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TISHREI: THE MONTH
OF GREATNESS



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GREETINGS FROM THE PRESIDENT

TISHREI 5782

Dear Friends,

I am honored to present the first in a planned series of Torah Journals to be distributed by National Council of Young Israel, the Tishrei Torah Journal for 5782.

The diversity of both our contributors and the topics they have selected, reflect the broad scope of our movement and those who wish to connect with it. It is my hope that the thousands who will read these Divrei Torah will benefit greatly and thus enhance their spiritual experience during this crucial time period for each and every Jew.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our sponsors, without whose support this undertaking could never have succeeded. I particularly want to thank our many branches which joined together in a true spirit of Achdus by sponsoring and encouraging this project. Thanks also to Charles Miller, Chairman of our Synagogue Services Committee for your ideas and suggestions. And a special thank you to our Director of Rabbinic Services, Rabbi Binyamin Hammer, for coordinating the actual production and printing of the Journal. Yasher Koach for your efforts.

As we enter the Yamim Noraim, the time during which we all engage in Cheshbon HaNefesh, it is a perfect opportunity to consider where our Young Israel Movement stands and the direction in which we are headed.

During the brief six months since the election of our administration, we have focused on revitalizing the spirit of cooperation and unity which had seemed to almost disappear over the past several years. By establishing direct weekly communication with our branch presidents, asking them to distribute useful and im-

portant information to their memberships, through the weekly presentation of our 4 Minutes of Torah videos, through Town Hall meetings with branch memberships and an extremely well attended Delegates Assembly, we have begun the process of restoring the feeling of Mishpacha for which Young Israel was always known. **AFTER ALL, WE ARE FIRST AND FOREMOST A SHUL ORGANIZATION, THE AIM OF WHICH IS TO SERVE AND BENEFIT ITS CONSTITUENT BRANCHES AND THEIR FAMILIES.**

We are also working on expanding our presence in Eretz Yisrael through our Yisrael Hatzair, which offers vitally important services to hundreds of individuals and works to coordinate the activities of our 38 Young Israel branches in Israel. You will be hearing much more about this development in the coming weeks and months.

I realize that there is much hard work which lies ahead if we are to truly succeed in restoring the role of National Council of Young Israel. Perhaps even more importantly, is the need to create the sense of working together between the Council and the branches, as well as among the branches themselves. The success of these efforts will lead us towards the accomplishment of our one shared goal, the strengthening and further growth of Orthodoxy in both the US and Israel.

I am confident that with continued perseverance and the cooperation of our members, we can succeed in this mission and regain the status of a truly vibrant, affective, and influential national organization.

My best wishes for a Shanah Tovah and a Kesivah V'Chasimah Tovah to all.

Rabbi David Warshaw

President, National Council of Young Israel



INTRODUCTION HOW TO JUDGE A YOM KIPPUR?

RABBI SHMUEL ISMACH AND RABBI SHOLOM AXELROD

INTERIM LEADERSHIP, YOUNG ISRAEL COUNCIL OF RABBIS



IT IS GENERALLY difficult to meaningfully appreciate momentous occasions and significant moments in our lives as they pass so quickly, and then life moves on. We are reminded of this as we approach a most sacred day on our calendar, Yom Kippur. How are we to assess whether we have accomplished what we are meant to on that special day, when before we know it, it has passed.

Perhaps, as Yom Kippur is the "שַׁבַּת שַׁבָּתוֹת," the "Sabbath of Sabbaths," (Vayikra 16:31) we can derive a lesson from Shabbat itself.

Regarding Shabbat, the Torah famously states (Shemot 20:7) "זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ" "Remember the day of Shabbat to make it holy." What exactly is it that we required to remember? There are many interpretations of these words. To some, it refers to the obligation to make Kiddush on Friday, and to others, the requirement to remember Shabbat every day of the

week and count towards its arrival. Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) explains that the word "remember" is used here as it usually is, to mean that we recall the past. How so? He explains that for every day of the next week, we should be recalling the previous Shabbat and that "we are to let the Sabbath at its termination reach over into the weekday, and in the blessing of the Havdalah we again mention the importance of the Sabbath as an institution that sanctifies our whole life, so that we take the Sabbath spirit with us into the working life of the weekdays."

To Rav Hirsch, the memory of Shabbat must reverberate into the following week and that the heightened spiritual awareness it offers and the time for prayer and reflection it affords must not only impact that day but must spill over into the following week as well. The successful Shabbat is one that will be "remembered" well past the time when the Havdalah candle is

blown out.

This might be what the Gemara means when it says (Shabbat 118b):

אמר רבי יוחנן משום רבי שמעון בן יוחי: אלמלי משמרין ישראל שתי שבתות כהלכתן - מיד נגאליں

Rabbi Yochanan says in the name of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai: “Would the Jewish people keep only two Shabbats, they would be immediately redeemed.”

Most commentators explain that this is not to be understood as requiring two random weeks of

Shabbat observance, but instead, two consecutive ones. The after-effects of a successful Shabbat, taken into its next week and forming the basis for another successful Shabbat would create not only a repeated cycle but a narrowing spiral of closeness to and awareness of G-d that would result in inevitable redemption.

So what of Yom Kippur, the “Shabbat Shabbaton?” If Shabbat is supposed to be a day that reverberates into our week, what should we expect of the after-effects of the all-important day of Yom Kippur? Again, we turn to Rav Hirsch. In his commentary to the Avodah of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur, he takes a close look at the five times the Kohen Gadol would go to the mikvah and the ten times he

would wash his hands and feet. He wonders why the final washing, performed as he would remove his sacred garments and ready himself to put on his ordinary clothing to go home, would require a formal washing beforehand. How was this part of the Yom Kippur service? He explains that this is exactly what the symbolism of the detailed service means to display:

removing the sacred garment to don his everyday clothing does indeed constitute avodah!

He writes (Vayikra 16:4): “The meaning of all the

symbolic procedures performed in the sanctuary is in the actual life outside the Sanctuary; for ordinary life actualizes the spirit that is drawn in Sanctuary life. Indeed, the meaning of the aspirations in bigdei kodesh is in the deeds performed in bigdei chol.” The official service might end when the white vestments are removed, but the kohen’s inspired personal service must continue beyond any wardrobe change.

Again, we are reminded that the special day of Yom Kippur - like the day of Shabbat - is not judged only by how that day transpired, but rather its success and the fulfillment of its purpose is only seen in the days that follow. Just as the successful Shabbat needs to impact our week, the successful

***the memory of
Shabbat...must
spill over into the
following week***

HOW TO JUDGE A YOM KIPPUR

Yom Kippur needs to impact the Kohen Gadol's way past the time he's changed back into his regular clothing when the pageantry of the day has ended.

The lessons learned from the Kohen Gadol apply equally to us. Our Yom Kippur isn't truly over when the shofar blows. After that sound diminishes and we return home to remove our Yom Kippur wardrobe, we are challenged to have that special day inspire us on the days which follow.

Hopefully, we can "remember" to take our Shabbatot with us through our weeks, and our Yom Kippur with us throughout our year so that every week, and every year, builds on the one before.

We believe this message to apply equally to the mission of the National Council of Young Israel. As the NCYI embarks on a new chapter in its halowed history, how will its success be

measured? The model of Shabbat and Yom Kippur teach us that it will never be any one election, program or event that will be the determining factor. In the coming months and years, only a sustained effort on the part of the

National Council and its branches to re-engage with each other in meaningful ways will lead to true success. We hope that one success will build on another and with Hashem's help,

we will make a positive impact on the thousands of Young Israel families and create a true kiddush Hashem for us. Have a G'mar Chatimah Tovah.

**we can
"remember" to
take our...Yom
Kippur with us
throughout our
year**

Rabbi Ismach is the mara d'atra, YI Great Neck. Rabbi Axelrod is the mara d'atra, YI Woodmere

The Young Israel Council of Rabbis is the Rabbinic arm of the National Council of Young Israel. They can be reached at rabbis@youngisrael.org

HOLYDAYS OR HOLIDAYS?

RABBI BARUCH TAUB

RABBI EMERITUS, THE BAYIT, TORONTO



I AM WRITING these words just after Tisha B'Av.

I want to pose a question.

The 17th of Tammuz, the three weeks (Bein Hametzarim), Tisha B'Av, a total of 21 days. Before we turn around Elul, Rosh Hashana, the Aseret Yemei Teshuva and Yom Kippur a total of 40 days.

Not to mention the mourning period of Sefirat Haomer, another 49 days.

Throw in Ta'anit Esther and the fast 10th of Tevet for good measure.

Please do the math - a total of 102 days! That is almost 1/3 of our 354 lunar year or 365 solar year.

What exactly does the Almighty want from us?

Can't we relax a little bit without all this mourning and repentance (Teshuva)!? How about a Holiday instead of a Holyday?

We of this COVID generation who for 1 1/2 years have been experiencing an unprecedented period of anxiety know the answer. We know it because we have basically been asking the same question: what does the Almighty want from us? He wants to get our attention and He did!

Via the High Holyday season He truly wants us to enjoy life, celebrate Simchas, smile and be happy. But the Torah designed these 112 days in order to remind us that there is also a serious dimension to life which should not diminish our Simcha but expand its meaning.

These 112 days are designed to "get our attention" and to encourage us to focus on the TOTAL picture of "ivdu et HaShem BESIMCHA" (serve HaShem with joy). These days are designed to remind us of the bigger picture.

We have been gifted by a loving G-d the ability to live a meaningful life with Torah and mitzvot. A life that



HOLYDAYS OR HOLIDAYS?

provides the opportunity of bettering ourselves spiritually as individuals, in our communities and as the entire enterprise of Am Yisrael, Torat Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael. Therefore from time to time we must be reminded of what we as a people are missing such as the Beit Hamikdash. (By the way in its absence we are lacking 270 of the 613 mitzvot) !

The challenge is to utilize these final 10 days from Rosh Hashana through Yom Kippur to thank Him for this opportunity. A proper application of the meaning, message and mitzvot of these days are designed to recalibrate the real definition of living a joyous life.

Make no mistake about it the Almighty wants us to be happy and enjoy life to the fullest. He just wants us to realize that the joy and happiness will come by living a rich spiritual life.

Ketiva Vechatima Tova.
Happy Holyday / Holiday!

JOURNEY IN TESHUVA

RABBI JOSHUA GOLLER

MARA D'ATRA,

YOUNG ISRAEL OF WEST HEMPSTEAD



ONE OF THE most oft recited tefillos of the Yomim Noraim is chapter 24 of Tehillim. It makes its' first cameo on the night of Rosh Hashanah. It returns once again to cap off the Ma'ariv service on Yom Kippur. It is recited in very melodious, deliberate and somber tones. While it is a beautiful chapter of Tehillim, there are many others that might have had a tighter connection to the Yomim Noraim. Why was this specific chapter chosen and given such a prominent role in the tefillos of the Days of Awe?

The Satmar Rebbe, in his Divrei Yoel, explains that the Gemara (Shabbos 30a) is the key to understanding the center stage afforded to this chapter. It develops the idea that this particular chapter is the one dedicated to the forgiveness of Dovid Hamelech. After the incident with Batshe-

va, Dovid did some serious introspection and teshuvah, then asking for a sign that he was forgiven and absolved of all wrongdoing. Hashem responded that the sign would not be given in his own lifetime but rather in the lifetime of his son, Shlomoh. Indeed, the fascinating story of the gates in the Beis Hamikdash, the subject of this chapter, is the story of Dovid's absolution.

Therefore, the Satmar Rebbe posits, if this is the case, it needs to be given such importance. There are two crucial ideas that are often lost on people who are in the process of doing teshuvah. One is, that great people do not have to go through the same rigorous process that the average person has to endure. They don't have our challenges nor the laborious process of returning to Hashem after a misstep. The other, that teshuvah is a grand process that is only granted to special people. But the average person on ones own cannot embark on such an ambitious journey.

This chapter serves to lay to rest both of those misunderstandings. Here we have a tzaddik like Dovid Hamelech who goes through the same process that the average person does. He does so as an individual. It is his story that we highlight by saying this chap-

ter. It is this encouragement that this chapter gives each and every one of us. We can each introspect, reflect and work on ourselves to achieve complete teshuvah. We can each erase the distance from Hashem that some of our mistakes have caused just the same as Dovid Hamelech did. It is for this reason that this chapter, in Te-

hillim, was given such crucial time and space at this auspicious time of the year. Because it is needed to encourage each and every individual in their own

odyssey.

Each of us has our very own journey in teshuvah. We have a unique smorgasbord of mistakes, challenges and items to improve. It is important to recognize that while each process may differ, at the core, the process and goal are the same for one and all.

Wishing all of you great success on your unique journey.

May Hashem grant you a healthy, happy, meaningful and successful year ahead. Warmest of wishes for a kesivah v'chasimah tovah.

This chapter serves to lay to rest both of those misunderstandings.

