch our breath. But **שמאי הזקן** lived a whole different week.

Six days a week he was already sitting **ממש** at the **שבת** table. And this is not the private **הנהגה** of one great man, it's really a **פסוק: זכור את יום השבת לקדשו**.

אלעזר בן חנניה learns out from these words: **תהא זוכרו מאחד בשבת**, remember **שבת** from Sunday. And the **רמב"ן** writes that this is why the days of the week were never given names of their own.

There's no Monday, it's **אחד בשבת** and **שני בשבת**, the first day towards **שבת** and the second day for **שבת**. A **ייד** never counts away from **שבת** behind him; he counts toward the **שבת** in front of him.

שבת does not begin on a Friday afternoon; **שבת** begins on Sunday. And now, we are challenged, and we are privileged with the following mission: Bring the seventh day into all seven days.

And it takes almost nothing. One thing a day. One day, learn a single **הלכה** in **הלכות שבת**, two minutes! One day, buy something for **שבת**: a bottle of wine, buy flowers, really buy the flowers, buy a **נאש** that your children love. One day, prepare something for **שבת**: polish the **לייכטער**, set out the tablecloth, prepare a story, or a **דבר תורה**. And then say it out loud, the way **שמאי** did: **זו לשבת**! This is for **שבת קודש**! And when your families, when your children, when your spouses hear those words on a Tuesday, that Tuesday will never be the same again.

The sweetness of **שבת** belongs to those who build it. And the **שבת** a **ייד** keeps and guards stands over him and guards him. And **חז"ל** tell us that **שמירת שבת** is a **שמירה** for a person not only today, not only during the week, but in the days of **חבלי משיח**, in the days of **מלחמת גוג ומגוג**. A **ייד** that honors the **שבת** all week long, the **שבת** will watch over him all week long.

And this year, the **רבונו של עולם** has given **כלל ישראל** a remarkable gift, because **ראש השנה** falls out this year on **שבת**. And on the first

day of **שבת** this year, on the first day of **ראש השנה** this year, there will be no **שופר**. What? No **שופר**? And the **ספרים הקדושים** teach us that in such a year, it's not the **שופר** that stands for **כלל ישראל**, but it's the **שבת** itself that stands before the **כסא הכבוד** and speaks for us in place of the **שופר**. The **שבת** that is being built right now, this Sunday, this Tuesday, this Thursday is the **שבת** that will speak on our behalf on the **יום הדין**.

Bring the seventh day into all seven days. Two words: **זו לשבת**. Six days a week. Live a week like that, and a person is living inside the day that's coming, the day that the whole world is heading towards, the day of **יום שכולו שבת ומנוחה לחיי העולמים**.

May we all be **זוכה** to such a **שבת, במהרה בימינו, אמן**.

The Shofar That Brought Him Home by Rabbi Paysach Krohn

In a bar in Mumbai, a young Israeli heard a sound he never expected. Within hours, that sound would begin leading him back to Eretz Yisrael, Torah, and the life he had almost forgotten.

Rabbi Paysach Krohn was visiting Boca Raton when Rabbi Philip Moskowitz, an assistant rabbi there, approached him with a story.

Rabbi Krohn is accustomed to people sharing stories with him wherever he travels. He listens to them all. Most will never make it into a speech or a book. But every once in a while, someone tells him a story that makes all the listening worthwhile. This was one of those stories.

Rabbi Moskowitz told him about a cousin of his in Israel. The young man had grown up completely secular. He had attended a secular school. He knew there was such a thing as Shabbos. He knew there was something called Gemara. But Torah and mitzvos were not part of his life.

Eventually, like so many young Israelis, he entered the army. Serving in the Israeli army carries tremendous pressure. A soldier never knows when the next attack might come. The next stabbing. The next emergency. The next moment when everything can suddenly change.

After living under that kind of pressure, many young soldiers finish their service desperate to get away for a while. They travel. They want to relax. To breathe. To leave the pressure behind.

Rabbi Moskowitz's cousin did the same. He left Eretz Yisrael and traveled to Asia. Eventually, he found himself in Mumbai, India. And the longer he remained away from Israel - The further he drifted.

Whatever connection to Yiddishkeit he had once possessed began to disappear. Shabbos meant less. Yom Tov meant less. Mitzvos disappeared from his life. Slowly, even his awareness of the Jewish calendar faded.

Until one night in Mumbai.

The young Israeli was sitting in a bar with some Indian friends. They were drinking. Talking. Relaxing. It was approximately eight o'clock at night.

And suddenly - He heard a shofar. He froze.

There is something about the sound of a shofar. It is not an ordinary sound. It reaches deep inside a Jew. But hearing a shofar when you expect one is one thing. Hearing one unexpectedly - In Mumbai - In the middle of a street filled with bars and pubs - Was something else entirely.

He jumped up. He ran outside. Who Was Blowing the Shofar?

He looked around. The street was crowded. People were everywhere. Bars and pubs lined the area. Who had blown the shofar?

He couldn't tell. Perhaps he had imagined it. But then, a few minutes later, from further down the block - He heard it again.

Another blast.

Now he knew. Someone was blowing a shofar. And for some reason, the sound shook him. He couldn't explain it. Why was someone blowing shofar in Mumbai? Why tonight? Why here?

He left. He went home. He began making phone calls, trying to figure out what he had heard. And then he happened to look at the calendar. He saw the date. And suddenly - His heart dropped.

It was Yom Kippur. That day had been Yom Kippur. The holiest day of the Jewish year. Jews around the world had been fasting. Davening. Saying Vidui. Standing before Hashem. And he had been going about his life - Without even knowing it was Yom Kippur.

He eventually discovered the source of the shofar. A Chabad shliach in Mumbai had blown it at the conclusion of Yom Kippur. The fast was over. The shofar was simply announcing that Yom Kippur had ended.

But for this young Israeli, that shofar was announcing something entirely different. It was telling him how far he had traveled. Not geographically. Spiritually.

He sat down and began to cry. He could not stop crying. How could this have happened? How had he fallen so far? He had grown up in Eretz Yisrael. He was Jewish. He knew what Yom Kippur was. And now he had reached a point where the holiest day of the year could come and go - And he wouldn't even know it.

The realization devastated him. But it also awakened him.

"I Have to Get Back"

That night, he made a decision. He packed his bags. And the very next morning - He left Mumbai. He returned to Eretz Yisrael. And

when he arrived, he did something his family could barely understand. He enrolled in a yeshiva.

His parents thought he was crazy. What had happened to him? Why this sudden transformation? But the young man knew exactly what had happened. He had seen where his life was heading. And he had become frightened by how far he had drifted.

His feeling was simple: "If I could fall this far, I have to get back."

And he did. He began learning Torah. And he continued. Not for a few days. Not for a few weeks. Not even for one year.

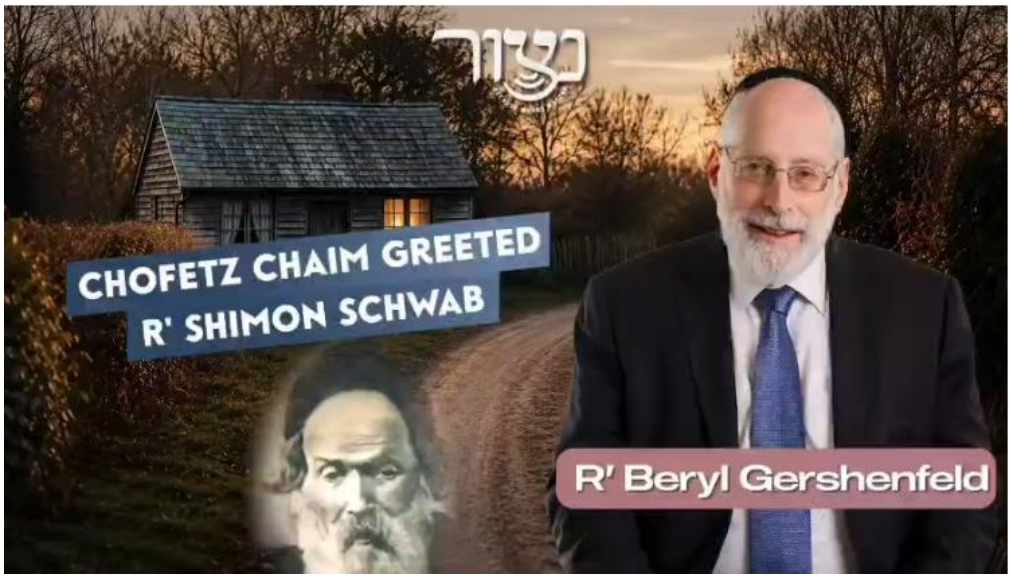
He spent approximately the next ten years learning in yeshiva and continuing to grow. His life was transformed. He became observant. He got married. He built a Torah home.

That is one of the great mysteries of life. We rarely know the full impact we have on another person. You say something encouraging. You teach someone a little Torah. You invite someone for Shabbos. You perform a chesed. You smile at someone who feels invisible. You show another Jew that you care. You give someone hope. You blow a shofar. And then you continue with your life.

To you, the moment is finished. But perhaps for the other person - The story has only begun.

A sentence you barely remember may stay with someone for twenty years. A mitzvah you performed without thinking twice may inspire another Jew. An act of kindness that took you five minutes may change the direction of someone's life. - You may never know. But Hashem knows.

The young man had traveled thousands of miles away from Eretz Yisrael. But in the end, all it took was one sound of the shofar to remind him where he belonged.



We think about the **גדלות** of the **לשון**, our speech. There's a wisdom statement: 'you can't judge a book by its cover.' The book can have a nice fancy cover, but what inside is what's really important. But that's just a secular wisdom statement.

In **תורה**, we have a deeper idea that you can't judge a book even by what's written inside the book. We have the **גמרא** in **ברכות ז׳ עמוד ב׳, גדול שימושה יותר מלימודה**. The **גר״א** understands that we can't understand the words of wisdom that are said until we see the **בעל מחבר** of the **ספר** himself, until we see how he lives his life and what comes out. And that's the greatness of the **מצוה** of **לשון הרע**, of understanding what the **חפץ חיים** brought to the **וועלט**.

The **חפץ חיים**, we all think about a person who learns **שמירת הלשון**, that he'll be brittle, he'll be quiet, he'll be distant, he'll be a hermit. But **גדול שימושה יותר מלימודה**. My wife's grandfather, **רב שמעון שוואב**, would always tell us that there are different types of people who are **שומר פיו ולשונו**. Some, they understand that the beginning is the key and there's control, there's what they can't do, there's **נצירה** of stopping their speech.