AN ACRONYM OF TESHUVAH

RAV SHALOM GOLD

RABBI EMERITUS,
YOUNG ISRAEL OF WEST HEMPSTEAD

A SHABBAT SHUVAH MESSAGE



THE STORY IS TOLD of one of the Chassidic greats, Rav Zisha of Anipoly, sitting at the Shalosh Seudot table on Shabbat Shuvah as the day was ebbing away. He was talking about the importance and the significance of doing teshuvah. Of course, the Chasidim said “Rebbe, dos iz azoi schver – teshuvah is a very difficult thing to do.”

He responded: In Shemoneh Esrei we ask for refu’ah sheleimah - complete healing; we also ask for ge’ulah sheleimah - complete redemption, and in a berachah right near there, it says, Hashiveinu - bring us back to you in teshuvah sheleimah. Just as we want refu’ah sheleimah and we want ge’ulah sheleimah, it is our responsibility to try and do teshuvah sheleimah, complete teshuvah.

So they still insisted, “But Rebbe, it’s so difficult.”

Reb Zisha again responds:, “You can do teshuvah b`rashei teivos, as an acronym, one letter at a time. Take the word תשובה, letter by letter.”

“The ת in teshuvah stands for תמים - the passuk in Torah says man should be wholeheartedly complete in a relation with your G-d. (Devarim 18:13)

***You can do
t’shuvah b`rashei
teivos, one letter
at a time.***

The ש in teshuvah stands for שויתי ה' - I place G-d before me constantly. (Tehillim 16:8)

The ו stands for ואהבת לרעך כמוך - Love your friend like yourself. (Vayiqra 19:18)

“The ב in teshuvah stands for בכל דרכיך דעהו - In all of your ways, know Him [G-d]. (Mishlei 3:6)

“The ה in teshuvah stands for ה' - Prepare yourself O Yisrael before your G-d.” (Amos 4:12)

There may be even more than a kernel of truth in what I am going to say, something that R' Zisha didn't say at all.

What R' Zisha constructed here was the essentially the core of a religious personality as a mature member of a faith community. G-d is in front of me constantly, in all of my ways I am to know Him, love your friend like yourself, be complete and full, prepare yourself for G-d.

Join all these ideas together and you have the building blocks of the perfected religious personality.

But it occurs to me that these five pessukim are five steps which may very well describe five periods in time beginning with the month of Elul, and continuing on to Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, Sukkot, Hoshana Rabah and Shemini Atzeret.

Let us consider here the first two pessukim.

What is the meaning of **תמים תהיה עם ה' אלוך** "Be wholehearted with Your G-d"? RaMBaN (Nachmanides 1194-1270) holds that this is a positive Torah commandment. He disagrees with RaMBaM who does not count this passuk, as a mitzvah asei, a positive active commandment. RaMBaM, (Maimonides 1138-1204) on the other hand, sees this passuk as an overall description of the totality of the Jew, but in and of itself does not require anything specific. According to RaMBaM, for something to be counted as a mitz-

vah there must be something very specific about it. This passuk is one of these general pessukim, that just says, "Keep My Statutes and My Mitzvot," and, as such, is not counted as one of the 613 mitzvot.

RaMBaN disagrees with the RaMBaM and says that **תמים תהיה עם ה' אלוך** does call for a specific act.

"We are commanded that our hearts should be full and complete with Him. And what is the meaning of this command? That our hearts look towards G-d alone. And we should believe that He alone does everything. He is the only One who knows the truth about what will be in the future. And if we want to know (at a period of time when there were prophets in Israel if we wanted to know what was to be in the future) we would go to His prophets and his pious ones. We don't follow the astrologers; we don't look at all the nonsense that passes in the world for knowledge of the future. Rather, we should declare: "Everything is in the hands of Heaven". And we don't believe the words of the astrologers will come true because G-d is the only One who has it in His ability to change - dramatically change - all of nature. He makes fools of the magicians and those fools who use crystal balls to tell us the future." (RaMBaN, Devarim 18:13)

So, there is something very specific about **תמים תהיה עם ה' אלוך**. It is now a description of a relationship. We believe that everything comes from Him.

AN ACRONYM OF TESHUVA

He is the One who holds the future - our future - in His hands. He is the only One who can determine and dramatically change whatever there is there in nature.

RaMBaN continues:

We are to believe that anything that is going to happen to us is in direct relationship to the extent to which we are close to Him. Yirmiyahu indicated: Don't learn the ways of the goyim and don't be broken by the signs and omens that come from the heavens, as the goyim are broken by this.... For G-d gave you Eminence over all the other people and placed His spirit (of prophecy) only upon you...And this is a mitzvah asei, a positive mitzvah. (that we be "whole" with G-d). (RaMBaN's addenda, Sefer haMitzvot of RaMBaM, Asei 8)

So, we are talking about a relationship of absolute trust, of faith, a relationship of dependence, a relationship that our whole future depends on Him.

I ask you: Isn't that the mood of the month of Elul? Isn't that what we are supposed to think and feel during the month of Elul - that our relationship is the closeness with Him?

אני לדודי ודודי לי. I am to my Beloved and my Beloved is to me. That's Elul! Ev-

everything that is going to happen to me depends upon You. That is why I turn to You before יום הדין, the Day of Judgment, is going to come.

In the month of Elul we have to develop a relationship that can best be described by תמים תהיה עם ה' אלוך.

Unfortunately, there is the word in Yiddish [תמים, as in], "ער איז אַ תמים", sort of a denigration of a person, he is naïve. That is not at all what the word

תמים means any place in Tanach. Examples:

- Noach is described as, "איש תמים היה בדורותיו." (Bereishis 2:9)

-What is Ribono shel Olam going

to say to Avraham at the end of פרשת לך לך "התהלך לפני והיה תמים" (ibid 17:1)

= How is Ya'akov Avinu characterized? "איש תם יושב אוהלים." (ibid 25:27)

We are talking about people who had a relationship of fullness, complete dependence. I know that whatever is going to happen depends on You, and to the extent to which I am close to you.

That is precisely the mood that one is supposed to develop during the month of Elul. If I know that everything depends on Him, therefore, I am going to do teshuvah so that I can stand before Him on Rosh HaShanah and be



judged for good.

Interesting, as I said, RaMBaM says that **תמים תהיה עם ה' אלוך** is not a specific mitzvah, but rather, it represents a total assertion of all of Torah. In other words, all of Torah is supposed to make a person into one whose relationship with G-d is complete and full.

MaLBiM (1809-1879) explains that RaMBaM reads the entire passuk (in one breath) as an imperative - a mitzvah, a command -. But RaMBaM, who does not see it as an imperative, reads the passuk differently. **תמים תהיה** - In your relationship with G-d if you will be **תמים תהיה עם ה' אלוך**, then as a result you will then be close to G-d, your G-d. Read this way and the message is not an imperative, a mitzvah, but the passuk is describing how one is to relate to G-d.

That is the message of Elul.

The next passuk in Reb Zisha's teshuvah acronym is **שוויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד** - I place G-d before me constantly. This describes

the mood of what Rosh haShanah should be. In order to describe this to you, let me refer to the opening passage of the Shulchan Aruch by Rav Yosef Karo (1488-1575): **יתגבר כארי לעמוד** - "A man should arise in the morning to do the service of his Creator by waking up the morning and not that the morning should wake him up."

(I like to watch the sun rise over the **הרי יהודה**)

הרי יהודה. I like to watch the sun set over the **הרי יהודה**; and from my living room I can watch both of them. It's unbelievably beautiful. I've told you that in the past I've asked my people, my friends in **חוץ לארץ**, what do they see when they look out of their living room window? They see the house across the street. Oy!)

We have the ability to see much further. If you look out of the living room window you can see the rolling green hills and whispering brooks of **הרי יהודה**. So you are supposed to wake up the morning, not to have the morning wake up you. Rav Moshe Isserles, RaMa, adds his practical comments to this. Realizing that not everyone is "going to wake up the morning", he says: "At very least a person should not miss the time for davening when the community davens". He continues with a longer quotation from RaMBaM's Moreh Nevachim (3:52)

"Placing G-d before me always" is a fundamental rule of the Torah and in the conduct of the righteous who walk before G-d. We do not sit, move and occupy ourselves when we are alone and at home in the same manner as we would do in the presence of a great king. And our talk with the members of our family and relatives would not be the same when in the presence of royalty. Therefore, when a person seriously considers that the great King Hakdosh Baruch Hu whose presence is fully in the entire world stands over you and sees what you do...immedi-

ately a person would be fearful and always be gripped with feelings of inadequacies in His presence.”

‘ He continues: “That passuk is a great rule in Torah, and at the level that the righteous who go before G-d achieve...” and now consider the description of what is implied and what is said by שוויית ה' לנגדי תמיד -

“...The way in which a man conducts himself, how he speaks, and what he does at home with the people of his house is far different than the way in which he is

going to conduct himself when he is in the presence a king... The way a man sits and the way he moves and the things he does are different when he is alone in his house such as his sitting and moving and involvements before a great king - you conduct yourself in a completely different way. He can speak nor open his mouth wide as he chooses when he is with the people of his house and those who are close to him. It is not the same when one is in the presence of a king.

“All the same, when a man is going to concentrate on the fact that The Great King, The Holy One, Blessed is He whose honor and dignity fills the whole world, that he is standing over him and watching what he is doing, as it says, ‘Can a man hide himself any

place and I don’t see him’? When a person ponders and thinks about that -‘I place G-d before me always,’ immediately, what will come upon him is fear and humility and a terror that he will be embarrassed before Him constantly.”

Consider this: How is this person supposed to see himself on Rosh HaShanah?

Isn’t the entire theme of Rosh HaShanah about מלכויות, Kingship. This is the day when we crown G-d as King of the world.

How does G-d become a crowned

king? Because on that day man was created. The wise men tell us, אין מלך בלא, עמ - There is no king without a people. It is on the Day of Creation, on Rosh HaShanah with the creation of man, that G-d becomes King. In fact, all of the Rosh haShanah tefillos are about מלכות שמים, the Heavenly kingdom (ה' מלך / מעשה אלוהינו / מלך עולמים).

Chassidim call the first night of Rosh HaShanah, ליל ההכתרה - the Night of The Coronation.

Having said this, the whole mood of Rosh HaShanah is then שוויית ה' לנגדי תמיד as RaMBaM suggests is his Moreh Nevuchim and as quoted by RaM”a.

I see myself standing before המלך הגדול - The Great King. That’s what Rosh ha-

...you are supposed to wake up the morning, not to have the morning wake up you.

Shanah is all about.

Interestingly enough, the very last comment of RaMa at the end of Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim is **טוב לב משתה תמיד**. - For a person whose heart is good, life is always a party.

Do you know what RaMa is doing here? He is balancing out the fearful **תמיד** at the beginning of Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim with the **תמיד** at the end of Orach Chaim.

Life, ReMa teaches us, is supposed to be a happy experience. Torah never called upon a person to walk around on the face of this earth in a constant state of fear and depression. We are supposed to be happy with the real road to happiness between the first **תמיד** at the beginning of Orach Chaim and its halachos until **טוב לב משתה תמיד** the attitude of happiness at the end of Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim.

Something else is apparent. Even more than **שוויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד**, which presents for us the picture of The Great King who is standing before us on Rosh HaShanah, how do we know that Rosh HaShanah is **יום הדין**, the day on which G-d judges the Jewish People? It doesn't say so in Torah. All we know from the Torah about Rosh HaShanah is that it is the first day of the seventh month, which is the month of Tishrei and we also know that it is **יום תרועה** - a day of sounding the Shofar. How do we come to know it is **יום הדין**?

Among all the fascinating things the

Gemara says is: "Do you know how we know that Rosh HaShanah is **יום הדין**? We learn this from G-d's relationship to **ארץ ישראל**. Look carefully at this pasuk. Moshe is describing **ארץ ישראל** to the Jewish People and he says,

אֶרֶץ אֲשֶׁר ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ דִּרְשׁ אֹתָהּ תָּמִיד עֵינֵי ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ בָּהּ מִרְשִׁית הַשָּׁנָה וְעַד אַחֲרִית שָׁנָה. (דברים פרק י"א פסוק י"ב)

"[It is] A land with which G-d is involved in constantly; the eyes of G-d are on it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year." (Devarim 11:12)

The Gemara explains **מראשית השנה** "From the beginning of the year judgement comes forth," and for what will be throughout the whole year until the end of the year.

G-d is intimately involved with every human being on the face of this earth and with all of the nations in the world. We learn this from the way G-d relates to **ארץ ישראל** - constantly. This is an enthralling pasuk. **שוויתי ה' לנגדי תמיד**. - When is that **תמיד**? It is the **תמיד** we learn of Rosh HaShanah.

The Gemara continues: Look carefully how **מִרְשִׁית** is spelled here. There is an 'א' missing in the word. Now, If you take the remaining letters and rearrange them do you know what they are? **תשרי**.