But **רב שמעון** was a young 19-year-old **ישיבה בחור**, and he traveled to **ראדין** to meet the **חפץ חיים**, who he'd never met. It was an **ערב שבת**. Things were busy, and he met the **חפץ חיים**. And the **חפץ חיים** sat and spoke with him for 40 minutes on a busy **ערב שבת**, a person he didn't know, a **ישיבה בחור** from the **מיר**, and made **רב שוואב** feel the most beloved, awake, and inspired person that he could be.

He kept telling, "Oh, you've gone to **ישיבה**, you've become a **בן תורה**. You know how great it is to be a **בן תורה**? You know what the **מעלה** of a **בן תורה** is?" And for 40 minutes, he gave him **חיזוק**, and strength, and vision. And he recognized that there was no one who liked to **שמועס**, liked to speak as much as the **חפץ חיים**.

The **חפץ חיים** had gotten to the level of where he'd taken the seriousness of the laws of **שמירת הלשון** and had gotten to the place, the **עשה טוב**, the doing good of it, of recognizing that the end of the **פסוק** was what we're talking about also.

נצור לשונך מרע, but it goes on, **בקש שלום ורדפהו**, you have to run after and find **שלום**. That's what he did. And the **חפץ חיים** had this ability to bring life and bring **חיות** to everyone around him.

That's why **רב שוואב** would say, some people might know the **משנה ברורה** as well as I do, and there are less people who know **ספר שמירת הלשון** as well as I do. But the most important thing I know is I knew the **מחבר** of the **ספר**, I knew the **בעל שמירת הלשון**. And he wasn't called the **בעל שמירת הלשון**, he was called the **חפץ חיים**.

מי האיש החפץ חיים. He was a person who had gotten to the level where he'd taken his speech and recognized how to love life and bring life out and express it to everyone in the world with that.

We all call the **חפץ חיים** the **בעל שמירת הלשון**. He wasn't a hermit, he wasn't stiff. He was a **בעל חפץ חיים**, a person who loved to speak, loved to sit down and engage people in discussions, loved to pick them up and inspire them. And that's why you can't judge a book by its cover, you can't even judge a book by what's written inside of it.

But when you see the **בעל חפץ חיים** and you recognize what it is to know the laws of **לשון הרע**, and recognizing **נצור לשונך מרע** brings you to **רודפי שלום ורדפהו**, then we know truly what the laws of **לשון הרע** are about and the power of our **לשון**.

R' Nosson Hirth - Can We Say "באהבה" on Yom HaDin?



This year, that **ראש השנה** falls out on **שבת** on the first day, there's a big discussion in the **פוסקים** as to the **נוסח התפילה**. We say **ותתן לנו ה' אלקינו**, so since it's **שבת**, we say **באהבה את יום השבת הזה**.

הקדוש ברוך הוא gave us with love this day of **שבת**, but then at the end, it gets tricky, because we say **ואת יום הזכרון הזה, זכרון תרועה**, and what's the next word? It helps to have a **סידור**. What's the next word?

The **לבוש** says the next word is **מקרא קודש**. We don't say **באהבה מקרא קודש**. Why not? Because it's not appropriate to have **זכרון תרועה**, which has to do with judgment, together with **באהבה**, with love. **אהבה** and **דין** don't go together. So we only say **באהבה** in the beginning, and not at the end.

Now, the **קצה המטה**, that's in the bottom of the **מטה אפרים**, brings down from the **ראשונים, מהרי"ל, אבודרהם**, and others that say, no, we do say **באהבה** in the beginning and at the end.

רב משה explains, because when it comes to the judgment of **הקדוש ברוך הוא**, when He's judging **כלל ישראל** Chazal tell us that we are still considered the **בנים** of **השם**. We are still considered His children, there still is love.

And **רב משה** adds that due to **הקדוש ברוך הוא**'s love, that's why He judges us, presumably he means because He wants to keep us in line. He's not coming just to torture us, He wants to make us better. So therefore he says, when it comes to Rosh Hashana, **דין** and **אהבה** are not a **סתירה**, and he says that's the **מנהג**, that we **do** say **באהבה** at this point as well. - We say **זכרון תרועה באהבה**.



Rav Dessler on Rosh Hashanah — The Day of Divine Investment

1. Not Reward — Investment

Rav Dessler teaches that the judgment of Rosh Hashanah is not about tallying mitzvos and aveiros. The physical world cannot contain the reward of even one mitzvah. So what *is* judged?

Hashem evaluates how you used last year's opportunities — and decides how much new spiritual potential to invest in you this year.

This reframes Rosh Hashanah entirely: It is not "What do I deserve?" It is "What can I become?"

Shofar — The Awakening From Forgetfulness

Rav Dessler says the Yetzer Hara's greatest weapon is forgetfulness. Not rebellion — but drifting.

The shofar breaks that fog: It forces consciousness. It brings your real self to the surface. It restores clarity — the first step of teshuvah. - The shofar is not a cry of fear; it is a cry of **identity**.



Why Do We Say "Zecher L'Yetzias Mitzrayim" in the Tefillos of Rosh Hashanah?

The *sefer* ***Arvei Nachal*** asks: Why did they establish that in the wording of the *tefillos* of Rosh Hashanah we mention about *Yetzias Mitzrayim*? What is the connection between the *Yetzias Mitzrayim* and Rosh Hashanah?

The *Arvei Nachal* explains: Hashem told Avraham that his descendants would be enslaved for 400 years — "your seed shall be strangers… and they will enslave them and afflict them for four hundred years." (*Bereishis* 15:13). However, the reality was that the slavery lasted only 210 years — the numerical value of **רדו**.

Why was the decree shortened?

Because the Jewish people cried out: "And Bnei Yisrael groaned because of the labor, and they cried out… and their cry went up to Elokim."

Their *tefillos* changed a decree that had been set centuries earlier.

This is the central message for Rosh Hashanah: - **Just as heartfelt *tefillah* overturned a divine decree in Mitzrayim, *tefillah* on Rosh Hashanah can overturn the decrees of the coming year.**

This is why we mention the *Yetzias Mitzrayim* — not as a historical memory, but as a living proof of the power of *tefillah*.

Teshuvah is greater than Techiyas Hameisim! For Techiyas Hameisim brings back the body, but Teshuvah brings the Neshama back to life! ~ - R' Eliyahu Eliezer Dessler ztl.

Dip the Apple in the Honey – Why an Apple?



On the night of Rosh Hashanah many have the custom to eat an apple dipped in honey, and they say: "May a sweet year be renewed upon us." (*Rema, Orach Chaim* 583:1).

What is the reason we specifically dip an apple in honey, why don't we dip some other fruit into honey?

R' Nosson Gestetner *zt"l* explained this, based on the words of *Tosfos* (*Berachos* 37a) regarding the *nussach* of the *berachah* "*Borei nefashos rabbos ve'chesronan*".

Tosfos explains that: "Their deficiencies" refers to bread and water — things without which a person cannot live. "And for all that You created to give life to every living soul" refers to all other things in the world which, even if they had not been created, the world could still survive — for they were created only for pleasure, such as **apples** and similar foods.

Now, on Rosh Hashanah, a person's sustenance is judged, as *Chazal* say: "All of a person's sustenance is fixed for him from Rosh Hashanah to Rosh Hashanah." (*Beitzah* 16a)

This is the meaning behind dipping specifically an apple in honey:

It hints to the fact that we ask Hashem to grant us abundant, comfortable sustenance — not merely the bare minimum required for survival, but sustenance that is like an apple dipped in honey, something of pleasure and sweetness, of comfort and abundance.



The Virtue of the Pomegranate

In the order of the *simanim* that we eat on the night of Rosh Hashanah, we say upon eating the pomegranate: "May our merits increase like the pomegranate," or "May we be filled with *mitzvos* like a pomegranate."

At first glance, this is puzzling. If we want to merit an increase of merits and *mitzvos*, why limit them "like a pomegranate"? The number of seeds in a pomegranate is finite. Why not say: "May our merits increase without limit"?

Rabbi Dovid Povarsky *zt"l* explained as follows:

The defining characteristic of pomegranate seeds is that they are packed tightly together, attached one to another, with no space between them. So, on Rosh Hashanah we ask: "May our merits increase like the pomegranate" — meaning: May our entire year be filled with *mitzvos* without interruption, densely packed. One mitzvah chasing another, one mitzvah leading into the next.

Beyond the beauty of performing *mitzvos* in a continuous chain, there is another great advantage: When a person's time is filled with *mitzvos*, with no gaps between them, he is protected from sin. To sin, one needs time — and if he has no time, how can he sin?

Some have the custom to say the *nussach*: "May we be filled with *mitzvos* like the pomegranate" — meaning: May the *mitzvos* fill us, may we feel satisfaction and joy from them.

There are people who fill themselves with nonsense and trivialities; they occupy themselves with shallow matters, and these things fill their lives. We therefore ask that we be filled with *mitzvos*, that we feel they fill our entire being.

Spiritual Insomnia - R' Efram Goldberg shlita



The Jewish holidays are often associated, for many of us with family, particularly grandparents. As each holiday comes around, I can still hear my Bobe and Zada, Grandma and Grampa sharing their aphorisms and adages with me as if they were here. Each year at this time they would remind me, as I am sure your grandparents reminded you, that you must not sleep on Rosh Hashanah day because you will then have a sleepy year.

While it may sound like a *bubba ma'aseh*, this practice actually has a source in our halachah. **The *Rema*** quotes the Yerushalmi that "נוֹהֲגִין שֶׁלֹּא לִישׁוֹן בְּיוֹם רֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה, וּמִנְהָג נָכוֹן הוּא". We have the practice not to nap or sleep on Rosh Hashanah day and this is a worthy custom."

Indeed, it isn't only on Rosh Hashanah that we try to refrain from excessive sleep. The great men of the *Mussar* movement taught their disciples to limit sleep, as there would be plenty of time for rest in the grave.

For most of his life, **The Gaon of Vilna, Rabbi Eliyahu Kramer**, slept only two out of twenty-four hours and even then only in four thirty-minute intervals. The Gemara records that this was also the sleep pattern of King David, whose magic harp awoke him at midnight to continue his efforts to serve Hashem and Klal Yisrael.

Scientists today recognize this as an alternative sleep method. It is called polyphasic sleep, also known as "Da Vinci sleep" or "Uberman sleep."