From the beginning of the year in Tishrei, judgment takes place; but what will happen at the end of the year? So, therefore, I think that I am not at

AN ACRONYM OF TESHUVA

all far off-base when I say the second passuk of the acronym of Reb Zisha of Anipoli, - שוויי' ה' לנגדי תמיד - is also a description of what takes place on Rosh HaShanah. It is a description of how we are supposed to see G-d in the world, it is a description of that G-d who is going to judge us on that day, from that passuk, from Tishrei, from the beginning of the year until the end of the year.

It is pretty clear, I

feel, that שוויי' ה' לנגדי תמיד is indeed the whole attitude and atmosphere, the entire perspective of Rosh HaShanah. Just as תמים תהיה עם , the first passuk of the acronym describing the relationship we are supposed to develop with G-d during the month of Elul, then,

the second passuk, שוויי' ה' לנגדי תמיד is the essential captivating message of Rosh haShanah.

Kesivah va-chasimah tovah to all.

***The Chasidim call
the night of
Rosh HaShanah,
ליל ההכתרה -
the Night of The
Coronation.***

ברזכים הבאים

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"VOICES"

BY RABBI ELAZAR R. MUSKIN

MARA D'ATRA, YOUNG ISRAEL OF CENTURY CITY



DURING THE PAST months, terror, trauma, tragedy, and evil triumphant filled the air. In addition, Israel and Jews worldwide were subjected to the vilest outburst of anti-Semitism since the 1940's.

After experiencing such violent explosions, where can we find a glimmer of hope for the year ahead?

Perhaps an answer can be found in the laws for sounding the Shofar, the primary symbol of the New Year festival.

The Talmud in Rosh Hashanah 27b states: "If one places a Shofar within a Shofar and blows, if the inner one is heard, he fulfills the Mitzvah, but if the outer one, he does not."

How should we understand this law? Is it simply a legal concept, or does it hold a moral lesson as well?

In today's climate, besieged by the voices of chaos, war, and hatred,

transmitted to us by a biased media and amplified by social media, it is difficult to imagine that there can even be a soft inner voice of morality, honesty, and justice.

The past chief rabbi of Israel, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau, a survivor from Buchenwald, was 8 years old when the camp was liberated. He maintains friendships with many survivors. One, a very wealthy man, is also the thinnest man the rabbi has ever seen.

On one occasion his friend invited the rabbi to a delicious dinner, but the friend barely ate. He only nibbled at the food. Worrying that his friend might be ill, the rabbi finally asked why he wasn't eating. The man replied, "Every time I sit down to a beautiful meal, I hear a voice in my head. It is my twelve-year-old daughter who died of starvation in Auschwitz. She comes to me and asks three words in Yiddish: "Father, please, bread." In Auschwitz I couldn't give her that bread, and now

VOICES

when I want to eat, I hear the sound of her voice and I can't eat."

We all hear voices. One comes from the harsh, cruel outside world. It is strong and powerful; it blasts our ears; it seems to conquer us. But then we hear a second voice, a quiet voice, an inner voice, urging us to have courage, to support our people, to stand by Israel, to obliterate terror.

The Talmud, in discussing the Shofar, also makes another profound and telling observation. It states the principle, "That two voices cannot be heard simultaneously." But then the Talmud includes an exception: "If it is beloved and dear, one concentrates and hears."

We are constantly subjected to two voices that compete for our attention. Which sounds shall we hear—the loud clamor of the evil doers, the terrorists, and their supporters? Or the still small voice of the heroes—the front-line health providers and the rescue workers at a suicide bombing?

At first you might think that the loud voice will win, and the soft voice will definitely lose. The loud voice seems so powerful. It seems to conquer all. But if the soft voice is the voice of G-d, if it is beloved, it will be heard and ultimately will be victorious.

Simon Wiesenthal relates that when he was imprisoned in concentration camp, he once saw a fellow inmate risk his life to smuggle a Siddur into the camp. At first, Wiesenthal admired this man. But then, the next day, to his horror, he saw that man rent out the Siddur in exchange for pieces of bread.

Wiesenthal recounts, "I was angry with this Jew. How could he take a holy Siddur and use it to take a person's last piece of bread." From that moment on, he vowed never to pray again.

After the liberation, he explained his lack of faith to Rabbi Eliezer Silver, the famous US Army Chaplain, who had come to comfort survivors. In response, Rabbi Silver said, "Why do you look at the Jew who rented out his Siddur? Why don't you look at the dozens who gave up their bread in order to use a Siddur? That's faith! That's the true power of the Siddur."

Wiesenthal concluded, "When he said that I walked together with him to pray."

Which voice are we going to hear? The laws of the Shofar are there to guide us, to tell us if we listen to the inner voice of our conscience, we will find the right path for the coming year.

RABBI ELAZAR MUSKIN IS SENIOR RABBI OF YOUNG ISRAEL OF CENTURY CITY IN LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

Which sounds shall we hear?



ROSH HASHANAH: FRIENDSHIP DAY



RABBI YOSEF WEINSTOCK

MARA D'ATRA, YOUNG ISRAEL OF HOLLYWOOD- FT. LAUDERDALE, FL

THERE are many things that I envy about my children: their carefree existence, their insatiable curiosity; their innocence. The fact that they laugh every day; and that they get tucked in by their mother with a song and a kiss every night. I also envy the role that friends play in their lives. Children make friends so easily. My family will be at the park for only a few minutes and my children have already made new friends whom they play with as if they've known each other forever.

It is not so easy for adults to make and keep friends. Friendship requires a serious investment. It requires selflessness. You must decide that someone else is important enough to take attention and time away from your own schedule and needs. And even if a person is willing to make room for friendship in their life, one must then be willing to take a risk and deal with the vulnerabilities inherent within friendship – the possibility that a friend will hurt you, or the threat of losing that friend.

In an article entitled “Where Have All the Men Gone?” Mark Svenvold (professor of creative writing, Seton Hall University) argues that adult men have an especially hard time making and keeping friends. He brings many sociological studies that indicate male friendship has dropped off significantly in the past two decades, particularly among educated, successful men between the ages of 30 and 60. He identifies a number of problems that hinder male friendship. The first problem involves time constraints. For men, friendship consistently ranked behind marriage and parenthood as a legitimate claim on one's time. Add to this the fact that people are working many more hours than they once did so many men just don't have time for friends. A second problem is that the image of manhood that most men inherit puts a high value on independence and self-reliance, like the Lone Ranger or Dirty Harry.

Friendship is good for you. People with



ROSH HASHANAH: FRIENDSHIP DAY

poor social ties are at a greater risk of illness and premature death than those with good social connections. Studies have shown that friendship can protect a person from coronary disease and the onset of Alzheimer's. Friendship can also help a person bounce back more quickly from illness.

Friendship can also be good for your wallet. Even those who invest in friendships for the right reasons may find those relationships to be career enhancing and business – boosting. Some of the biggest deals are brokered between friends. For example, the friendship that began between Bill Gates and Warren Buffet over cherry cola and college football led to the greatest transfer of wealth – 31 billion dollars – to the Bill Gates Foundation.

It is therefore not surprising that in 1935, Congress proclaimed the first Sunday in August to be National Friendship Day. Since then, celebration of National Friendship Day has become an annual event. Several other countries have adopted the tradition of dedicating a day to friends. (In America it seems to only be celebrated by Hallmark in order to sell Friendship Day cards. Friendship Day is enthusiastically celebrated in several countries across the world. In 1997,

the United Nations named Winnie the Pooh as the world's Ambassador of Friendship.

Judaism may not have famous ambassadors on par with Winnie the Pooh. But we do have our own Day of Friendship : only it's not at the beginning of August, it's Rosh Hashanah. Yom Teruah.

Rosh Hashanah is a Day of Friendship with Hashem.

The Torah calls today Yom Teruah. The term teruah is ambiguous. Onkelos translates the term as yevava, a crying sound. But even the sound

of the teruah is up for debate: is it (a) shevarim, (b) is it a teruah, (c) is it all of the above a shevarim-teruah combined?

Two more meanings of the word teruah emerge from a piyyut, a poem that we read Rosh haShanah morning. In Chazarat Hashatz of Shacharit, right before “Zochreinu L'Chayim” we say:

“We shall appear in judgment with the sound of the teruah,

Causing the earth and its inhabitants to tremble

Teruah can mean to tremble, which may be a reference to the quality of the sound, or more broadly to the mood and approach to the entire holiday.

But the piyyut continues:

“In the company of friends, I will enjoy His friendship.”

Teruah is related to the root rei’ut-friendship. This is the meaning of the word in Parshat Balak (Bemidbar 23:21).

Rashi explains there that Bilam was blessing the Jewish people that they should experience G-d’s love and friendship.

So in addition to Rosh Hashanah being a Day of Judgement and a Day of Shofar Blowing it is also a Day of Friendship.

Rav J.B. Soloveitchik z.l. (1903-1993) understood this line as teaching us that Rosh Hashanah is a Day of Friendship with Hashem. There are many things that friendship can teach us about how to relate to G-d. For example, the ahavat Hashem/ yirat Hashem dichotomy can be understood in terms of the investment and vulnerability necessary in all friendships. Love and Fear are not just a continuum but are two factors simultaneously in play. Ahavat Hashem is expressed by making room for G-d in our lives. At the same time yirat Hashem may be expressed in the fear of damaging or losing that relationship with the Divine.

But Rosh Hashanah is not only a day to explore our friendship with G-d but with our fellow human beings as well. Today is the Anniversary of the creation

of Man. According to the Talmud, Eve was also created on Rosh Hashanah. That means that today is the anniversary of G-d’s declaration “Lo tov heyot Adam l’vado” On this date in history G-d stated, as fact, that humans are not meant to live a lonely existence; rather, we must seek out friendship relationships.

Friendship is not only good for our physical well-being but for our souls as well. On Rosh Hashanah, the creation of the world was completed. King David writes in Psalms “Olam chessed yibaneh”. G-d predicated the existence of the world on chessed, kindness. Rav Eliyahu Dessler (1892 – 1953) explains that the essence of chessed is to exercise one’s koach hanetinah, The Power of Giving. We are supposed to emulate this Divine trait. One way of doing so is making friendship a priority. What are the action steps necessary to attain this goal?

The key to friendship on this Yom Teruah is in the old adage: Think Global, Act Local.

We must commit ourselves to a culture of caring. As Elie Weisel wrote: What does it mean to be a congregation? It means to care about each other. Pray? We can pray at home. We come together as a congregation in order to share in each other’s lives and in order to share in the life of the Jewish people’s past, present, and future.

Once, the Gerer Rebbe asked one of

ROSH HASHANAH: FRIENDSHIP DAY

his chassidim: “How is Moshe Yaakov doing?” The disciple didn’t know. “What!” shouted the Rebbe. “You don’t know? You pray under the same roof? You study the same book? You serve the same G-d? You dare tell me that you don’t know how Moshe Yaakov is, whether he needs help or advice or comforting? How can that be?” On Rosh Hashanah, G-d forgets nobody during His judgment of the world. Each person is remembered and given attention. On this Day of Friendship we must resolve to do no less.

Once the commitment is there in our worldview, we must act local- by appreciating the impact of everyday, small, seemingly ordinary acts of friendship.

Simple acts of friendship can have a profound impact, both on the ben-

eficiary of the act, but perhaps even more so on the person doing the act. Ralph Waldo Emerson had it right when he said,

“It is one of the great compensations of life,

that no man can help another without also helping himself.”

A smile. Being the first to say “Good morning”. Letting someone tell you a joke that you have heard

before. Helping a stranger in some small way. Asking “How are you?” and really meaning it. One-Minute Mitzvot, as I’ve heard them called. Yet their impact extends far beyond the time and effort invested in them.

On this Yom Teruah let us value friendship in our lives and resolve to make it more of a priority – with man and Hashem. Happy Friendship Day.

***On Rosh Hashanah,
G-d forgets nobody
during His judgment
of the world.
Each person is
remembered and
given attention.***



THIRTEEN DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

RABBI CHAM WASSERMAN

RABBI EMERITUS, YOUNG ISRAEL OF PASSAIC-CLIFTON;

EDITOR, THE RABBI'S LETTER, YOUNG ISRAEL COUNCIL OF RABBIS



THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE season of the Yamim Noraim, our Days of Awe, we focus our distinct prayerful attention on three dramatic tefillot which are repeatedly incorporated within the Yom Kippur machzor. These are: Avinu Malkeinu, Vidui, and a passage from Shemot 34 which has come to be known as יג מידות (Yud Gimel Midot, henceforth YGM), the Thirteen Attributes [of Hashem] signifying the manner by which Hashem's ongoing relationship with the humankind and the entire world can be realized.

Avinu Malkeinu is a much-expanded version of a prayer originally uttered by Rabbi Akivah (Ta'anit 25b)

Vidui, the confessional supplication, can best be appreciated by recalling RaM-BaM's opening formulation to his Hilchot Teshuvah: "If a person transgresses any of the mitzvot – when he repents...he must confess (verbally) before G-d. This verbal confession is a positive mitzvah of Torah." (BeMidbar 5:6-7)

As for the recitation of the Yud Gimel Midot, on Yom Kippur these are repeatedly invoked over-and-again throughout the entire day in all of the five tefillot with a chazzan leading the minyan (Maariv, Shacharit, Musaf, Minchah, Ne'ilah). As for the number of times in each tefillah the number could vary depending on the nuach of the community.

It is especially noteworthy that Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveichik z.l. established the practice in his minyan to recite YGM seven times in every one of these tefillot even though some standard Yom Kippur machzorim may have a lesser count. Some, for instance, omit Selichot entirely in Minchah, but for The Rav (and others) Yom Kippur was the day of invoking the Yud-Gimel Midot – all day.

In these shared lines the focus will be exclusively on the YGM.



ABOUT THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF YOUNG ISRAEL

Since its establishment in 1912, the National Council of Young Israel has been deeply committed to supporting its branch synagogues and members, and dedicated to enhancing the vibrancy of Orthodoxy and Religious Zionism and supporting the State of Israel.

With a renewed focus on enhancing synagogue services and further strengthening the relationship between the national organization and the branches, as well as Israel branches, through greater cooperation and communication, the National Council of Young Israel offers an array of services to its members, including:

- **PRESIDENT'S BRIEFINGS**, which contain helpful information, programming suggestions and responses to questions received, are emailed weekly.
- **"4 MINUTES OF TORAH,"** a recent series that enables Young Israel rabbis from throughout the United States to disseminate words of Torah in the form of brief 4-minute videos, which are shared with thousands of Young Israel members each week.
- **"PARSHA NATION,"** which includes questions, answers, and games for youth programming purposes to ensure that younger children can simultaneously learn and have an enjoyable time on Shabbat morning, is shared with youth directors and others each week.
- **REGULAR CALLS WITH RABBI MORDECHAI WILLIG, SHLIT" A** the longtime spiritual leader of the Young Israel of Riverdale, which provide a unique forum wherein pulpit rabbis from across the United States can discuss and share best practices.

- **WEEKLY DIVREI TORAH**, which feature insights on the parshah from leading synagogue rabbis and prominent Torah scholars from throughout North America and Israel, are shared with its branch synagogues each week.
- **THE DIVISION OF RABBINIC SERVICES** provides invaluable assistance to synagogues with rabbinic searches and rabbinic contracts; rabbinic development and over twenty years of Rabbinic Training Seminars, professional development and mentoring internship.
- **EXPANDED PROGRAMMING** for youth, teens, seniors, and singles, and enriched adult education opportunities for Young Israel members.
- **ADMINISTRATIVE AND OFFICE-RELATED SERVICES** to be offered at reduced rates, as well as joint purchasing of common supplies and equipment.

With a primary focus on working closely with its branches to foster greater camaraderie and collaboration between the synagogues and the national organization, and an emphasis on building teamwork throughout the Young Israel movement, the National Council of Young Israel is a resource for its branches, and we encourage you to partner with us to take advantage of the services that we offer.

For further information or questions about National Council of Young Israel please contact office@youngisrael.org.

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OWEN RUMELT AND BETTY-ATLAS
RUMELT AND FAMILY
SIMONE RUDOFF SEMER AND MARK SEMER
SUSAN AND RABBI DAVID WARSHAW

THIRTEEN DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

A CHRONOLOGICAL TIME TABLE

(Eliezer Shulman, Seder haQorot baTanach, p.55-57; translated by Sarah Lederhendler, The Sequence of Events in the Old Testament, p.55. Israel Ministry of Defense Publishing House

There is a dramatic chronology recorded in Shemot that ultimately resulted in G-d imparting these YGM to Moshe.

40 DAYS after finally being freed from centuries of Egyptian servitude as the nation is camped around Mt Sinai (Shemot 19) Moshe Rabbeinu is summoned three times to ascend Mt. Sinai where he remained each time for forty days and nights - without food or water (Devarim 9:9 and 9:18).

[1] First 40-day ascent (7 Sivan – 17 Tammuz) The revelation of the Ten Commandments occurs here. When G-d was finished speaking to Moshe, He gave Moshe two stone tablets inscribed with the words of the Ten Commandments. Moshe descends from the mountain and as he approaches the camp he sees what was occurring around a golden calf. In a fit of justifiable anger, he hurled the two stone tablets to the ground smashing them at the foot of the mountain. (Shemot 24:18; 32:19)

[2] Second 40-day ascent (18 Tammuz – 29 Av) Upon descending, again after 40 days, Moshe proclaims to the nation: “You have committed a grave

sin. G-d’s presence (shechinah) will not be with the Jews as was in the past.” Moshe then moves his own tent of dwelling away from the camp. From there he pleads with G-d that His glorious presence return as in the past. G-d agrees. (Shemot 34:13-23).

Now Moshe is instructed to fashion two second stone tablets and with them to ascend Har Sinai the next morning. He informs the people: “Yet, I will now ascend to Hashem [once again], perhaps, I will be able to attain forgiveness for your sin.” [Shemot 32:30; Devarim 9:18; Shemot 34: 1-2,4]

[3] Third 40-day ascent (30 Av/Rosh Chodesh Elul – 10 Tishrei) On Rosh Chodesh Elul Moshe ascends Har Sinai once again, prostrates himself before Hashem and for forty days and nights “entreated G-d to grant Israel forgiveness for the sin of the Golden Calf”. G-d’s forgiveness was then manifest through the introduction of His YGM to Moshe.

These, Hashem tells Moshe, are an irrevocable covenant between Hashem and His chosen people, a statement of how Hashem relates mercifully in the world.

Moshe returns to the camp on 10 Tishrei which henceforth would become the sanctified annual day of Yom Kippur. (Chassidim call Yom Kippur “Yom haKadosh”) When reciting the YGM on Yom Kippur how appropriate it would be to recall the chronology of this

compelling original occurrence.

THE BIG QUESTION: IDENTIFYING THE THIRTEEN

ויעבר ה' על פניו ויקרא ה' / ה' / א-ל / רחום /
 וחנן / ארך-אפים / ורב-חסד / ואמת / נוצר-חסד-
 לאלפים / נשא-עון / ופשע / וחטאה / ונקה / ...

(Shemot 34:6-7 according to Tosafot Rosh ha-Shanah 17b)

How these attributes were communicated to Moshe is related in an enthralling segment of Gemara (Rosh haShanah 17b) where we learn

that [the voice of] Hashem passed over him (Moshe) and called out... the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy. “Rabbi Yochanan taught: Were the following not expressly stated in a passuk we would not have been able to say that HaKadosh Baruch Hu appeared to Moshe as if wrapped in a tallit, as a chazzan, and demonstrated to him, as it were, the procedure of how these Attributes should be recited”.

A description of this scene was understood to mean that this is the manner by which this prophetic vision was perceived by Moshe. (RaMBaM Moreh Nevochim I:21 and others)

The count of thirteen is an undisputed

tradition of chazal (much like 613 being the unquestionable count of Torah’s mitzvot). But which exactly are the Thirteen Attributes as recorded in the Torah is a dispute throughout the ages.

Steinzaltz in his original edition of Rosh haShanah 17b presents a chart where

nine different versions of the count of thirteen are identified by some fifteen halachic authorities and commentators. And there are still others who deal with the matter in

a very wide array of halachic literature. (See also Kasher, Torah Shleimah, Ki Tisa endnotes, pp. 124-125; RaMBaM Moreh Nevochim 1:54)

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING:

Does the first “Hashem” revert back to the word preceding it, “vayiqra Hashem” (ויקרא השם) teaching us that it was Hashem Himself who called out what the thirteen Attributes were, and in this way instructed Moshe as to what they are? Or, together, are both “Hashems” distinctly two different depictions of these Attributes?

RaSHI (1240-1105) in his Chumash commentary quotes the opinion ex-

HaKadosh Baruch Hu appeared to Moshe as if wrapped in a tallit, as a chazzan, and demonstrated to him the procedure of how these Attributes should be recited

THIRTEEN DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

pressed in Gemara (Rosh haShanah 17b) that the first Hashem refers to G-d's mercy shown a person prior to him/her sinning while the second is Divine mercy following the sin.

Rabbeinu Asher (Rosh) (c. 1250-1327) asks "Why is it necessary for Hashem to show mercy before a person does anything wrong? He explains that Hashem knows that a person is going to sin, He nevertheless treats that person with mercy."

RaMBaM (1138-1204) explains that this Hashem recited twice is similar to a repeated biblical style as we see with "Avraham Avraham" (Bereishit 22:11) and "Moshe Moshe" (Shemot 3:4)

The Vilna Gaon (1720-1797) suggests that neither of the "Hashems" are part of the YGM; according to his count, the first Attribute is "keil", right after the both names of Hashem.

Keil is an Attribute denoting G-d's absolute mercy. It was this Attribute uttered by Moshe, in the first prayer recorded in all of Torah, when he entreated G-d, to heal his sister Miriam from the Divine chastisement inflicted

on her for having berated her brother. (Bemidbar 12:13)

Limitations on the length of this essay do not allow for a description of the other YGM

elaborate poetic introductory pieces were composed to introduce each time the YGM are proclaimed. This, together with the YGM is what we call Selichot

RECITED REPEATEDLY ON YOM KIPPUR

Since the YGM were revealed to Moshe on the day that became the original Yom Kippur, the day when

G-d forgave His people for their depravity of fashioning the golden calf, it is entirely understandable, therefore, that our own seeking forgiveness from G-d is why we repeat the YGM many times throughout the day.

Throughout the ages beginning especially in Talmudic (220-500) and Geonic (609-1040) times and continuing into the Middle Ages, elaborate poetic introductory pieces were composed to introduce each time the YGM are proclaimed. This, together with the YGM is what we call Selichot.

Selichot are recited in every one of the five sections of tefillah throughout Yom Kippur. YGM are one major focus of Yom Kippur liturgy, (the Avodah of the Kohein Gadol recited in Musaf being another). Communities



THIRTEEN DIVINE ATTRIBUTES

throughout the ages adopted different poetic versions (nusach) for their society. There are thirteen known different communal versions of Selichot, with three, these days in Ashkenazic nusach (rite), being the dominant ones – Lita, Poland, and the version in England, France and Germany. (see Daniel Goldschmidt, Machzor le-Yom Kippur p.13)

YGM AT OTHER TIMES

While originally intended for Yom Kippur, the YGM have been inserted throughout davening on several other

occasions: fast days; daily weekdays before Tachanun (nusach Sephard and, in Israel nusach Ashkenaz also); when removing the sefer Torah from the Aron haKodesh on a weekday yom tov (although there are some places where it is recited on Shabbat also).

A CONCLUDING SUGGESTION

With the Days of Awe upon us you may want to devote some time to learn TB Rosh haShanah 16 – 18 and, with commentaries of your choice, YGM in She-mot 34.

Young Israel **ישראל הצעיר** *in Israel*

Our Young Israel office in Israel is excited to announce that we are renewing its position as the active Young Israel presence in Israel. Our focus in our office is on Torah and programming. We currently run four different programs: Judaic Heritage Program for Deaf, Get-Refusal Prevention Project, Mental Health Programs, and Support for the IDF. If you need anything while in Israel, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. We would like to wish you and your family a Shana Tova U'metukah.



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SUKKOT AND THE PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS

RABBI DORON PEREZ

EXECUTIVE CHAIRMAN, WORLD MIZRACHI



ONE OF THE remarkable ironies of life is this - the more one pursues happiness, the more one is destined never to find it.

This is a central theme in culture critic Ruth Whippman's book, *America The Anxious-How Pursuit of happiness is creating a nation of nervous wrecks*.¹ She quotes a study of Psychologists from the University of California, Berkeley who show that paradoxically the more people valued and were encouraged to value happiness as a separate life goal, the less happy they were.

Why is this the case? Why is the quest for happiness for the very sign that we won't find it? The answer is that happiness is not something we find when we search for it but a by-product of living life in the correct way. What emerges clearly is that happiness is not a transient emotion or a destination to be pursued but rather a state of being. The more one lives in sync with one's

core values the more happiness finds us. The moment we detach ourselves from living life and begin to search for happiness as an end in and of itself, the more it evades us. Happiness is a natural result of living life the way it should be lived - of being the people we ought to be. Happiness cannot be a destination but is rather a result of the journey of an inspired life process.

It is this very state of being, says Rav Shimshon Rafael Hirsch that we ultimately hope to be blessed with on Sukkot.² After all, only this holiday is defined in our prayers as "Zman Simchateinu"-the time of our happiness.³ Additionally, it is the only holiday where we find the unusual expression of Simcha- **והיית אך שמח** "You should be only happy" implying a type of complete or ultimate happiness.

What is the meaning of this phrase? Rav Hirsch explains that it refers to a state of being, a mindset that we hope to achieve having been celebrating in



G-d's presence in the Temple precinct for the entire seven days.

Happiness can be transformed into character trait, a permanent quality that accompanies us throughout our lives. It is this state of being that we hope to take with us into long, rainy winter months. Indeed it can only be this mindset that will successfully see us through the "winter periods" of life, the difficult and dark times.