In any case, chutzpadik child that I was, I would often turn to my Bobe and respond "and what would be so bad if I slept the whole

year?" Perhaps a little older and I hope less chutzpadik, I still wonder, why is sleep fundamentally bad or negative that we discourage an excessive amount of it? Didn't I earn my nap on Rosh

Hashanah afternoon by sitting in *shul* and davening all morning?

Just as in physical sleep we lack consciousness, awareness and alertness, and instead enter a shutdown mode, similarly one can be in a state of spiritual sleep, lacking spiritual consciousness and awareness in a state of spiritual shutdown.

While physical sleep is necessary to rejuvenate the body, spiritual sleep poses a great risk to the soul, as it is deprived of the very thing that nourishes it, namely awareness.

The Rambam writes that the entire essence and goal of the *shofar* is to wake us from our spiritual sleep and lack of self-awareness. The *shofar* screams out at us, he says, "wake you sleepers from your slumber and begin to spiritually live."

Gratuitous sleep is viewed negatively on Rosh Hashanah because it is a day to wake up, to rouse ourselves to a higher consciousness, not to seek to enjoy a few more minutes of unconsciousness.

The *Shelah ha'kadosh* gives the most amazing reason for the custom of *Tashlich*.

He explains that we go to the water to see the fish. Why? Because fish never close their eyes; they don't sleep. They are in a constant state of awareness and alertness. Rosh Hashanah reminds us that, like fish, we need to remain spiritually awake.

Too many of us are simply sleepwalking through life. Rosh Hashanah demands that we wake up, not get extra sleep. May we not only remain physically awake this Rosh Hashanah, but more importantly may we experience a spiritual awakening and consciousness that lasts the whole year long.

Days of Judgment by Rabbi Benzion Shafier

On Rosh Hashanah it is written, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed: how many will pass from the earth, and how many will be born. Who will live, and who will die. Who will die at his predestined time, and who before his time. Who by water, and who by fire… (*Tefillos* Rosh Hashanah)

One of the basic principles of *emunah* is knowing that Hashem is involved in the big picture issues of life. Which nations will go to war and which will enjoy peace? Which totalitarian dictators will threaten world destruction? How much havoc will they be permitted to wreak? Which countries will prosper and which will suffer? Which political figures will suddenly pop up on the scene? Which names that yesterday were unknown will suddenly and menacingly take center stage? Which new technologies will be brought to the marketplace? Which diseases will suddenly appear? Which cures will be discovered?

All of the issues of the coming year are reviewed, assessed, and decided by Hashem. If you visualize the planet as a multi-dimensional chessboard, Hashem sits as the Grand Master, mapping out the moves of the coming year. This pawn will go here; this one there. This knight belongs here; the bishop over there. All of the events of the coming year are weighed, measured, and determined.

There are many, many issues that affect the over eight billion people on earth. And every one of them is planned out by Hashem on Rosh Hashanah. Hurricanes and tsunamis, earthquakes and famines, terrorist attacks and ponzi schemes. While Hashem gives man free will, it is only in regard to our choices. Each and every outcome remains in Hashem's hands.

On Rosh Hashanah, we revel in the fact that Hashem sits as the true Judge, meting out the fate of mankind. As such, we should feel a

tremendous sense of joy, an outpouring of emotion as we contemplate the magnificence of the Din.

In spite of this, in contrast to other Yomim Tovim, we do not rejoice and sing *Hallel*.

"The *Malachim* asked Hashem, "Why is it that the Jewish nation doesn't sing *Hallel* on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur?"

Hashem answered them, "Is it possible that a king sits on the throne of judgment, with the books of life and death open in front of Him, and the Jewish Nation should sing?" – Rosh Hashanah 32b

Rosh Hashanah is the day that humanity's fate is decided. My Creator sits as the Judge. He alone determines what will transpire in the coming year. I trust in His kindness and His wisdom. And so, I feel a sense of tranquility and joy. The house is in order; the Master is home. Nevertheless, that emotion has to be tempered. While it's grand to recognize that mankind as an entity is being judged, I, too, am a man, and I, too, am being judged. My fate for the coming year is in question. Will I live or die? Will I be healthy or sick? Will I enjoy great prosperity or not? The fate of my family, the fate of my community, and the fate of my loved ones is being decided.

It Is Hard to See the Judgment

With this as a backdrop, here is an observation. We are told over and over about the power of prayer. We know that Hashem is more merciful than any person we could ever imagine. And *Chazal* tell us that Hashem waits for our prayers. If we accept that our fate for the coming year is decided on Rosh Hashanah, then we should spend the entire day in *shul* with tears streaming down our cheeks, imploring, beseeching, and begging Hashem for mercy.

While it's true that the *davening* on Rosh Hashanah is more intense than usual, for most people crying and begging isn't an apt description. The question is: why?

Part of the reason is that the judgment on Rosh Hashanah is different than any other judgment that we experience. Down here in this world, when there is a court case there is a period of fact-finding, a period of deliberation, and then the decision is read for all to hear. At that point, the judge, the jury, the defendant, and all in attendance know the ruling.

We live through a similar process on Rosh Hashanah. There is a period of fact-finding and a period of deliberation before the verdict is reached. But we don't hear the verdict. We don't know what the decree is.

Were we given a year of life or not? Were we granted a year of health and well-being or not? The decree is set, but we don't hear it. If we did, it would change the way we view life.

What We Don't See

The Steipler Gaon, *zt"l*, was known as a man of extraordinary holiness and was accepted as one of the leaders of his generation. People would come to him from far and wide for advice or a *berachah*. Often, they would hear words that bordered on prophetic.

The Steipler lived in a small apartment in Bnei Brak. Typically, the Steipler would sit at his desk and listen to the person who had come to see him for a moment or two, his eyes largely remaining on the *sefer* in front of him. It was rare for the Steipler to look up.

One day, a man walked into the Steipler's small apartment in Bnei Brak. It was midafternoon, and there were already many people in line waiting. When this man walked into the apartment, not only did the Steipler look up, he stared directly at him, and in Yiddish began shouting at him, "*Rasha, rasha* (wicked one), get out! Get out, *rasha*!"

Everyone in the room was silent. All eyes turned to this man. He turned red. He turned white. Then he ran out of the apartment.

A few hours later, someone came in to see the Steipler and said in a low voice, "Rosh Yeshiva, forgive me, but that man that the Steipler called a *rasha* doesn't seem to be such a *rasha*. When he left the Steipler's apartment, he got into a car that had a number of other people inside. The car got into a major crash, and every other person in the car died. He was the only one who was unhurt. Obviously, he isn't such a *rasha*!"

The Steipler responded, "Don't you understand? When he walked into the room, the Angel of Death walked in with him. I didn't have a choice. When someone humiliates his friend, it's as if he killed him. That was the only way I could save him."

Seeing the *Din*

There used to be a time when men like the Steipler could see the Angel of Death. We can't. So it is difficult for us to relate to the issues that are decided on Rosh Hashanah.

Nevertheless, when you look around an average *shul* on Rosh Hashanah, you should recognize that many decrees are being put into place. There will be many beautiful pronouncements. That man who lost his job and can barely pay his bills will be granted a year of great financial well-being. That older single who has not yet found her bashert will be granted to meet him this year. The couple that has not yet merited having children will now be granted a child.

There will, however, also be many decrees that aren't so pleasant. That man will lose his business. This family will go through great travails. That woman will be stricken with a dreaded illness. And if you daven in a large enough congregation, there will also be a few people who will get an X over their heads. This will be their last year of life; they won't make it to next Rosh Hashanah.

But we don't see this. We walk out of *shul* on Rosh Hashanah, and we wish each person a good sweet year. But we don't know. We don't know what the decree is. We don't know what the outcome will be.

But we understand that Hashem knows what is best. Hashem sits as the ultimate Judge, and Hashem metes out mankind's fate.

May Hashem grant us a sweet, good year with health, happiness, and success in all of our endeavors.

Appreciating the Small Things in Life

The Power of a Small Thought of Teshuvah: ***The Pele Yoeitz in his entry on Rosh Hashanah quotes the drosha that the Reshash would give before Tekias Shofar. He mentions that even if one has many aveiros if he has a small hisorarus to do teshuvah on Rosh Hashanah, he is already considered a Ba'al Teshuvah, and since Rosh Hashanah is such a special time Hashem will help and the teshuvah will go a long way.***

The Eternal Perspective

The most fundamental concept to work on is to increasingly become aware of the value of the afterlife, to realize how little this world has to offer in comparison.

By internalizing this attitude, you will not allow either physical or material bias to rule your actions in life. ~ R' Yechezkel Levenstein zt"l.

"On Rosh Hashanah a person is judged not only for what he was, but for what he truly wants to become." ~ Rav Yisrael Salanter.

"The awe of Rosh Hashanah is an awe filled with trust—knowing Hashem is near and listening." ~ The Chazon Ish.



Towards the end of the Second World War, a mysterious German submarine crossed the Atlantic Ocean and shockingly made it all the way to American shores. And it promptly opened its doors, and six shadowy spies got out of the submarine, and they ran inland. And these six spies were tasked with planting bombs at different strategic locations throughout America in an effort to sabotage the American army in its war with Germany.

Five of the six men ran off without being seen. But the last one was spotted while running on a nearby dock by a local fisherman, who raced to the police and reported him. And after describing roughly what the man looked like, the police forwarded the case to the FBI, who began a frantic search to catch this spy.

Now here's where the story gets wild. My wife's great-grandfather, Siegfried Shmuel Hopfer, a German immigrant, who he was a big *tzadik*, a *talmid chacham*, he was also a brilliant inventor and a professor at the prestigious Cornell University in Ithaca, New York.

Despite having lived in America for years before the war broke out, he was nevertheless suspected by the FBI as being the last spy that ran off that submarine. And even though it was totally ridiculous that a religious Jew would be a German spy in the middle of World War II, they nevertheless suspected him, being that he was German, and he was a professor who knew a lot about making radio technology and the like. So, they began tracking his every move.

And then one day, the FBI broke into his apartment to investigate, and they started opening every drawer, and they even started leafing through every closet, and eventually an FBI agent came

running out of the bedroom and says, "Aha! I found it. I have found something that shouldn't be here. I have found something that is unequivocal proof that you, Mr. Hopfer, are a spy." And he reaches up, and he holds up a *sheitel*!

Now, who would possibly wear a wig but a spy trying to disguise himself? You, my friend, are a spy, and you are under arrest. Promptly arrested and placed in jail.

And fortunately, after many people came to his defence pointing out the complete absurdity of a Jew working to help the Germans in the middle of World War II, he was eventually released from jail and went on to live a beautiful life.