Perhaps this explains why Israel is continually rated amongst the happiest countries in world. At least according to the UN World Happiness Report conducted annually over the last 10 years ranking 160 countries by how happy their citizens perceive themselves to be, according to six variables: GDP per capita, social support, life expectancy, freedom from corruption and generosity. Israel is consistently in the top 15.

What is striking about these findings is that Israel ranks ahead of dozens of countries who don't face the ongoing challenges of aggressive bordering Terror States, the threat of nuclear extinction by Iran, ongoing Palestinian terror attacks and the need for mandatory military draft. Incredibly, despite these unique threats in one of the toughest regions in the world, Israel scores high very time.

How can this be explained? It seems to me that living in Israel despite all the challenges comes with the great

sense of being Jewish. Israel is the only country that G-d promised to the Jewish people and no other nation has so long and deep a connection to a land like the Jewish people and no other nation has so long and deep a connection to Eretz Yisrael. Is it somehow linked to the essence of Jewish life. Journeying to our Land like Abraham, walking the same streets as Samuel and fighting like King David to defend the same country gives those living in Israel a unique sense of connection to Jewish destiny. A spiritual synchronicity, a type of X-factor plugging one into a deep state of alignment with Jewish destiny and hence a state of happiness.

Sukkot, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are unique opportunities to tap in the sense of simcha. To celebrate Jewish life, the mitzvot of the day and to stand in the presence of G-d. When we are living in synch with our deepest values, we merit the resultant happiness as a state of being. We hope and pray that it accompanies us throughout our lives. The butterfly will sit constantly on our shoulders.



1 St. Martin's Press 2016

2 Rav Hirsch's commentary in Deuteronomy 16:15

3 Of the three times in Torah that Simcha (joy) is mentioned in connection with a holiday, two are about Sukkot

THE MITZVAH OF DALET MINIM

RABBI SHAY SCHACHTER

ROSH BAIS MEDRASH, YOUNG ISRAEL OF WOODMERE



THE MEANING OF THE DALET MINIM

One of the beloved mitzvot of the month of Tishrei season is that of the Dalet minim, the four species that the Torah commanded us to take on Sukkos. The Dalet minim, are a sign of thanksgiving to Hashem as well as a symbol in the teshuva process. At the time of our happiness we are commanded to take the Dalet minim, whose beauty naturally inspires joy, to attribute that happiness to Hashem. On the other hand, the lulav resembles a spear that we have emerged victorious in battle against the claims of the prosecutors on Yom Kippur. Lastly, the variety in the Dalet minim, some having taste and smell while others have neither, epitomizes the unity of the Jewish nation.

WOMEN

Women are exempt from taking the Dalet minim because it is a time-bound positive mitzvah. Ashkenazic women are permitted and encouraged to perform the mitzvah with a

bracha.

Although some say that women shouldn't do the shaking of the lulav in the six directions, most poskim disagree and hold that woman may and should shake the lulav in all of the directions.

CHILDREN

The obligation for training (chinuch) children begins at the age when they can shake the lulav on their own. When a child reaches that age, his father has an obligation to buy him a kosher set of Dalet minim that will be his own.

This year the first day falls out on Shabbos and so technically it isn't necessary to buy a child his own since it is possible to give his set to the child after fulfilling his obligation on the second day. Nonetheless, ideally the father should buy one for his child so that he could shake it during the hallel when the congregation is reciting it.

One who follows the minhag to just let the child one's child borrow his lulav has what to rely upon.



THE MITZVAH OF DALET MINIM

HOW TO ARRANGE THE DALET MINIM

ARRANGEMENT

The minhag is to place the hadasim to the right of the lulav and the aravos to the left. This is also true for a lefty.

The hadasim should be tied so that the hadasim are higher than the aravot.

The spine of the lulav should be facing towards the person shaking it.

TYING THE MINIM

There is a mitzvah to tie up the Dalet minim together. The minhag is to use the woven holder (keishikel) made of lulav leaves that has holes for the three minim, in addition to the three ties.

If one forgot to tie the three minim before Yom Tov it is permitted to bind them with a pre-made lulav ring. However, it is forbidden to tie a lulav ring on Yom Tov.

If one doesn't have any pre-made lulav rings or the woven holder one should wrap them up with a string and tuck in the end of the string at the end.

HOLDING THE DALET MINIM

The lulav, hadasim, and aravos are bound up and held in the right hand, while the Esrog is not tied together and held in the left hand.

A lefty should switch and hold the lulav in his left hand and esrog in his right.

Based on Kabbalah it is proper to hold the Dalet minim touching one another with one's two hands together.

A person should make sure that he is holding the Dalet minim directly without anything in between his hands and the Dalet minim. Therefore, it is important to remove one's ring before shaking the lulav. One can leave on a bandage that can't be removed.

HOW TO TAKE THE LULAV AND RECITE THE BRACHA

SEIZE THE MOMENT: GET THE BRACHA IN BEFORE THE MITZVAH

On the first day of Sukkos prior to shaking the lulav, we recite the bracha of the lulav and add shehechyanu. On the remaining days we don't say shehechyanu unless the first day was Shabbos like this year, in which case we would say it on the second day.

Since we are supposed to make the bracha before doing the mitzva (over liasiyatan) and since we fulfill the mitzva of Dalet minim by simply lifting them together, it is preferable to follow one of these methods:

The minhag is to take the lulav in one's right hand, and esrog in one's left hand while the esrog is upside down. After reciting the bracha, one should flip the esrog and shake all four together.

Alternatively, one could take the lulav, hadasim, and aravot in one's right hand, leave the esrog on the table out of the box. After reciting the bracha, one would lift the esrog and shake all four together.

Take the lulav and esrog in their upright positions and have in mind not to fulfill the mitzvah until one



THE MITZVAH OF DALET MINIM

made the bracha.

After the fact if one took all four species before making the bracha, one may still make the bracha as long as one didn't shake it yet.

SHAKING THE LULAV

Ideally, the bracha and mitzvah of holding and shaking the lulav should be done while standing.

Ashkenazim shake the lulav in the order of east, south, west, north, up, and then down. Face forward and shake clockwise. One does not have to turn one's body to face that direction.

Chasidim and those of Chasidic descent follow the order of the Arizal to shake in the order of south, north, east, up, down, west.

If in the same shul there is a mix of minhagim, many poskim recommend that everyone follow the minhag of the shul to avoid lo titG-dedu, not deviating from a communal practice. Some poskim aren't as concerned for lo titG-dedu in this scenario.

One should refrain from shaking while mentioning the name of Hashem lest he become distracted while saying His name.

BENCHING LULAV IN THE SUKKAH

Based on Kabbalah, some have the

minhag to shake the lulav with the bracha in the sukkah before going to shul.¹ Others prefer that the bracha be made right before the hallel so that there isn't an interruption between the bracha and the shaking the lulav in the hallel, one of the primary mitzvot of the lulav.² Alternatively, some argue that based on the principle of tadir kodem, giving precedence to the common mitzvah, one must daven Shacharit before shaking the lulav.³ Therefore, many do not shake the lulav in the sukkah.⁴ In some communities they try to accommodate both concerns and take a break before hallel for people to shake the lulav in the sukkah and return.

ACQUIRING AND DISCARDING THE DALET MINIM

BORROWING THE DALET MINIM

As Rabbi Dr. Aaron Glatt noted in order to ensure safety this year, anytime one must borrow a lulav and esrog from someone outside their family unit they should wash their hands before and after shaking the lulav and esrog.

One may borrow a lulav and esrog without asking permission. Since it is a mitzvah and the risk of damage is low, we can assume that the owner would allow it. However, if one knows that the owner is meticulous about his, or circumstances dictate that he

1 Mishna Brurah 652:4. This was the practice of Rav Chaim Volozhin (Keter Rosh 109) and Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichot Shlomo ch. 11 fnt. 73).

2 Nefesh Harav p. 217, Rav Tzvi Pesach Frank in Mikraei Kodesh 2:16

3 Igrot Moshe OC 4:99. Teshuvot Vehanagot 5:216 notes that this was the practice of the Rav Velve Soloveitchik.

4 Rav Soloveitchik's practice (oral report from Rav Hershel Schachter)



probably is such as if it is meticulously wrapped or put away in a private locker, one should not use it without permission. This refers to the later days of Sukkos. However, on the first two days one does not fulfill his obligation with a borrowed lulav, even if it is with permission.⁵

One can “borrow” a lulav to fulfill the mitzvah on the first two days if the person gives it as a gift on condition that it be returned. Even if the lender specifies that it should be a gift, it can be

assumed that it was given with the intention that it is a gift so that the borrower can fulfill the mitzvah.⁶

DISCARDING THE DALET MINIM

The Dalet minim don’t retain their holiness after Sukkos and can be thrown out within a separate bag or a clean gDaletge, but it still should not be treated disrespectfully by being thrown into the gDaletge with everything else.⁷ Some have the minhag to save the lulav to burn it with the chametz before Pesach.⁸

The Dalet minim, are a sign of thanksgiving to Hashem as well as a symbol in the teshuva process.

IS IT BETTER TO CHECK ONESELF FOR QUALITY DALET MINIM OR BUY THE PRE-INSPECTED ONES?

While it is praiseworthy to learn the laws of the Dalet minim and pick them out oneself to ensure that they are top quality and look nice, it is perfectly acceptable to buy a package of hada-

sim or any of the Dalet minim that were already inspected by rabbinic authorities. On the one hand, selecting the Dalet minim oneself enables more personal

involvement and inspires learning the halachos. Additionally, certain aspects of the beauty of the Dalet minim depends on personal preferences. However, due to the intricacies of the laws it is preferable to rely on the pre-inspected and get a more preferable result.⁹ This year in particular for safety Rabbi Glatt is recommending buying a set that is pre-examined and not going to the Dalet minim stores.

LULAV

AUTHENTIC

One should buy a lulav with a hechsher in order to be sure that it came from

⁵ Rama 649:5, Shulchan Aruch 649:2, Halachos of Other People’s Money p. 67

⁶ Shulchan Aruch 658:3-5

⁷ Mishna Brurah 21:6-7

⁸ Rama 664:9

⁹ Rav Chaim Jachter (Parshat Ki Tavo Vol.13 Num. 2)

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a date palm tree and not a Canary palm.¹⁰

BENT LULAV

Ideally, one should have a completely straight lulav. If the spine of the lulav is bent it is still acceptable unless it is as bent as a sickle. One should avoid using a lulav where most of the top leaves are bent like a reed.¹¹

MIDDLE LEAF SPLIT

If most of the middle leaf is split the lulav is invalid.¹² It is preferable to get a lulav that is completely closed.¹³

LEAVES SEPARATED FROM SPINE

The lulav must have leaves that cover the spine.¹⁴ It is preferable to buy a lulav with leaves that are not separated from the spine. If the leaves are somewhat separated from the spine the lu-

lav is acceptable as long as the leaves are not drooping downwards.¹⁵

LENGTH

The lulav's spine must be at least 4 tefachim (14.2 inches).¹⁶

ESROG

QUALITIES

Ideal qualities to look for in an esrog include: bumpy, symmetrical, thick on bottom and thin on top¹⁷ and not spherical¹⁸ or cylindrical.¹⁹

Besides for the qualities that the poskim specified, the niceness of an esrog includes its subjective beauty.²⁰

HOLE

A hole of any size invalidates the esrog. Many poskim hold that it is not an issue if only a piece of the outermost

¹⁰ Rav Moshe Feinstein (Igrot Moshe O.C. 4:123) invalidates it, while Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (cited in Halichot Shlomo 10:9), allows it. Rav Hershel Schachter ("Halachos of Dalet Minim," min. 15) favors the former approach.

¹¹ Shulchan Aruch 645:8-9. Mishna Brurah 645:40

¹² Mishna Brurah 645:16. Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichot Shlomo 10:1) allows a double tiyomet, where there are two equally tallest leaves. The Maamar Mordechai 645:4 writes that one should not check the middle leaf too forcefully, as it may split in the process; if it does not look split upon glancing at it, it is valid.

¹³ Rama 645:3 writes that it is preferable to get a lulav that is completely closed. Mishna Brurah 645:16 cites the Gra that one doesn't need to be strict at all if only the minority of the middle leaf is split.

¹⁴ Shulchan Aruch 645:4. After the fact, see Beir Halacha 645:1 s.v. v'adayin Chazon Ish 146:21.

¹⁵ Rama 645:1, Mishna Brurah 645:3

¹⁶ Rama 650:1. The length of the etzbah is a great dispute: Rav Avraham Chaim Na'eh holds it is 0.8 inches, Rav Moshe Feinstein holds it is 0.9 inches, and the Chazon Ish holds it is 1 inch. Generally, Rav Hershel Schachter uses the measurements of Rav Moshe.

¹⁷ Tiferet Yisrael (Mishnayot Sukka 3:6)

¹⁸ Shulchan Aruch 648:18

¹⁹ Kaf Hachaim 648:113

²⁰ Rabbi Mordechai Willig, shlita (quoted by Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg "A Practical Guide to Purchasing Dalet Minim," min. 44-6) would ask his wife to pick the nicest-looking esrog from amongst the valid esrogim.



peel is removed, while some say that it is acceptable even if a piece of the thin yellow peel is removed.²¹

PITOM FELL OFF

If the pitom falls off or the stem on the bottom of the esrog is completely removed, the esrog is invalid on the first two days. If just the shoshanta, the flower-shaped protrusion off the stem on top, falls off it is better not to use it if one has another option.²² An esrog that grew without a pitom is perfectly kosher.²³ Starting Chol Hamoed if just the shoshanta or even the pitom fell off and the body of the esrog is intact it is valid unless a better option is available.²⁴

BLACK DOT

Some poskim invalidate an esrog that has black dots found on the part that

begins to slope towards the top (chotam), while others deem it valid.²⁵

GREEN

An esrog that is completely green is invalid. If, however, if it started to become yellow, it is valid.²⁶

SIZE

An esrog must be at least the size of an egg.²⁷

GRAFTED

It is important to buy an esrog that has a reliable hechsher to ensure that it is not grafted.²⁸

HADASIM

SIZE

One should use three hadasim for the mitzvah. Each hadas should be at least 3 tefachim (10.7 inches) in length.²⁹

21 Shulchan Aruch 648:2, Mishna Brurah 648:24 is lenient only if part of the outermost peel is removed. Chazon Ish 147:1 is lenient even if some of the thin yellow peel. The Rama is lenient if a hole was made while the esrog was growing but the flesh and peel subsequently grew over it.

22 Shulchan Aruch and 648:7-8, Mishna Brurah 648:31

23 Rama 648:7, Mishna Brurah 648:32

24 Mishna Brurah 648:30-1, 649:36

25 Shulchan Aruch 648:12 invalidates an esrog with a discoloration of any size on the chotam, the area of where the esrog begins to slope to the top. Therefore, Halachos of the Four Species (p. 22) writes that a black dot on the upper part of the esrog invalidates it. Rabbi Zvi Sobolofsky ("The Laws of the Dalet Minim," min 4-5), however, explained that most of the esrogim we have do not have any issue with discoloration; the little black dots are just specks of dirt. Similarly, Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg ("A Practical Guide to Purchasing Dalet Minim," min. 32-3) quotes Rav Hershel Schachter as saying that black dots invalidate the esrog only if they develop because of rotting, which is not usually the case

26 Shulchan Aruch 648:21. Rabbi Hershel Schachter, shlita ("The Halachos of the Dalet Minim," min. 33-5) cited the Mishkenot Yaakov's opinion that the esrog is invalid even if it started to yellow.

27 Shulchan Aruch 648:22

28 Rama (Responsa 226), Mishna Brurah 648:65

29 Shulchan Aruch 650:1, 651:1

THE MITZVAH OF DALET MINIM

THREE PER ROW

The hadas should have rows of three leaves (meshulashim) spanning the length of the branch. One can check whether the leaves are aligned with three in each row at arm's length. Even if they the leaves in a row aren't at the same exact same height it is acceptable.³⁰

LEAVES FELL OFF

If leaves fell off such that rows of three leaves cover only 1.6 tefachim (5.3 inches) of the branch, the hadas is acceptable.³¹ In an extenuating circumstance if only two leaves remain in each row for a majority of the hadas it is nonetheless kosher.³²

LEAVES DRIED

If the leaves become dry to the point where they easily wither away when one presses a fingernail to them and

they lose their green color, the hadas is invalid. If, however, three moist green leaves in a row at the top of the hadas remain, the hadas is still valid.³³

ARAVOS

LENGTH

One should use two aravos branches for the mitzvah. Each aravah should be at least 3 tefachim in length.⁵⁰

QUALITIES

The leaves of the aravah should preferably be long and narrow with smooth edges. If the edges of the leaves have small serrations, the aravah is nonetheless valid. If, however, the stem is white, the leaves are rounded, or the edges of the leaves have large serrations, the aravah is invalid.³⁴

LEAVES DRIED

If most of the leaves of an aravah dried out to the extent that they lost

30 The Gemara understands that the Torah's description of hadas demands that it have rows of three leaves (meshulashim). The Gemara Sukkah 32b considers a hadas with rows of two leaves and one leaf on top to be an abnormal hadas (hadas shoteh).

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach (Halichot Shlomo p. 198) rules that the determining factor for meshulashim is the location of the stems of the leaves. Additionally, he explains that a row of leaves is considered meshulash if the three stems are in proximity such that it would be possible to draw a horizontal circumference of the branch that would intersect with all three stems (see diagram above). Rav Yigal Ariel (Techumin 11:177) understands that it is enough if the leaves are roughly in rows of three and do not blatantly deviate from rows. Rav Chaim Jachter (Parshat Ki Tavo Vol.13 Num. 2) notes that the common practice of some gedolim was to analyze the hadas at arm's length to make this determination.

31 Shulchan Aruch 646:5 rules that one ideally should have the leaves be in rows of three for the entire length of the hadas; nevertheless, one fulfills his obligation if the leaves are in rows of three for the majority of the branch. Mishna Brurah 646:18 states that this majority refers to a majority of the minimum size of a hadas branch. Thus, since the hadas should be 12 etzba'ot, a majority would only require no more than 6 etzba'ot, even if the hadas is larger than its necessary 12 etzba'ot.

32 Mishna Brurah 646:18

33 Shulchan Aruch 646:7-8, Mishna Brurah 646:20-1

34 Shulchan Aruch 647:1, Mishna Brurah 647:2, Aruch Hashulchan 647:4



their green color, the aravah is invalid. If, however, the leaves only withered and did not completely dry out, the aravah may still be used.³⁵

LEAVES FELL OFF

If the majority of the leaves fall off the aravah within the 3 minimum tefachim it is invalid.³⁶

GREW NEAR WATER

Although most aravos grow by the water, an aravah is valid no matter where it grew. Some say that it is preferable to use aravos that grew by a river, whereas others say that there is no such preference.³⁷

CASE TO PONDER

In a certain out of town community, there was a family whose grandfather would visit every year and purchase the Dalet minim for each member of the family. The issue was that although the grandfather was observant, he was not familiar with the complexities of the halachos of the Dalet minim and bought them himself not through a shul. The question was whether the grandchildren were obligated to check the Dalet minim. If the grandchildren would be discovered

checking the Dalet minim and certainly if the Dalet minim were found to be invalid, a huge fight would erupt. Rav Dovid Cohen of Gvul Yavetz in Brooklyn answered that to avoid any familial discord it wasn't necessary considering that the majority of Dalet minim sold are kosher.³⁸

Halachipedia is focused on creating a useful, easy-to-read, and searchable encyclopedia of practical halacha in English. The content in this packet and on the website (www.halachipedia.com) is edited by Rabbi Ike Sultan, a student of Rav Hershel Schachter Shlit"a and Rav Mordechai Willig Shlit"a, both of whom have expressed support for the project. Rav Willig has graciously reviewed many of the articles printed through Halachipedia. With over 800 pages and 20,000 sources, the content continues to expand online at Halachipedia.com. If you have any questions, please email ask@halachipedia.com.

35 Shulchan Aruch 647:2, Mishna Brurah 647:7, Shaar Hatziyun 647:6

36 Shulchan Aruch 647:2, Mishna Brurah 647:9

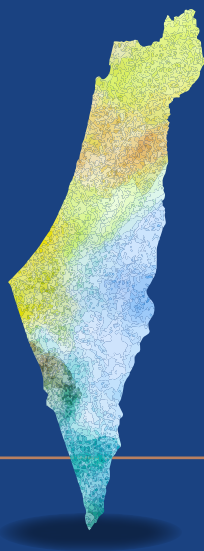
37 Shulchan Aruch 647:1, Mishna Brurah 647:3

38 Rabbi Chaim Jachter

MOSHE'S BRACHAH TO REUVEN; MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

RABBI ZEV GOLDBERG

MARA D'ATRA, YOUNG ISRAEL OF FT. LEE



SHEMINI ATZERET and Simchat Torah are joyous days for the Jewish People. It is a busy time, filled with beautiful davening, inspiring shiurim and joyous hakafot. As a result, it can be difficult to find the time to properly study the final parashahh in the Torah, V'zot HaBrachahh. The challenge is compounded by the fact that the text of the parashah is comprised almost entirely of Moshe's final blessings to the shevatim (tribes), which are complex, multilayered and often cryptic. It is unfortunate that we do not spend more time studying this parashah. Each passuk is a gem filled with meaningful insights and lessons to learn.

What follows is a short study of Moshe's brachah to Reuven, the first blessing he bestows upon the tribes.

At first glance, Moshe's brachah to Reuven is underwhelming. **יְהִי רְאוּבֵן וְאֵל יָמָת** "May Reuven live and

not die, and may his people be counted in the number (Devarim 33:6)." Did Moshe simply wish to convey that the tribe lives on? Did Moshe intend that the families of Reuven live for eternity and never die? What is the deeper significance of these words?

RaMBaN (1194-1270) explains that in order to understand the implication of Moshe's words we need to recall that Reuven has chosen to dwell on the eastern side of the Jordan river. As we know from parashat Matot, Moshe only agrees to this arrangement on the condition that the tribe of Reuven (and Gad) lead the battle to conquer the land of Israel. As such, the tribe of Reuven was in a precarious situation. They would be the first into battle and their lives would be at stake.

Moshe's blessing, **יְהִי רְאוּבֵן וְאֵל יָמָת**, "May Reuven live and not die", was in fact a heartfelt prayer on Moshe's part that Reuven be successful on the battle-

field. The second phrase in Moshe's brachah, "וְיִהְיֶה מִתְּיֹתֵינוּ מִסְפָּר", "and may his people be counted in the number," should be understood in this context as well. Moshe was praying that the number of soldiers from Reuven that set out for battle should be the same number that safely return from battle.

In this light, Moshe's prophetic prayer was a passionate plea to Hashem to protect the soldiers who would be risking their lives for the Jewish People. What an inspiring brachah!

Rav Ovadia Sforino (circ. 1475-1550) offers an interpretation, that likewise focuses on Reuven's decision to dwell east of the Jordan. Sforino notes that Reuven's choice to live outside of Israel could come with potentially terrible consequences. When a Jew lives in Israel, they are closer to Hashem and therefore likely to receive a larger portion in the next world. When a Jew chooses to live outside of Israel, they risk receiving a smaller portion in the next world.

Moshe's blesses the tribe of Reuven with intentions to offset the disadvantages of living outside of Israel. When Moshe said, "יְחִי רְאוּבֵן", "May Reuven live", he intended to bless the tribe of Reuven to "live" in the next world, de-

spite choosing to live east of the Jordan River.

Additionally, we know from earlier on in Sefer Devarim that one of the benefits of living in Israel is the potential for long life, as the Torah teaches us, "למען ירבו ימיכם וימי בניכם על האדמה", "so that your days and the days of your children be lengthened on this land. (Devarim

11:25)" Moshe was concerned that the tribe of Reuven living outside of Israel would not enjoy a similar blessing so he adds, "וְאֵל יָמֹת", may Reuven "not die."

Rabbi Chaim Ibn Attar (1698-1743), in his commentary, Or HaChaim, offers a very creative suggestion. He explains that when Moshe said, "May Reuven live and not die", Moshe was referring to the leaders of the tribe of Reuven that were ensnared in Korach's rebellion. According to the Midrash (Bamidbar Rabbah 18), the majority of the 250 men who died along with Korach were leaders from the tribe of Reuven. Although Korach's attack was aimed directly at Moshe, in an act of incredible humility and graciousness, Moshe pleads that those who joined with Korach should be forgiven and granted life in the next world. What a powerful lesson to learn – although we may be wronged,

a passionate plea to Hashem to protect the soldiers who would be risking their lives for the Jewish People.

MOSHE'S BRACHAH TO REUVEN; MORE THAN MEETS THE EYE

we ought to forgive and rebuild relationships.

Lastly, Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888) notes that Reuven is the only tribe (besides Shimon who receives no blessing) that is not blessed with a specific attribute or strength. Furthermore, unlike many of the other blessings that are connected to the tribe's ancestral lands in Israel, Reuven's brachah makes no reference to the nature of his tribal land. As such, Rav Hirsch suggests that Reuven's blessing refers to the eternal life

that one receives from learning Torah. Understood in this light, Moshe's blessing, "May Reuven live and not die" is a reference to blessings that come from Torah study. May Reuven's tribe enjoy the eternal benefits that come from deep immersion in the waters of Torah!

Rav Hirsch explains that the second half of Moshe's blessing should be understood in this fashion as well. When Moshe said, "and may his people be counted in the number," he was referring to the fact that Torah is the great equalizer! Although the tribe of Reuven would not be defined by a unique quality, if they studied Torah, they

would be on equal footing among their brethren.