But there is something that amazes me about this story. When Jewish people see a wig, they see holiness and sanctity. We see the beckoning of *sinai* for us to focus on our inner royalty and not our outer physicality.

When a non-Jew sees a *sheitel*, it strikes him as so bizarre, so unusual that a woman would cover her hair, so odd that a woman would choose to hide such an attractive feature, that the only other explanation that they could come up with is that that person must be a spy!

We are a people who stood at *har sinai* and underwent a metamorphosis, a people who possess special cells which are inheritable. We are biologically different from the rest. We are a people who bridge heaven and earth.

We are a people who have a spark inside of us that no matter what, and no matter when, will forever shine bright. Adolf Hitler could not have been more right when he said, "Judaism is not a religion, it's a race." True, we're a race. A race that contains unimaginable holiness, because Jews don't just think different, we are different.



I once heard a story from my uncle, Rav Shia, otherwise known as Dr. Abraham J. Twerski, zichrono livracha. He told a story that by our ancestor, the אפטער רב, זכר צדיק וקדוש לברכה, there was a baal habayis who was very, very wealthy. He was wealthy, his children were independently wealthy.

And this baal habayis once said to the Apter Rav that, "I am so wealthy, and my children are so wealthy, I have no idea how it would be possible for the Ribono shel Olam to take my money away. Because even if I lose my money, my children will take care of me."

The Apter Rav was terribly alarmed when he when he heard those words, and he said, "oy, rav So-and-so, don't talk like that."

The next morning, this baal habayis woke up in the morning with a terrible urge to convert to Christianity. We're talking about a regular, frum Jew, and he woke up with this unmanageable urge to convert to Christianity, and he found himself walking over to the church, knocking on the door. He went into the church and told the priest that he's come to the conclusion that he wants to convert to Christianity.

The priest was overjoyed that a frum Jew was going to convert to Christianity, but he wanted to make sure that the person was really serious, and wasn't making fun of him. So he told him, "In order to convert to Christianity, you need to sign over all of your possessions to the church." And he prepared a document, and this fellow went ahead and signed the document, signing over all of his possessions to

the church. The priest then told him to take a seat, and that he has to go out to prepare for the baptism.

As soon as the priest left the room, the urge dissipated. And this Yid found himself sitting in the priest's office, having signed over all his possessions to the church. And he realized that he has lost everything. Not only has he lost his own possessions, as soon as his family finds out that he wrote over everything to the church for the sake of converting to Christianity, they're going to disown him. And he has absolutely nothing left in life.

And he realized that he spoke very foolishly the day before. He looked for a way out of the priest's office, and the only way out was through a window. He climbed out of the window and ran to the Apter Rav's house. And he broke down and started sobbing to the Apter Rav, "I made a mistake, I made a terrible mistake. How foolish I was, how foolish I was to say such silly words. Of course the Ribono shel Olam is a kol yachol, He can do everything. What was I thinking?"

The Apter Rav taught this Yid how to do teshuvah, and how to learn bitachon properly, to know that everything is in Hashem's hands, and a person should never trust in his wealth, never trust in anything of his own. We're totally in Hashem's hands.

And when this Yid, accepted upon himself absolute teshuvah, the Apter Rav told him, "Now look out the window." And they looked out the window, and they saw that there were flames coming out of the roof of the church, the church was burning down. And along with the church burnt this paper that he had signed over all of his possessions to the church. And this Yid had a yeshuah. This is obviously a very extreme story, but sometimes without even saying it, we think it.

And we don't realize that there's nothing we take for ourselves. There's nothing that we have that we control. Everything is in the Ribono shel Olam's hands.



Covered With Care

Several verses are recited by the entire congregation immediately prior to shofar blowing, and the shofar is covered with a tallis while they are said (see Mateh Efraim 585:3). Why?

The Sdei Chemed explains this custom with the following midrash (Bereishis Rabbah 56:5). Scripture makes no mention of how Yitzchak occupied himself while his father exerted himself to build the mizbei'ach upon which he planned to offer his son. Where was he, and why did he allow his father to build it on his own?

Avraham did not allow him to help, the midrash answers. Preparing the altar and pyre involved cutting large pieces of wood. Avraham worried that splinters would fly as he worked and pierce his son's body, thus inflicting a blemish invalidating him for sacrifice. He covered him with a blanket to ensure that the ultimate korban would be properly offered.

We cover the shofar before it is blown, says the Sdei Chemed, to remember Avraham's dedication to ensuring that he would not be prevented from fulfilling his holy mission.

R' Avraham of Sochatchov ZT"L would say:

"I once traveled to a resort in Germany. The local 'enlightened' rabbi saw my shtreimel and asked derisively, 'Why are you wearing a fur hat in the summer?' I told him, 'True, it is summer now, but shabbos here is very cold!'"



Delving Deeper

Q We repeat the Yud Gimmel Middos over and over in Selichos and during the Yamim Noraim. It's a powerful tefillah that is always answered. What gives it this unique power?

A **R' Chaim Friedlander** (Sifsei Chaim, Moadim, vol. 1, p. 203) explains that the power of the Yud Gimmel Middos is not just in reciting them, but in committing to live them. By internalizing and emulating these Divine traits of compassion, patience, and forgiveness, we draw down into the world Hashem's mercy. They are not magic words; it's about finding these middos within ourselves and mirroring Hashem's ways.

Rosh Hashanah: Don't Change. Be You! - R' Yoel Gold



A couple of years ago, I released a selichos film. And in preparation for the selichos film, I went around on the streets in Pico and I stopped random people with a mic and camera in hand, and I told them, I said, tell me what emotion comes up for you when you hear the words Rosh Hashanah?

Now, the top three answers we received was dread, guilt, and nothing. People didn't feel anything positive about Rosh Hashanah.

Some said awe, some said teshuvah, there were those who said that, but an overwhelming majority didn't respond positively. And the truth is, there's a big question, on my mind at least. We just spent almost an entire month of Elul. Elul is about love. **אני לדודי ודודי לי**,

I'm to my beloved, my beloved is to me. **את לבבך ואת לבב**, the acronym, the rashei teivos Elul, which means it's all about heart, it's all about love. And all of a sudden, it flips. Judgment Day is coming.

Now imagine you date somebody and you fall in love. You send them flowers, you write them cards, you take them out for dinner, and then you subpoena them to court. That's what's happening. What happened to our relationship? What happened to Elul? What happened to Ani ledodi? All of a sudden, we are facing with a real Yom hadin? Our lives are on the line?

My hope is that by the end of this talk, instead of having negative feelings or maybe feeling nothing, we're going to feel empowered. And I want to start with a story. It's a personal story that happened to me when I was eighteen years old.

When I was eighteen, I was about to graduate from high school. I learned in Adelphia yeshivah, it's ten minutes out of Lakewood. My rabbi, some of you may have heard of him, his name was **Rav David Trenk**. There's a book about him, Just Love Them, an ArtScroll book written by Yisroel Besser. He was a big tzadik. He loved every Jew and he loved me.

And so, I was planning to go to Passaic, a different yeshivah, in the East Coast, after high school, when one day, my rabbi comes into the beis midrash. He was powerful, his physique, his energy was intense. And he comes, sits down next to me, and he says, Yoily! Used to call me Yoily. And I said, rabbi, what's going on? He said, Yoily, I want you to stay here in Adelphia next year.

Now, I said, rabbi, why?

He says, I want you to help build our beis midrash. You have to understand that at that time the Adelphia bet midrash consisted of three guys. If I were to stay, I would be number four. There was no way I was going to stay in Adelphia beis midrash.

I look at Rabbi Trenk, it's very, very hard to say no to him. Yoeli, please. I could see his pleading eyes. I said, rabbi, let me sleep on it.

The next morning, he comes at the beis midrash again, he says, Yoeli! I wasn't sure what to say, I was trying to push him off, and he says, Yoeli, we're going for a drive, get into the car.

So I get into the car, and we're driving down Route 9 toward the Staten Island Expressway. He has this old jalopy station wagon, and I said, it looks like almost 30 years ago, said, rabbi, where are we going? He said, Yoeli, I'm taking you to a din Torah. Taking you to court.

I froze. I said, haha, rabbi, please, what's going on? The joke is over.

He said, nope, I'm taking you to a din Torah.

I said, where? To who?

He said, we're driving to **Rav Shmuel Berenbaum's** house, the rosh yeshivah of the Mir, and we're going to ask him whether you're mechuyav to stay here next year.

I couldn't move. I didn't say another word. 20 minutes later, we get to Ocean Parkway and we get to Rav Shmuel's house. It was around 1:00 in the afternoon.

I see Rav Shmuel walking with some students from the Mir, just finished first seder, and he sees my rebbe, Rabbi Trenk, with me, I'm trembling, and he sees Rabbi Trenk.

He says, David, what are you doing here? Rabbi Trenk learned in the Mir, Rav Shmuel was his rebbe. And he says, rebbe... rebbe, I'm here for a din Torah with my talmid, this is Yoeli Gold.

So Rav Shmuel smiled, he chapt the situation, and he invites us into the apartment, a humble little abode, and he sits down, and Rabbi Trenk, my rebbe, starts crying.

He says, rebbe, Yoeli was in our yeshivah for four years. I love him so much. Please tell him to stay another year to help build the Adelphia beis midrash.

Rav Shmuel, he could see how scared I am, so he puts his hand over mine, and he goes like this, and he looks me in the eyes, he says, and nu, what do you say? I said, rosh yeshivah, I love my rebbe, but I got to move on.

So he said, where are you going to learn better?

So I said to him, I said, I think I'm going to learn better in Passaic.

He says, you're going to learn better in Passaic? Go!

I won. I looked to my rebbe, and I could see there's a faint smile on his face, and we leave. Now, we did not say another word in the car. We just drove back in complete silence, and I left.

A couple of days later, yeshivah ended, I graduated, I went to Passaic. Now you have to understand, every couple of months, my rebbe, Rabbi Trenk, would drive to Passaic, storm into the beis midrash at random, look for me, try to find my seat, run over, pick me up, he was very strong, Yoeli! I miss you! I love you!

I said, rebbe, were you just in the area, in the neighborhood?

He says, no! I just drove to tell you that. He would do it every couple of months until I left Passaic.

Every word in this story is true.

Now, I kept up with Rabbi Trenk for many, many years. It was 20 years later when I get the call from his wife, the rabbanit, and she says, Yoeli, rebbe passed away. He was sick at the end of his life.