Rav Hirsch's insight has a particularly strong resonance on Simchat Torah. Simchat Torah is a day designated to celebrate our holy Torah. One of the central components of this joy is the belief that each and every Jew has equal access to encountering Hashem

through Torah study. No matter one's tribe, no matter one's status, everyone is able to become a Torah scholar. Dancing with the Sifrei Torah on Simchat Torah is symbolic of this idea. The

dancing is not restricted to the talmidei chachamim, all are invited to join, as Torah is accessible to all!

No matter which interpretation you prefer, Moshe's brachah to the tribe of Reuven is laden with meaningful and inspiring lessons. I encourage you to take the time and study Parashat V'Zot HaBrachah carefully and enjoy the richness and beauty found in every passuk.

Chag Sameach.

***everyone is
able to
become a
Torah scholar***

HOW DO I KEEP SHEVI'IT WHEN VISITING ERETZ HAKODESH?

RABBI DAVID RUE

AV BET DIN, LOS ANGELES BEIT DIN



SO YOU ARE coming to Israel this year. It's a Shmittah year! What do you have to know? What food is sanctified with the holiness of Shmittah? Let's start with a basic rule: All food grown by Jews in the Holy Land, and flowers (if they are either edible or have a pleasant fragrance), have Kedushat Shevi'it.

The laws of Shevi'it are complicated but do not have to be burdensome. There are great rewards to keeping the Sabbatical year. It is well known that the Talmud says אוֹרֵא דֶּאֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל מְחַיִּים, the very air of the Land of Israel makes one wise. Many Poskim have learned from this that even more so, eating the produce of the Shmittah year makes one wise.

For many people who have not lived in Israel during a Shmittah year abiding by the restrictions seem like an

insurmountable obstacle. In fact, it is a sacred opportunity. Every mitzvah we do, every act of chessed, brings us closer to HaShem. Why would we want to forgo the chance to not only become more insightful but also be closer to G-d?

These are the different sources for fruits and vegetables found in Israel during the Sabbatical year. Each source has to be identified before purchase and use.

* Food imported from outside of Israel does not have Kedushat Shavi'it.

* Hydroponically grown vegetables in Israel do not have Kedushat Shevi'it.

* Food from Heter Mechirah (leasing the land to a gentile) is without kedushah. Rav Kook maintained that even so, one should treat these fruits as if they did have Kedushat Shevi'it.



HOW DO I KEEP SHEVI'IT WHEN VISITING ERETZ HAKODESH?

* The Mabit says produce grown by gentiles (יבול נכרי) in Eretz Yisrael nonetheless has Kedushat Shevi'it, while Beit Yosef says it does not. The old minhag in Yerushalayim is to be lenient and treat the produce of a gentile as not having Kedushat Shevi'it. In Bnai Brak, however, they are strict in this matter.

* Otzar Beit Din (from the Tosefta), was in fact recommended by Rav Kook and the Chazon Ish. This system is that the Beit Din would hire workers (usually the very farmers themselves) and pay them to harvest the food and bring it into the city where the Beit Din would appoint agents to distribute the food, and recover the costs of the harvest and distribution. According to all opinions this food has Kedushat Shevi'it.

* All Kosher supervisions in Israel address the issues of Shmittah. There are Gedolim who support each of these methods of keeping Shmittah.

- Mehadrin hashgachot based in Yerushalayim use either Arab or imported produce.
- Those based in Bnai Brak use Otzar Beit Din.
- Regular hashgachot rely on Heter Mechirah.

Many products indicate the source of the produce. If they do not specify the source, and you want to know if it is

Otzar Beit Din or Arab produce, contact them directly.

* If you use produce with Kedushat Shevi'it, then you have to be careful not to waste any. Because it is kadosh, it should not be disposed of in a disrespectful manner. (Just like a talis is not thrown in the garbage when it is no longer useable.)

For instance, when cutting up a bell pepper you should cut as close as possible to the stem so that there is no edible pepper left that is attached to it. If there is edible pepper still attached to the stem, then it needs to be properly disposed of. (see below)

* You should plan to prepare the amount of food you will be eating, avoiding having leftovers that would go to waste. Yet it is inevitable that there will be leftover food. This food should be set aside until it is no longer edible, and then it may be wrapped in a plastic bag and disposed of in the garbage. Flowers should be left until they are no longer fresh but wilting and are no longer attractive; they also can then be wrapped in a plastic bag and thrown out.

For your further information: If you want an in-depth English book on Shmittah, the best I have seen is Rav Yosef Zvi Rimon's "Shmittah: From the Sources to Practical Halacha", Magid Books, a division of Koren publishing.





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KESIVAH V'CHASIMAH TOVAH
TO ALL.



SUNSHINE IN A BOTTLE



UNDERSTANDING HOSHANOS

RABBI GERSHON SCHAFFEL

MARA D'ATRA YOUNG ISRAEL OF SKOKIE



HOSHANOS

In the time of the Bais HaMikdash the kohanim took aravah branches and as they encircled the mizbeach they would say **אֱנָהּ ה' הוֹשִׁיעָה נָא אֱנָהּ ה' הַצְלִיחָה נָא** (Sukkah 4:5). The Midrash (Yalkut Shimon 703) teaches that in the absence of a Bais HaMikdash and mizbeach a leader of the shul stands like a Heavenly angel holding a Sefer Torah and the people encircle him. One difference between the practice of the Bais HaMikdash and our current practice is that we walk around holding our lulav and esrog.

The practice of reciting Hoshanos as

we walk around the bimah developed in the era of the Gaonim. Sefer Sed-er HaYom explains that Hoshanos are a supplication that Hashem should save us from all distress and from hands of our enemies and nullify the evil schemes of those who seek our demise. The Arizal notes that there are three elements of the practice and mnemonic for this is the word **אדם**. **א** represents **אדם**, the person himself who encircles the bimah. The **ד** stands for **דיבור**, which are the tefilos that we recite. The last element is the action – **מעשה**, represented by the letter **מ** which is the action of holding the lulav and esrog as we encircle the bimah.

הושע נא

The word **הושענא** is a contraction of the two words **הושע** and **נא**. There are two explanations of the word **הושע**. One explanation is that it is related to the word **ישועה** – salvation and it is prayer for salvation. The second explanation is that it relates to the word turn (See

Bereishis 4:4) and we ask Hashem to turn towards our prayers and to be attentive towards them.

The word **נא** also has multiple explanations. One explanation is that it means now. In this context it means

UNDERSTANDING HOSHANOS

that Hashem should save us, now. Alternatively, the word means, please and in this context, it means, “Please, save us.” Some commentators contend that both explanations apply, and the meaning is “Please, save us now.” Others explain that the reason we repeat the words הושע נא before and after each phrase is to incorporate both ex-

planations. הושע נא – please save us... הושע נא – save us now. This is similar to Moshe Rabbeinu’s prayer for Miriam when he prayed קל נא רפא נא לה, repeating the word נא. A final explanation of the word נא is rooted in its numerical value. We ask Hashem to save us and accept our pleas during the 51 days, beginning from Rosh Chodesh Elul.

למענך וכו'

When we are in exile Hashem’s Name is desecrated and thus we ask Hashem to redeem us so that His Name will be glorified.	אלקינו
The purpose of creation is the Jewish People so that they can sing Hashem’s praises. Therefore, we pray to Hashem to save us so that we can fulfill the purpose of creation.	בוראנו
When Hashem redeemed us from Egypt, we were not worthy of redemption since we were idolators, the same as the Egyptians. Accordingly, we ask Hashem to redeem us now, even though we are not deserving of redemption.	גואלנו
We ask Hashem to save us because it is for Your sake that we seek You. Since Hashem has promised that if we seek out Hashem, He will redeem and save us, we can turn to Him with confidence.	דורשנו

למען אמתך

The introductory stanza (למען אלקינו) calls Hashem to save us for the sake of His name. In this hoshanah, we call upon Hashem to save for the sake of His character traits. Although Hashem and His traits are one and are not separate from His existence, we anthropomorphize His traits

and address them independently. This hoshanah also corresponds to Avrohom Avinu who was the first to recognize Hashem's greatness and the praises of Hashem in this hoshanah are descriptions of Hashem's greatness.

<p>A. To fulfill your promise to our forefathers; B. To keep Your word and to be truthful you mercifully forgave Adam HaRishon, even though he was judged for death, so too You should act kindly and save us; C. For Yaakov who personified truth.</p>	<p>למען אמתך For the sake of Your truth</p>
<p>A. We pray that Hashem save us for the sake of His covenant that He established with Avrohom Avinu that He would not annihilate the Jewish People; B. We ask for salvation for the many covenants, e.g., bris milah, the covenant established when we received the Torah, the covenant with Dovid HaMelech; C. For Yitzchok since Hashem promised to fulfill His covenant with Yitzchok.</p>	<p>למען בריתך For the sake of Your covenant</p>
<p>A. Your Greatness should be recognized since our salvation will magnify His Name; B. Some maintain that it refers to tzadikim through whom Hashem's Name is magnified; C. For Avrohom who magnified and sanctified Hashem's Name in this world.</p>	<p>למען גדלך ותפארתך For the sake of Your greatness and beauty</p>
<p>A. For Your Torah which was studied and observed by our forefathers even before it was given; B. Upon salvation, the fulfillment of Your laws will be properly restored.</p>	<p>למען דתך For the sake of Your Laws</p>

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<p>A. הוֹדֵךְ refers to the Divine Presence;</p> <p>B. Your Glory and Splendor will be manifest to all upon our salvation.</p>	<p>לְמַעַן הוֹדֵךְ</p> <p>For the sake of Your Glory</p>
<p>A. וְעוֹדֵךְ refers to the Bais HaMikdash and we pray that our private conversation with Hashem should be restored to what it once was;</p> <p>B. וְעוֹדֵךְ refers to the shevatim who constituted an entire congregation (עֵדָה שְׁלֵמָה) and would gather together in the Bais HaMikdash with a unified heart</p>	<p>לְמַעַן וְעוֹדֵךְ</p> <p>For the sake of Your Meeting House</p>
<p>A. The term זִכְרֶךְ refers to the meaning of the Name of Hashem as it is pronounced, i.e., He is the Master of all;</p> <p>B. We refer to the righteous who remember Hashem's sacred Name even in circumstances in which they are not able to speak.</p>	<p>לְמַעַן זִכְרֶךְ</p> <p>For the sake of Your Mention</p>
<p>A. You should save us out of Your Kindness and not due to our righteousness;</p> <p>B. We should be saved in the merit of Avrohom Avinu who personified the trait of kindness;</p> <p>C. You should go beyond strict judgment and kindness should overpower justice.</p>	<p>לְמַעַן חֲסִדֶךְ</p> <p>For the sake of Your Kindness</p>
<p>A. Salvation is not for our sake, it is for Your sake since You are Good and Forgiving;</p> <p>B. For the sake of the Bais HaMikdash that is called "good."</p>	<p>לְמַעַן טוֹבֶךְ</p> <p>For the sake of Your Goodness</p>
<p>We should be saved since we unify Your name through the recitation of Shema.</p>	<p>לְמַעַן יְחוּדֶךְ</p> <p>For the sake of Your Unity</p>
<p>A. We should be saved but not for our sake or due to our proper ways, rather so that Your Name should not be desecrated;</p> <p>B. The term refers to the Divine Presence that resided in the Bais HaMikdash.</p>	<p>לְמַעַן כְּבוֹדֶךְ</p> <p>For the sake of Your Honor</p>
<p>A. A reference to the Bais HaMikdash where Torah was studied;</p> <p>B. A look towards the future when we will learn Torah directly from Hashem and will not forget it.</p>	<p>לְמַעַן לְמוֹדֶךְ</p> <p>For the sake of Your Teaching</p>

<p>A. For the Jewish People who coronate Hashem; B. Hashem, who is the true King will be merciful for the sake of His Kingdom rather than leave us in the hands of earthly kings.</p>	<p>למען מלכותך For the sake of Your Kingship</p>
<p>A. For the sake of Your Name which is eternal; B. A reference to our tefilos (למנוח) that allow us to be victorious over Hashem by praying and nullifying His decrees.</p>	<p>למען נצחך For the sake of Your Eternity/ Triumph</p>
<p>A. For the sake of those who fear Hashem; B. It is a reference to prophecy as we pray for the restoration of prophecy.</p>	<p>למען סודך For the sake of Your Counsel</p>
<p>A. For the sake of Your Power; B. A reference to Torah or the Ark of the Covenant – aron habris.</p>	<p>למען עוצך For the sake of Your Power</p>
<p>A. Tefillin, either ours or Hashem's that contains terms of endearment towards Klal Yisroel and thus we are deserving of compassion; B. If we are saved it will generate praise and Glory for His Name.</p>	<p>למען פארך For the sake of Your Beauty</p>
<p>A. You are righteous and love righteousness; B. Your righteousness will become evident to the world when You save the Jewish People.</p>	<p>למען צדקתך For the sake of Your righteousness</p>
<p>A. Hashem's Name is sanctified through us and thus we pray that we should be redeemed from exile and the Bais HaMikdash rebuilt to sanctify Your Name; B. Hashem's Name should be magnified and Sanctified</p>	<p>למען קדושתך For the sake of Your Sanctity</p>
<p>Even though we sin and are not deserving of Your mercy, one of Your traits is to be merciful and we plead to You to utilize that trait.</p>	<p>למען רחמיך הרבים For the sake of Your Abundant Mercy</p>
<p>We seek for Your crown to be restored, for the Bais HaMikdash to be rebuilt and for Your Divine Presence to return so that Your Name will be sanctified in the eyes of the nations.</p>	<p>למען שכינתך For the sake of Your Divine Presence</p>

UNDERSTANDING HOSHANOS

A. We pray that You should respond to our praises for which You sit and anticipate; B. So that we can retell Your praises	למען תהלתך For the sake of Your praise
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אָבן שְׁתִּיָּה

In this hoshanah we daven that Hashem will rebuild the Bais HaMikdash and thus we use many different names and references to the Bais HaMikdash. This hoshanah also has numerous references to the Yerushalayim since the greatness and praise of Yerushalayim was due to the presence of the Bais HaMikdash.