She said, he just passed away, and I'm calling you right away, would you fly in from LA to New Jersey to eulogize him at the levayah?" So I said, "Yeah, of course." So I get onto a plane, and you know when somebody passes away, you start thinking back to every

interaction, you reflect on the relationship, and I suddenly remembered how he took me to the din Torah, this bizarre event. And I remembered I said, "No." He begged me to stay, and I left anyway.

I felt like I owed him an apology. And so I come to the levayah, and after the levayah, we go over to the rebbetzin's house, and I start crying.

I say, "rebbetzin, I feel like I owe rebbe an apology. Do you remember that incident when he took me to a din Torah to Rav Shmuel Birnbaum, he begged me to stay?"

I'll never forget what the rebbetzin told me.

She said, "Yoeli, listen to me carefully. My husband knew that you had to go. It's time for you to leave and go learn in Brisk. The reason why he took you to a din Torah to Rav Shmuel Birnbaum is so that **you** could know, **you** should understand how valuable **you** are to the yeshiva, how much he loves **you** and how much he cares about **you**, and that **you're** worth fighting over. **You're** worth it, the drive to Brooklyn, Rav Shmuel Birnbaum, **you are worth it! And you're needed."**

That's Rosh Hashanah after Elul, where we develop a relationship, where it's **אני לדודי ודודי לי.** – Hashem says, "I'm taking you to a din Torah. You matter. You are too valuable. You have a mission. You have a purpose. I love you too much. You can make a difference.

Rosh Hashanah is a day of chesed: just as Hashem created the world in order to give, a person should enter the new year with the desire to give to others. - The best way to begin a new year is not by asking, "What will I receive?" but by asking, "What will I give?" ~ Rav Yitzchok Hutner.

Rabbi Avigdor Miller

Every *erev Rosh Hashanah* when **R' Itzele Peterberger** left his home to go to the *beis haknesses*, he turned to his wife and he said, "*Zeit mir mochel*. Please forgive me."

And she said, "*Zeit mir mochel*."

It's a good idea for everyone, by the way; before you set out to the *beis haknesses* on Rosh Hashanah to *daven* Maariv, you turn back and say, "Rochel, forgive me."

And she says, "Chaim, forgive me."

You hear that *eitzah?* Isn't that a beautiful way to begin the year?

That's an excellent way to go into Rosh Hashanah, with *teshuvah* and *mechilah*. Very important!



At the King's Service

Although our very lives and livelihoods are determined on Rosh Hashanah, and thus it is appropriate to *daven* accordingly, the central focus of the day is *not* on temporal matters but rather on crowning Hakadosh Baruch Hu as King. This is to send a loud and clear message: all pursuits, including kindliness between man and his fellow, are devoid of meaning without *Hashem Melech*.

This year, *bli neder*, starting on Rosh Hashanah itself, whenever I do an act of kindness for another Jew, I will consciously remind myself that I am doing it because it is the *ratzon Hashem* that I should emulate Him — the Creator Who is חָפֵץ חֶסֶד - '*He delights in kindness*.'



Rosh Hashanah: Rising from the Ashes

There is a perplexing statement made in the middle of the Haftorah read on the second day of Rosh Hashanah.

הֲבֵן יַקִּיר לִי אֶפְרַיִם אִם יֶלֶד שַׁעֲשֻׁעִים כִּי־מִדֵּי דַבְּרִי בּוֹ זָכֹר אֶזְכְּרֶנּוּ עוֹד עַל־כֵּן הָמְו מֵעַי לוֹ רַחֵם אֲרַחֲמֶנּוּ נְאֻם־יְהוָה – *Is Ephraim My favorite son or a delightful child, that whenever I **speak of him**, I remember him more and more? Therefore, My inner self yearns for him; I will surely take pity on him, says the Almighty."* (Yirmiyahu 31:20)

Since **דַּבֵּר** is the term used for harsh speech (Rashi Bamidbar 12:1), why is it used in this loving statement?

In order to fully appreciate the answer, we must first hear an incredible story shared in Rav Yitzchak Dwek's Life of Bitachon:

Early one morning at the end of the summer, Joel traveled to an office in midtown Manhattan for an important business meeting. When he arrived, he was only mildly perturbed to hear that the meeting had been cancelled at the last moment.

Truthfully, Joel was pleased that he could immediately return to his office in lower Manhattan, and get right back to work, as that was his life.

On the way back to his office in the financial district of New York City, Joel bought himself a coffee and then hurried toward the train – he wanted to resume his duties as soon as possible. Not a moment was wasted in his highly efficient daily schedule. However, as he rounded the corner near the subway, another pedestrian bumped into him, spilling hot coffee all over his pressed shirt and stylish suit.

There was no way Joel could go to work with the brown beverage all over his clothes, so he decided to take the subway back to his apartment, where he would take a moment to change and then rush back to work.

As soon as he entered his apartment and changed his clothes, he quickly picked up the phone to let his boss know that he would be a bit late. But at that moment, he looked out his window and could not believe what he saw. The window of his apartment faced his office building: the World Trade Center. It was the morning of September 11, 2001. And Joel watched in disbelief as a huge 747 airplane flew into Tower 2 where he should have been at that very moment – except that the Almighty decided to send someone to pour coffee all over Joel in order to force him to return home to change his clothing.

Joel tried in vain to contact someone, anyone, at his office which was on the 102nd floor, but all the phone lines were dead. As his eyes remained glued to the window, he watched his office building collapse.

Without thinking, he ran all the way back to Ground Zero of the Twin Towers and did whatever he could to help out. But after several days, the whole experience began to significantly affect him emotionally. Even more, since his office had gone up in smoke, he no longer had a job.

Without anything to wake up for in the morning, he was utterly lost. Though Joel was Jewish, his religion had never been a part of his life…until he caught sight of an ad for a course in reading Hebrew. This course eventually sparked a full-fledged interest in Judaism. Without a satisfying job to anchor him, Joel had been searching. Now that NJOP (National Jewish Outreach Program) had entered his life, Joel was blown away to finally find people who were able to answer all his questions and get him back on track.

Joel began gradually embracing more mitzvos and continues to grow. The spilled cup of coffee saved Joel's life in more ways than one.

[Reproduced from "Touched by Our Seder" by Rav Yechiel Spero]

Rav Elimelech Biderman (Va'eira) quotes the **Chozeh of Lublin** who beautifully explains that the prophet specifically uses the harsher term **דַּבֵּר** in this affectionate statement to show that even when we need to be shaken from our spiritual slumber, our Father's attempts to awaken us are done out of His overflowing compassion.

Although it may be painful, we cannot underestimate the Almighty's profound love hoping to inspire us to rekindle our relationship with Him and reconnect to our Heavenly mission – just ask Joel.

First Thank Then Request

The Tiferes Shlomo, Shlomo Hakohen Rabinowitz writes the following: It is known that when a person wishes to pray for that which he needs, he should first thank Hashem for what he has already received and only then proceed to ask for his new requests.

This is seen from passuk that says **הודו לה' כי טוב כי לעולם חסדו**. First you must thank Hashem on the good he has already given you – **הודו לה' כי טוב**, and with that you can draw new blessing to the world – **כי לעולם חסדו**.

This is the intention behind the setup we find in the davening of the Yamim Nora'im. First we say **'ועל כולם יתברך ויתרומם וכו** and then we say **וכתוב לחיים טובים כל בני בריתך**.



The **פסוק** in **משלי** tells us, **יש בוטה כמדקרות חרב ולשון חכמים מרפא**. '*Words can pierce like swords, but the tongue of the sages brings healing.*' (12:18)

What is the connection between the first half and the second half of the **פסוק**? The simple explanation is that these two ideas are connected. It is precisely because the tongue has the power to pierce, that it also has the power to heal. Without the tremendous power to wound, it would also not possess the power to heal and to give balm to people.

But this is the simple explanation, and I would like to offer another interpretation, one that is particularly relevant to the days in which we now find ourselves.

We are standing at the end of the year, and we ask ourselves, how is it possible that last year we **דאוועט** for so many things on **ראש השנה**, and yet we did not merit to see all of these prayers fulfilled in our lives? And that leads us to a more important question: how will this coming year be different?

I once saw an internationally renowned chef arrive at an event carrying his own knives. These were special knives that he had personally selected with great care. They were wrapped and protected meticulously. The chef understood that if he wanted his knives to perform properly, they had to be carefully preserved. He could not allow the blades to become damaged or blunt.

Our tongues were created with a natural power for our words to achieve in prayer. When we **דאוועו**, our **תפילות** are **מתקבל בעזרת השם**.

That is the natural power of our tongues. But when we fail to guard our mouths, the blade becomes blunt and weakened. It can no longer pierce the heaven, because the power has been spent and used for something else.

This is perhaps the meaning of the **פסוק**. We have to decide how we're going to use the powerful force of our speech.

יש בוטה כמדקרות חרב. We can use the power of our words to wound another person like a sword. It is possible. It is contained within itself, that power. Alternatively, **ולשון חכמים מרפא**, to use the same blade for healing by piercing the heavens with our **תפילות**.

When we prepare for **ראש השנה** and all year round, we have to ask ourselves, should we not preserve our most powerful tool?

Let us give ourselves the gift, a powerful mouth for powerful **תפילות**.

Rosh Hashanah Treasures



The Minhag to eat special fruits on Rosh Hashanah is from the Gemara (Horiyos 12a). While the Gemara gives a list of recommended fruits to eat, dipping apples in honey is not mentioned. The earliest source for the apple dipped in honey is from the Avudraham as quoted by the Rama (583:1).

What is the significance of this famous Minhag?

The Sefer Mo'adim L'Simchah offers a number of reasons:

1) The Maharil says that Yitzchok Avinu smelled an apple orchard when he commented on the beautiful smell as Yaakov came in to him to receive the Brachos. The Vilna Gaon says that this happened on Rosh Hashanah.

2) The Ben Ish Chai writes that apples give three pleasures, as they have a pleasant smell, appearance, and taste, which corresponds to three Brachos we request from Hashem that we would like to receive for the next year: Banei (Chidren and Nachas from our Children), Chayai (Life and Health), and Mezonei (Wealth).

3) The Zohar notes that wine symbolizes Din or judgment. Apples are eaten after strong wine in order not to be harmed by the strength of the wine. Therefore, since Rosh Hashanah is a time of Din, we eat apples in order to sweeten the judgment.

4) On Rosh Hashanah we want Hashem to remember the ashes of Akeidas Yitzchok. The ashes that accumulated on the Mizbei'ach from all the Korbanos are called 'Tapuach', which means 'apple'.

Pearls of Wisdom …A Word for the Ages

When it comes to eating the Simanei Milsa, the foods that have special significance at the Seudah of Rosh Hashanah, the **Sh"lah Ha'kadosh** says that eating foods just because they have names that connote good fortune is a waste of time and does not help us at all.

The real reason we eat the Simanim, he explains, is solely in order to say the Yehi Ratzon, the Tefilah that accompanies eating these foods.

When eaten like this, it provides us with a reminder and a means with which we can Daven to Hashem in the beginning of our first meal of the year for things that are important.

"The judgment of Rosh Hashanah is a judgment of closeness; whoever draws near is inscribed." ~ The Chasam Sofer.

תפילות of ראש השנה – Rabbi Yechiel Emmanuel

Preparing for Rosh Hashanah

The מטה אפרים (סימן תקפ״א סעיף נ״ח) writes that before ראש השנה, a person should organize the תפילות and פיוטים and learn their meaning, so they are fluent and meaningful on the day. He adds that one should teach the סדר התפילות to one's household beforehand to avoid confusion during davening.

Today, מחזורים are well-organized, but the goal remains: understanding the תפילה so its words — crafted by אנשי כנסת הגדולה — become כלים for שפע, created through our spoken דיבור.

Pitum HaKetores on Rosh Hashanah Night

The מעבר יבק, quoted by the מטה אפרים, recommends saying סדר הנהגות הדין פיטום הקטורת on ליל ראש השנה to "sweeten the two דין הקשה and דין הרפה." It is a short, accessible סגולה brought from reliable sources.

"ויאתיו כל לעבדך" Before Barachu

The מטה אפרים notes that many communities sing ויאתיו כל לעבדך before ברכו — a preparation for קבלת עול מלכות שמים, the essence of ראש השנה. The פיוט ends: "ויתנו לך כתר מלוכה" — our crowning of הקדוש ברוך הוא for the coming year.

Even if not universally practiced, it expresses the day's theme: entering ראש השנה regardless of our level of preparation, with the desire to accept מלכות שמים and participate in גילוי ייחודו.

Saying the First 11 Pesukim of Ki Tavo

Rav Chaim Palagi (מועד לכל חי) brings a מנהג to say the first 11 פסוקים of פרשת כי תבוא — the פרשת ביכורים on ערב ראש השנה Bikkurim: הודאה - is acknowledging we deserve nothing and thanking for everything. One who does so, he writes, is "פרע כבר כל חובותיו" and merits אריכות ימים.

The Structure of Rosh Hashanah Tefillos

Rav Shlomo of Germiza writes that the **תפילות** of **ראש השנה** were composed with precise measure, weight, and **סודות**, based on **פסוקים**. For example, **זכרנו לחיים** contains 11 words, corresponding to the 11 **פסוקים** of Hashem's **שבועה** to Avraham. The order and **גימטריא** of the words are part of the spiritual design.

Understanding the Three "ובכן" Insertions

Before **המלך הקדוש**, we say three **ובכן**'s. The **אבודרהם** explains that **ובכן** echoes **אסתר המלכה**'s words: **"ובכן אבוא אל המלך אשר לא כדת."** She approached the King (both **אחשורוש** and the **מלך מלכי המלכים**) with humility, feeling unworthy. So do we: we come not with entitlement, but with the awareness that everything is **מתנת חינם**.

1. ובכן תן פחדך — Yiras Shamayim

We ask Hashem to place **פחדך על כל מעשיך** and **אימתך על כל מה שבראת**. **רש"י** explains **פחד** is for what is close; **מורא (אימה)** is for what is distant. Thus:

- **מעשיך**= those closer to Hashem
- **ברואים**= the rest of creation

The **חתם סופר** defines **יראת שמים** not as fear *of* Heaven, but the **fear that Heaven has** — Hashem's "fear" of disappointing **כלל ישראל**, and our reciprocal desire not to disappoint Him.

We then say:

- **ויירָאוך כל המעשים**— deeper closeness-based **יראה**
- **וישתחוו לפניך כל הברואים**— the rest of creation bows like **עבדים**

Ultimately: **ויעשו כולם אגודה אחת לעשות רצונך בלבב שלם**— the world recognizes its place in the divine order, each creation serving Hashem with clarity and completeness.

2. ובכן תן כבוד — Honor to Am Yisrael

We ask:

- **תן כבוד ד׳ לעמך**— that **כלל ישראל's** honor be recognized as divine honor
- **תהילה ליראיך**— praise for those who fear Hashem
- **תקוה טובה לדורשיך**— that what the world calls "good fortune" be given to those who seek Hashem
- **ופתחון פה למיחלים לך**— clear vindication for those who place their hope in Him

It concludes with requests for **שמחה לארצך**, **ששון לעירך**, and the beginning of **צמיחת קרן לדוד עבדך**— the unfolding of **גאולה**.

3. ובכן צדיקים — Joy for the Righteous

We distinguish:

- **צדיקים**— who struggle and rise (**שבע יפול צדיק וקם**)
- **ישרים**— those who reached straightness without inner conflict (like the **אבות**)
- **חסידים**— those who act **לפנים משורת הדין**

We ask:

- **צדיקים יראו וישמחו**
- **ישרים יעלוזו**
- **חסידים ברנה יגילו**

And we request the removal of concealment:

- **ועולתה תקפוץ פיה**— all distortion of truth should close its mouth
- **וכל הרשעה כולה כעשן תכלה**— evil should dissipate like smoke

- **כי תעביר ממשלת זדון מן הארץ**— when Hashem removes the rule of wickedness

The section ends with the **פסוק: ויגבה ה' צבאות במשפט והאל הקדוש נקדש בצדקה**. — the dual forces of **משפט** and **צדקה** that redeem **ציון**.

The **תפילות** of **ראש השנה** guide us toward **דביקות**, humility, and clarity — preparing us to crown Hashem and to ask for a year of **גילוי מלכותו**. As the document says: "**ראש השנה** *is crowning* **הקדוש ברוך הוא**… *asking for a* **חלק געשמאקע** *in* **גילוי ייחודו** *over the coming year.*"

Three Segulos From The Lelover Rebbe of Beit Shemesh

The Lelover Rebbe Shlita of Bet Shemesh spoke about three segulos for Rosh HaShana:

1. Be **מְוַתֵּר**, because **כָּל הַמַּעֲבִיר עַל מִדּוֹתָיו, מַעֲבִירִין לוֹ עַל כָּל פְּשָׁעָיו** (Rosh HaShanah 17a). Whoever knows how to give in, give up his place or turn for another, or is willing to overlook a wrong done to him, will find that this is done for him on High as well: his sins are forgiven and "overlooked" by the **מִדַּת הַדִּין**—the attribute of strict justice.

2. **כָּל הַדָּן אֶת חֲבֵרוֹ לְכַף זְכוּת, דָּנִין אוֹתוֹ לְכַף זְכוּת** - "Anyone who judges others favorably will be judged favorably." (Shabbos 127b)

Judge others favorably and give them the benefit of the doubt. When you judge others favorably, it is reciprocated on High: you, too, are judged favorably and given the benefit of the doubt.

3. **כָּל הַמְרַחֵם עַל הַבְּרִיּוֹת, מְרַחֲמִין עָלָיו מִן הַשָּׁמַיִם**.

Whoever shows mercy to Hashem's creatures is in turn shown mercy from Heaven. Also, the **תַּרְגּוּם** of **רַחֵם** is **אֲהַב**—love. **אַהֲבַת יִשְׂרָאֵל**, **וְאָהַבְתָּ לְרֵעֲךָ כָּמוֹךָ**, is a great **סְגֻלָּה**!



Crowning Hashem King Through Our Marriages by R' Yitz Greenfield

What is the mission of Rosh Hashana?

According to **Rav Yitzchak Hutner, ZT"L**, (in Pachad Yitzchok) the Kedushas Hayom - holiness of the day - is Malchus, Kingship, when we crown Hashem our king.

Until Adam was created, Hashem was a moshel (ruler) with no one to accept His rule. Once Adam was created, with his power of free choice, he chose to accept Hashem as his King.

We crown Hashem our King every Rosh Hashana. When we say the Shir Shel Yom each Friday, we commemorate that Adam was the first one to crown Hashem King on the first Friday.

How did Hashem give Adam the power of free choice, which he used to crown Hashem King? We are taught (Bereishis 2:7) that Hashem formed Man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; then, Man became a living personality. Hashem gave Adam life through his head (nostrils).

How exactly do we crown Hashem our king?

We take a Shofar, and we use the breath that brought us to life, and we give our breath back to Hashem as we blow into it. This is the theme of Rosh Hashana: bring Hashem into this world and crown Him as our personal King.

How can we apply this message to our marriages?

When our spouse makes a mistake and crashes our car; when a bill is not paid on time and we have a penalty; when our spouse doesn't show up on time; when our child is involved with things that get us annoyed, and we feel our spouse is at fault, we have a choice. We can choose

to only see the situation in front of us and point fingers, or we can take a deep breath and recognize Hashem is the one in charge. The past happened EXACTLY the way Hashem wanted it.

We can find a time to sit down with our spouse and figure out solutions, so we are doing our Hishtadlus. To blame people is the opposite of crowning Hashem King. Instead of seeing our challenges as unfortunate events, let's strive to look beneath the surface and see the opportunity for growth. A crashed car can lead us to appreciate our health. An overdue bill can lead us to appreciate all the paid bills. A late spouse can lead us to appreciate being married. A misbehaving child can lead us to spend more time with him or her and answer the silent call for closeness and connection.

This Rosh Hashana, when we hear the Shofar, we have the opportunity to crown Hashem and accept that every situation we went through this past year and every situation we will find ourselves in this coming year is from Him and that He knows best. He is the Creator of the universe, and everything that happened to us and will happen to us is from our loving King.

When we are ready to let go of our own judgment and trust Hashem, we take to heart the message of how we crown Hashem our King in our life.

May Hashem bless our efforts with success and bless our homes with Shalom Bayis. May we be written in the Book of Life for a Gut Yar!

'The power of a single heartfelt tefillah on Rosh Hashanah can overturn decrees and reshape a destiny.' ~ Rav Chaim Shmulevitz.

"The greatest merit on Rosh Hashanah is simple trust that Hashem wants our good." ~ Rav Moshe Feinstein.



Insights By Rabbi Dovid Orlofsky - Tzom Gedalia – Don't Miss Your Chance

Many people don't appreciate the fast known as Tzom Gedalia, which occurs the day after Rosh Hashana. Let's begin with a historical context. There are four fasts on the calendar that are connected to the Churban. The first is Asara B'Teves, when Yerushalayim was besieged; the second is the Seventeenth of Tammuz, when the walls were breached; the third is Tisha B'Av, when the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, and the fourth is Tzom Gedalia.

What is Tzom Gedalia about?

After Nebuchadnezzar took the Jews into Galus, there were many Jews that he didn't even bother taking – all those who weren't that bright, who didn't have land, and anyone who was considered below average in his eyes. All those people who felt that they didn't succeed because society did them wrong were left behind with the country to themselves.

So, Nebuchadnezzar took a righteous man, Gedalia, and put him in charge to lead the remnant left in Israel so there was still a community left in the Holy Land. This group would finally have the opportunity to succeed Gedalia told the people "who never made it" and told them that this was their chance to make something of themselves.

What happened is that two people said, "Eh, Gedalia is just a lackey for the Babylonians," and plotted to kill him. When Gedalia was informed of the planned assassination, he quickly closed his ears and exclaimed, "Ah – Lashon Harah!" He wouldn't believe the reports, and sure enough, he was killed by two Jews who thought they were doing the right thing.

Gedalia's murder signalled the end of the settlement in the land of Israel; the remainder of those Jews went into exile in Egypt, and we don't know what became of them in the end.

Tzom Gedalia fittingly follows Rosh Hashana. Hashem gives us opportunities like those people in the time of Gedalia. Let's not throw them back in His Face. Everyone gets a knock on the door in life; most people simply choose not to answer it. Gedalia was that knock on the door. Hashem reached out to the people and gave them a lifeline, and they killed him.

Now, in the days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we are given a chance to reconnect with Hashem during a time that He is close ("seek out Hashem when He's coming to you"). Let's not allow the opportunity to slip away again!



Judging People Favourably!

It is said in the name of the famous **Kotzker Rebbe *zt"l***, that everything in this world has a purpose, even "**קרומער שכל**" - distorted logic. - It is meant to be used with a vivid imagination to figure out a way to get people off the hook and judge them favourably, to be **דן לכף זכות**.

Says **R' Zalman Guttman *shlit'a***, on the holy day of *Rosh Hashana*, there is probably nothing more important than applying this *midah*. We must remember that *Hashem* works '*midah k'neged midah*' - measure for measure.

Thus, if one looks away from people's faults and focuses only on the positive, *Hashem* will do the exact same thing for him!

מעשה אבות .... סימן לבנים

וַאֲנַחְנוּ כֹּרְעִים וּמִשְׁתַּחֲוִים וּמוֹדִים לִפְנֵי מֶלֶךְ מַלְכֵי הַמְּלָכִים הַקָּדוֹשׁ בָּרוּךְ הוּא

It was *Rosh Hashanah* morning, and a solemn, quiet hum filled the study of **Maran HaGaon R' Chaim Kanievsky *zt"l***. Because space was severely limited in his home, every seat allocated beyond the immediate family carried deep weight and not just anyone could enter. Among the small gathering of *mispallelim*, one man stood out. There was an intense, unmistakable posture to his *davening*, an aura of profound devotion that immediately drew the eyes of those around him.

Seeking to understand who this man was and how he had come to claim such a coveted place in R' Chaim's inner sanctum, a grandson approached him after *davening*. When asked about his background, the man smiled, a look of someone who had carried a secret for years, simply waiting for the right moment to share it.

He explained that his journey had begun thirty years earlier, born out of a catastrophic car accident that had completely crushed his leg. In the painful years following the crash, his life had been defined by immobility and despair. The most elite medical minds had carefully examined his file, evaluated the terrifying X-rays, and delivered a unanimous, shattering verdict: the damage was far too extensive, and the chances of restoring any function were absolute zero. No doctor was willing to take the risk of operating on a leg so thoroughly shattered.

On one occasion, a specialist had scheduled a date for surgery, only to get cold feet the evening before and cancel the procedure entirely. Left with a ruined leg and dim prospects, the man was forced to accept a life of physical limitation.

Eventually, seeking spiritual solace, he entered the humble residence of R' Chaim Kanievsky. He poured out his broken heart, explaining

that he could barely walk and that no doctor on earth would risk operating on his leg.

R' Chaim listened, but rather than focusing on the medical impossibility, he asked a single unexpected question: "Are you able to do **כורעים**?" (In *Mussaf* on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Yom Kippur*, during *Aleinu* and the *avodah*, every person kneels [**כורע**] - on the ground.)

The man shook his head sadly, explaining that he could barely stand on his foot, let alone bend down to kneel.

Without hesitation, R' Chaim looked at him with absolute certainty and commanded: "Perform the operation so that you can kneel!"

When the man tried to protest, repeating the definitive judgments of the world's leading orthopaedic surgeons who insisted the leg was beyond repair, the Sage refused to hear another word. He simply repeated the directive with unwavering conviction: go perform the surgery so that you can do **כורעים** before the King.

Well, armed with this clear spiritual mandate, the man felt a surge of renewed strength. He sought out the top orthopaedic specialist in the world, a non-Jewish doctor renowned for handling the most impossible cases.

Moved by the patient's relentless determination, the doctor surprisingly agreed to re-examine the file and, against all medical precedent, decided to take on the high-risk operation.

The surgery stretched on for agonizing hours, every movement fraught with peril. Yet, against all physical odds, the operation was a breathtaking success. For the first time in three decades, after months of gruelling rehabilitation, the man was able to lower himself to the ground, bend his knee, and pour out his soul in tearful gratitude to the Almighty.

Overwhelmed by what had transpired, the man travelled to thank the world-famous surgeon who had performed the medical marvel.

But as he began to express his deep gratitude, the non-Jewish doctor abruptly cut him off, raising his hands in protest.

"You have nothing to thank me for!" the surgeon exclaimed, his voice filled with genuine awe. "You must thank only the Creator, the Blessed One! - I have performed thousands of complex surgeries in my career, but I have never in my life attempted a procedure so complicated. Science cannot explain how your leg was restored. It was only a direct hand from Above - pure Divine assistance - that carried you through that operating room and put you back on your feet."

Standing in the quiet atmosphere of R' Chaim's study, the venerable Jew concluded his extraordinary tale. It was not merely medicine that had healed his body, but the *beracha* of a holy *tzaddik* who saw past human limitations.

Since his miraculous recovery, he made it his sacred mission to return year after year, traveling to do **כורעים** on *Rosh Hashanah* in the shadow of R' Chaim Kanievsky, eager to bow, kneel, and surrender his heart in the very place where his miracle was born.



כְּדֵי לְעַרְבֵּב אֶת הַשָּׂטָן

The trick "not blowing shofar to confuse the Satan" is too amateur.

Erev Rosh Hashana, I'll be sitting in my sukkah, wearing my Purim costume and non-leather shoes, eating a hamantasch-shaped cheesecake, in front of a menorah made entirely from matza.

That'll confuse the Satan!


OHR HaCHAIM
HaKADOSH GEMS
Rosh Hashanah
Rabboysay,
Open your hearts to this breathtaking Ohr HaChaim:
"Haben yakir li Ephraim im yeled sha-a-shuim
ki miday daberi bo zachor ezkerenu od
al-ken hamu me-ay lo rachem arachamenu ne'um Hashem."
"Is Efrayim a precious son to Me, or a delightful child?
For whenever I speak of him, I will surely remember him still;
Therefore, My heart yearns for him; I will surely have mercy on him,"
declares Hashem. (Yirmiyahu 31:19)
This is one of the most emotionally powerful pesukim in the Rosh Hashanah davening. It is prominently recited during the Zichronos (Remembrances) blessing of the Musaf Shemoneh Esrei on Rosh Hashanah, highlighting Hashem's enduring love and mercy for the Jewish people.
The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh (Rishon L'Tzion) explains:
When someone has a foul odour, others keep their distance from him. However, when their own baby needs a change, parents have no problem holding the child and playing with him. They kiss and hug him and almost don't even sense the bad odour because of their love for the child. We are Hashem's children, and Hashem says that even if we smell bad due to our sins, we remain Hashem's beloved children. Hashem plays with his child even when the child isn't clean.
In every situation, Hashem loves us and has mercy on us.
What an important and timeless lesson
the Ohr HaChaim teaches and reminds us!
Wishing all our esteemed readers a Shana Tova!
Chaim Bowden



סדר תיקון שובבים Livorno (Leghorn), Italy 1740 - A supplication for the redemption, intended for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. **תפלה שיסד ה״ה הרב המובהק הכולל החסיד והעניו כמוהר״ר חיים בן עטר ... לאומרה בראש השנה בג׳ תפלות אחר גמר העמידה קודם אלהי נצור, וביום כיפור בעוד שהשליח ציבור אומר ויעבור ה׳ על פניו**

יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵּנוּ אֱלֹקֵינוּ יְדִידוּת אוֹר נַפְשֵׁנוּ רוּחֵנוּ וְנִשְׁמָתֵנוּ, לְמַעַן בְּרִיתְךָ אֲשֶׁר כָּרַתָּ לִשְׁלֹשׁ עֶשְׂרֵה מִדּוֹת שֶׁאֵינָן חוֹזְרוֹת רֵיקָם לְעוֹלָם מִלְּפָנֶיךָ, זְכֹר אַהֲבָתֵנוּ וְחִבָּתֵנוּ וְהָשֵׁב שְׁכִינָתְךָ לְבֵית קָדְשֵׁנוּ וְתַחֲזֹר לְהִשְׁתַּעֲשֵׁעַ בָּנוּ כְּימֵי קֶדֶם, כִּי קָשָׁה פְּרִידָתְךָ מִמֶּנּוּ כִּפְרִידַת נַפְשֵׁנוּ מִגּוּפֵנוּ, הָמוּ מֵעֵינוּ וְכָלְתָה נַפְשֵׁנוּ אֶל גְּאֵלַת שְׁכִינָתְךָ וְאֶל מְעוֹן קָדְשְׁךָ, וְלִרְצוֹנְךָ ה׳ הִנָּנוּ מִתְחַנְּנִים וּבוֹכִים לְפָנֶיךָ ה׳ אָב הָרַחֲמָן עַל גָּלוּת הַשְּׁכִינָה – נִכְסַפְנוּ הוֹשִׁיעָה ה׳ שְׁכִינָתְךָ, וְדַבֵּק נַפְשֵׁנוּ בְּאַהֲבָתְךָ הַנְּעִימָה וְהָעֲרֵבָה עַל נַפְשֵׁנוּ וְרוּחֵנוּ וְנִשְׁמָתֵנוּ, וְיֵעוֹל מַלְכֵּנוּ בְּהֵיכָלֵיהּ

May it be Your will, our Father, our King, our G-d, the very light of our nefesh, ruach and neshoma – our lower soul, spirit and our higher soul, on behalf of Your covenant which You sealed for the thirteen attributes of mercy which are never left unheeded and unanswered, which You never turn away empty-handed from before You. Please remember our love and return Your Divine Presence, the Shechina, to our holy Mikdosh, the Temple, and delight in us once again as You have in the past!

Because Your departure is as painful and difficult to us as the departure of our soul from our body! Our innards pine away and our souls expire for the time of the redemption of Your Shechina and for Your holy abode, the Temple, and we desire Your good will!

We hereby beg, plead and cry before You, Hashem, merciful Father, over the exile and Golus HaShechina. Save Your Shechina, Hashem! And attach and bind our souls in dveikus to Your heartfelt love, which is pleasant and sweet for our souls and spirits, and may the King return to the halls of His palace!

Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff

שבת and שופר – Bringing רחמים on ראש השנה

רבותי, we are all preparing ourselves for the great day of **ראש השנה**, when the **רבונו של עולם** comes, so to speak, to judge and make decisions for all of **כלל ישראל** . May those decisions be **לטובה**.

There is much discussion among the **מפרשים** about **ראש השנה** falling on **שבת**. On the one hand, we are missing the **שופר**, which has such a powerful **כח** to bring **רחמים**. But **אודאי חז"ל** did not mean, **חלילה**, to take away that **כח** of **רחמים**. Rather, it is replaced by the **כח** of **קדושת השבת**. Each of the **ספרי היסוד** explains this in its own way, but the common theme is that if we strengthen ourselves in **קדושת השבת**, we can bring **רחמים**.

As **רבי מאיר** says in **שבת י"ב עמוד א'**, **שבת—יכולה היא שתרחם** itself can bring **רחמים**. Whether someone needs a **רפואה**, a **ישועה**, or any other kind of help, **שבת** has that **כח**. The **חסידישע ספרים** even have the **ווארט** that **שבת** stands for **שבת במקום תקיעות**. But for that, we need an extra **זהירות** in **שבת**.

There is also a deeper connection between **שבת** and **שופר**. The **שופר** is there to declare the **מלכות** of **הקדוש ברוך הוא**, to **ממליך** Him. And **שבת**, too, is fundamentally a declaration of His **מלכות**. The **רמב"ם**, in **הלכות שבת פרק ל'**, describes how we go out to greet **שבת המלכה. שבת** is the day when we acknowledge the **מלכות** of **הקדוש ברוך הוא**.

So, if we strengthen our connection to **שבת**, its **אמונה** and **קדושה**, we can access the same **כח** of accepting the **מלכות** of **הקדוש ברוך הוא** that the **שופר** brings.

How do we do that?

First, we must be especially careful this year to remember that it is **שבת**. When **שבת** and **יום טוב** come together, we can mistakenly think only in terms of **יום טוב** and forget the additional restrictions of **שבת—הדלקה, הבערה**, moving a candle, and so on. We must remind

ourselves throughout the day that **שבת** overrides the **יום טוב**. We should also be careful to mention **שבת** properly in the **תפילות** and **הזכרות**.

But beyond these practical **הלכות**, we should think about how to elevate our entire **שבת**. Each person can consider where he can be more careful: in **הלכות שבת**, in the way he spends the day, in what he speaks about, in the **קדושה** of the day, or perhaps in being more careful to **מעביר סדרה**.

I would especially like to strengthen myself and anyone who wants to join me in one **ענין** that always needs **חיזוק**: **לימוד התורה** on **שבת**.

The **קדושת השבת** is intrinsically connected with learning Torah. Sometimes, for one reason or another, we do not give ourselves the opportunity to learn properly, as much as we could. But especially this year, when **שבת** has such significance for us, we should make a **חשבון הנפש**.

Let us make a **קביעות** this year to learn more on **שבת** than we have done previously. **א געוואלדיגע זכות גדולה וועט דאס זיין**—and what a special **חיזוק** it will give us as we approach a **ראש השנה שבשבת**.

Perhaps we can add another **וואַרט**: **ישמחו במלכותך שומרי שבת**.

מלכות is not usually something we rejoice in. **מלכות** can inspire **פחד** and awe. So how do we say, **ישמחו במלכותך**—that we rejoice in the **מלכות** of **הקדוש ברוך הוא**?

The answer is: **שומרי שבת**. When a person is a **שומר שבת**, the **מלכות** of **הקדוש ברוך הוא** becomes something he can rejoice in. That is the special **כח** of **שבת**.

און דער אייבערשטער זאל העלפן אז ס'וועט זיין א יאר פון רחמים, א גוט יאר, א זיס יאר, א געבענטשטע יאר, we'll have each other in mind and we'll be able to share with each other **שמחה, נחת, געזונט, און ברכה פאר א זיס געבענטשטע יאר פאר אלע איידן אמן. כל טוב, שנה טובה ומתוקה**

A Good Sweet Year! - Quick thought! - R' Aron Litwin



So when I was a young kid, about seven or eight years old, **השם** put this idea in my mind, and I remember having the question: We wish people **שנה טובה ומתוקה**. We say the **יהי רצון** when we have the apple and honey on **ראש השנה** night, **יהי רצון** it should be a **שנה טובה ומתוקה**. A **שנה**, a year, **טובה**, a good year, **ומתוקה**, and a sweet year.

And I was bothered: Why do we say **טובה ומתוקה**, good and sweet? If it's good, it's sweet. If it's sweet, it's good. Why do we say good and sweet?

So here's a short idea, something beautiful just to share: **כל דעביד רחמנא לטב עביד**. Everything **השם** does is good. Sometimes the good is sweet. Sometimes it's not so sweet. So we're **דאוועניגג** that it shouldn't just be good, it shouldn't just be good because everything is good, but it should also be sweet.

אם ירצה השם, we should have a year that's not just good, because everything **השם** does is good, but it should be sweet as well.

It should be a **זיסע יאר**, a **שנה טובה ומתוקה**. May **השם** answer all our **תפילות לטובה**, and all the **ישועות** we're waiting for should be answered **לטובה בקרוב ממש**.

I want to wish you all, everyone listening, an amazing year ahead full of **שנה טובה ומתוקה. ברכה, ישועות ונחמות**

"The power of Teshuva is the greatest innovation since the creation of the world." ~ Rabbi Yitzchak Hutner - Pachad Yitzchak, Yom Kippur 1:8

תְּפִלַּת חַנָּה - Rabbi Shlomo Zalman Hoff

רבותי, גמר חתימה טובה. Let's hope that the **תפילות** of **ראש השנה** were **נתקבל**, and we remind ourselves we're up to day three already of **עשרת ימי תשובה**, which go by quickly.

One of the great **כחות** of **עשרת ימי תשובה** is the **ענין** of the **כח התפילה**, which affects the whole year and beyond. And I'd like to share with you an insight that occurred to me about the **תפילה** that **חנה** presented to **הקדוש ברוך הוא** that we **ליינט** in the **הפטורה** of the first day **ראש השנה**.

The **גמרא** in **דף ל״א עמוד ב** in **ברכות** has a lot of discussion about the **תפילה** of **חנה**, we learn various **הלכות** of **תפילה**. This is one of the primary examples of the **כח** of **תפילה**. And the **גמרא** says the following: **חנה** approached **הקדוש ברוך הוא** and said to **הקדוש ברוך הוא, וכי כל צבאי צבאות שבראת בעולמך, קשה בעיניך שתתן לי בן אחד?**

חנה says there are so many **נבראים**, there's so many around that have **יולדות** and children in the different parts of the creation, in the creation that you created. Is it difficult for you to create one more to give me a child?

And I was **מתבונן**, it's such a strange kind of a way to of expression of **חנה**.

חנה was an **עקרה**, was somebody wasn't able to have children. The difference between you and the neighbors and all the other people that have children is because of their anatomy, they have a **כח הטבע** to have children and you don't. How can you say to **רבונו של עולם**, if everybody else has so many **נבראים** having children, is it difficult for me for you to give me also?

You'll go to the doctor, he'll explain to you, you're different to everybody else, you can't have and they can have. But what it seems from this is that **חנה** had such an **אמונה** in the **רבונו של עולם**, she said

to **רבונו של עולם**, for you there's no difference between me and everybody else!

Whether the doctor says I can have, whether the doctor says I can't have, **אבער** for the **רבונו של עולם**, a barren woman and not a barren, an **עקרה**, it makes absolutely no difference.

She said to the **רבונו של עולם**, and I believe, and she fully **גענעבט אזא אמונה** in the **רבונו של עולם** that there was no difference in her ability to have children and anybody else's. And she said to the **רבונו של עולם, קשה בעיניך**, there's so many others who have children, and I, in your, for your capacity, **הקדוש ברוך הוא**, I'm no different to them.

A **נפלא'דיגע** understanding in the **כח** of **חנה**'s **תפילה**.

And if we **דאוועו**, we have to learn from this to **דאוועו באמונה**, we have to **דאוועו** with belief, not with despair, **נאר פארקערט**, with belief, that **רבונו של עולם** can, and he's waiting for our **תפילות**, whatever our situation is, **רבונו של עולם** is able to help us out. When we **דאוועו באמונה**, like **חנה**, that kind of **תפילה** has a **כח** to be able to achieve.

יתן השם that the **רבונו של עולם** should be **מקבל** all the **תפילות** that we **דאוועו**, especially in these days, that we should be able to **פועל** a **זיס געבענטשטע יאר, גמר חתימה טובה לכל ידידינו, כל קהילתינו, אויף א גאנץ כלל ישראל**

"Rosh Hashanah is the day we declare that life has purpose—and that we choose to live it with responsibility." ~ Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch.

R' Nachman of Breslov ZT"L would say:

"Each day a person is that much closer to death. How can he have time for arguments?!"



Dear Friends, **כתיבה וחתימה טובה**

Wishing you and your families a Shana Tova U'misukah - A sweet year filled with health, nachas, and success!

May Hashem grant you, your family, and the entire Jewish nation, a year filled with much bracha, gezunt, happiness, spiritual growth, and a year when we will greet Moshiach and see Hashem's name exalted throughout the world. – Yitzchok.



"Every moment of Rosh Hashanah carries hidden gates of blessing for those who seek them." ~ The Ben Ish Chai.




כתיבה וחתימה טובה