We daven for the rebuilding of the Bais HaMikdash on Sukkos since Kabbalistically the third Bais HaMikdash will be built on Sukkos. Additionally, the Midrash writes that the Bais HaMikdash

will be rebuilt in the merit of the first day of Sukkos. The Maharal explains that the Bais HaMikdash is Hashem's sukkah and thus when Klal Yisroel sits in the sukkah on the first day of Sukkos, Hashem bestows his Divine Presence on the Bais HaMikdash.

Lastly, this hoshanah, which is often recited on the second day of Sukkos, relates to Yitzchok Avinu who was the first to identify the sanctity of the place that would become the Bais HaMikdash.

A. Even Shesiyah is a name for the Bais Hamikdash which is a reference to the foundation stone from which the world was created and upon which rests the kodesh hokodoshim; B. The stone upon which Yaakov rested his head and subsequently made into an altar.	אָבן שְׁתִּיָּה Foundation stone
A. The Bais HaMikdash where Hashem chose for His Divine Presence to reside; B. The chosen people, in the chosen land, in the chosen city, in the chosen place (Tzion) for the purpose of avodah – service of Hashem.	בֵּית הַבְּחִירָה The chosen temple
Dovid HaMelech purchased Arnon's threshing house at full price and built there the altar and offered korbanos which Shlomo ultimately used for the Bais HaMikdash.	גֹּחַן אֲרֹנָן Arnon's threshing house

<p>A. דביר is a term for the Bais HaMikdash since it is the place from which communication with Moshe emanated or where punishment begins for those who do not follow the Torah.</p> <p>המוצנע refers to the place the is concealed, i.e., the kodesh hokodoshim;</p> <p>B. A reference to the aron habris which is concealed in the kodesh hokodoshim.</p>	<p>דְּבִיר הַמוֹצֵנֶע Hidden place / object</p>
<p>The place of the akeidah and the Bais HaMikdash. The place where rulings are issued for the Jewish People or the origin of awe for the nations of the world.</p>	<p>הַר הַמֹּרִיָּה Mount Moriah</p>
<p>A. The place Hashem showed Moshe where the Divine Presence will reside and where he will offer korbanos;</p> <p>B. The place where Hashem sees Yitzchok's virtual ashes and forgives the Jewish People;</p> <p>C. Part of the name of Yerushalayim which is a contraction of יְרֵאָה and שָׁלֵם.</p>	<p>וְהָרַ יֵרָאָה Mount Yaira'eh</p>
<p>זבול is a reference to the Bais HaMikdash as well as one of the levels of Heaven that contains a parallel Bais HaMikdash where Michael offers korbanos.</p> <p>The Divine Presence in the Bais HaMikdash is referred to as תְּפָאֶרֶת.</p>	<p>זְבוּל תְּפָאֶרֶת Residence of splendor</p>
<p>A reference to the altar, the heichal, Bais HaMikdash or Yerushalayim and is called חֲנֵה דָוִד since Dovid procured it and dwelled there.</p>	<p>חֲנֵה דָוִד Where Dovid resided</p>
<p>טוב refers to the Yerushalayim and לבנון refers to the Bais HaMikdash or the kodesh hakodoshim. The Bais HaMikdash is called לבנון since it "whitens" the sins of the Jewish People.</p>	<p>טוֹב הַלְבָּנוֹן Goodness of Lebanon</p>
<p>A. נוף is related to the Greek word נמפי meaning, bride so that we rejoice with Yerushalayim like a new bride. Also, Hashem cherishes the Bais HaMikdash as a groom cherishes his bride.</p> <p>B. Yerushalayim brought joy to the world since sinners had a place to go to achieve atonement for their sins.</p>	<p>יְפֵה נֹף מְשׁוּשׁ כָּל הָאָרֶץ Beautiful bride, joy of the land</p>
<p>Everyone praised Yerushalayim as possessing great beauty as opposed to other cities where only its citizens refer to it as beautiful.</p>	<p>כָּלִילַת יָפִי Perfect in beauty</p>

UNDERSTANDING HOSHANOS

<p>A. In Yerushalayim righteousness was constant; B. No one went to sleep in Yerushalayim with sins since the korbanos atoned for their sins; C. One who offered a korban was obligated to spend the night in Yerushalayim.</p>	<p>לִינֵת הַצֶּדֶק The place where righteousness resided</p>
<p>A reference to the Bais HaMikdash which corresponds (מִקְוֶה) to the Bais HaMikdash in the Heavens.</p>	<p>מָכוֹן לְשִׁבְתֶּךָ The foundation of Your dwelling</p>
<p>A. Yerushalayim is a place of tranquility. As long as your abode exists, the Jewish People dwell in tranquility; B. Yerushalayim is considered tranquil since there was never a fight related to finding a place to sleep.</p>	<p>נֹה שְׁאָנָן A tranquil abode</p>
<p>סוֹכָה is a reference to the Bais HaMikdash. We ask for salvation for the sake of the Bais HaMikdash built in the city Shalem.</p>	<p>סֶכֶת שָׁלֵם Tabernacle of Shalem</p>
<p>A. The 12 tribes would ascend to Yerushalayim that would contain them all which would thereby serve as testimony that Hashem chose them; B. Dovid HaMelech collected from all of the tribes to purchase Yerushalayim; C. The Bais HaMikdash should be rebuilt and we should merit to ascend to Yerushalayim; D. The Divine Presence dwelled in Yerushalayim primarily because the tribes gathered as one person with one heart.</p>	<p>עֲלִיַּת שְׁבֵטִים Pilgrimage of the tribes</p>
<p>A. The valuable cornerstone which can be seen from all sides. A reference to the beauty of the Bais HaMikdash; B. The even shesiyah from which the world was created and the location of the kodesh hakodoshim.</p>	<p>פֶּנֶת יְקָרָה The valuable cornerstone</p>
<p>The Bais HaMikdash which is distinguished in mitzvos and korbanos.</p>	<p>צִיּוֹן הַמְצֻיָּה Distinguished Tzion</p>
<p>The place of the aron hakodosh which contains all the sanctity of the world.</p>	<p>קֹדֶשׁ הַקְּדוּשִׁים Kodesh HaKodoshim</p>

A. It contains utensils that express love; B. Hashem concentrates His Divine Presence between the poles of the aron to demonstrate His love.	נְצוּף אֶהְבָּה Decorated with love
A. The place for the Divine Presence to dwell; B. The Divine Presence resides between the two keruvim.	שְׂכִינֶת כְּבוֹדֶיךָ The place for Your Honor to dwell
A. The Bais HaMikdash that is beautifully built at which everyone gazes; B. The kodesh hakodoshim which is the direction towards which everyone davens.	תֵּל תְּלִפְיוֹת Hill of Talpiyos

אָעֶרֶךְ שׁוּעִי

In most years this hoshanah is recited on the third day of Sukkos, the first day of chol hamoed, in chutz la'aretz. It falls on the same day of the week that Yom Kippur fell the week before

and thus there are many references to teshuvah, our prayer that Hashem accept our sincere repentance and our yearning to be free from the yetzer hora.

I arrange my prayers...	אָעֶרֶךְ שׁוּעִי I shall arrange my prayer
in the shul where we pray every day.	בְּבֵית שְׁוֹעִי In the house of my prayer
I revealed and confessed for my sins on Yom Kippur.	גִּלִּיתִי בְצוּם פֶּשְׁעֵי I revealed my sins, on the fast day
I sought out salvation in prayer, when You were available (during the 10 days from Rosh HaShanah to Yom Kippur)	דָּרָשְׁתִּיךָ בּוֹ לְהוֹשִׁיעִי I sought You, in prayer, on that day to save me
Listen to the voice of my prayers and make them acceptable.	הִקְשִׁיבָה לְקוֹל שְׁוֹעִי Heed the voice of my prayer
Arise from the attribute of justice and save me from my distress.	וְקוּמָה וְהוֹשִׁיעִי Arise and save me
A. Remember and be merciful to bring my savior, Moshiach ben Dovid. B. Remember and be merciful, You Hashem, who is the Savior of the Jewish People	זְכוֹר וְנִרְחַם מוֹשִׁיעִי Remember and be merciful, my Savior

UNDERSTANDING HOSHANOS

A. We should live under Your dominion, and we should rejoice, therein. B. Living G-d, grant us happiness and joy.	חי כן תִּשְׂמְחֵנִי Living G-d, let me delight
Good one, on account of my prayer, be favorable towards me.	טוב בְּאָנֶךָ שְׁעִי Good one, hear my groan
A. Hasten the time of the redemption and save me. B. My Savior should hasten to destroy those who tempt me to sin (see next phrase)	יוֹחֵשׁ מוֹשִׁיעִי Hasten my savior
A. Destroy my Yetzer Hora that tempts me, so that he will not continue to make me evil (see next phrase) B. A prayer that Hashem should destroy the wicked nations that exercise dominion over us	כֹּלֵה מְרִשְׁעִי Destroy the one who tempts me to sin
A. We want the yetzer horo destroyed so that we refrain from further sin B. The wicked nation should be destroyed so that they do not cause us to sin and become evil	לְבַל עוֹד תִּרְשִׁיעִי So that he not continue to make me evil
Hasten, Hashem, the G-d of my salvation, before the attribute of Judgement arrives	מְהֵרָה אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעִי Hasten, G-d of my salvation
A. My salvation and victory should be eternal B. The victory over the nations, expressed by holding the lulav and esrog should be eternal	נֶצַח לְהוֹשִׁיעִי Make eternal my salvation
Forgive their wicked sins, i.e., those done intentionally – b'meizid (see next phrase)	שֵׂא נָא עוֹן רָשָׁעִי Forgive the iniquity of my wickedness
Forgive their rebellious sins, i.e., intentional sins for which one does not derive benefit	עֲבֹר עַל פְּשָׁעִי Overlook my sin
Turn to accept my prayers and save me	פְּנֵה נָא לְהוֹשִׁיעִי Please turn to save me
Righteous Rock, save me (the nation that believes in Your salvation)	צוּר צְדִיק מוֹשִׁיעִי Righteous Rock, my savior
Allow my prayers to enter in front of Your throne	קַבֵּל נָא שְׁוֹעִי Please receive my prayer

Raise the pride of my salvation by sending Moshiach	רוּמֵם קָרְן יִשְׁעִי Raise the pride of my sal- vation
A. Sha-kai, who is with us in our distress should destroy those who violate His will. B. Sha-kai, disrupt the framework of the heav- ens and save us	שְׂדֵי מוֹשִׁיעִי Almighty, my Savior
A. Reveal Yourself and grant us a complete salvation B. Revel Yourself with the light of Sha-kai and repair the world under the dominion of Sha-kai	תּוֹפִיעַ וְתוֹשִׁיעִי Appear and save me

א-ל לְמוֹשָׁעוֹת

The opening phrase and theme of this hoshanah is based on the pasuk in Tehillim (68:21) wherein Hashem is referred to as the קל למושעות, the mighty

G-d who has given us salvation and we pray for salvation from our current circumstance.

Hashem, provide us with salvation from this exile, as You promised with the four oaths (see next phrase)	א-ל לְמוֹשָׁעוֹת G-d of salvations
A. In consideration of the four oaths that Hashem adjured us to follow and have to endure during this difficult exile, save us from the harsh treatment of the nations of the world; B. We ask Hashem to save us and judge us favorably during the four weeks of the month of Tishrei when the world is judged.	בְּאַרְבַּע שְׁבוּעוֹת With four oaths
We cry to Hashem in loud prayer to be saved from the heavy burden we suffer from the nations of the world.	נָשִׁים בְּשִׁוְעוֹת We draw close in pleas
We knock on the doors of the bais haknesses, where we arrange our prayers.	דּוֹפְקֵי עֶרְךָ שׁוּעוֹת Who come knocking to arrange our prayer
We meditate on Your Torah (the written law) that is called “delight.”	הוֹגֵי שְׂשֻׁעָשׁוֹת Meditate on Your [words of] delight

UNDERSTANDING HOSHANOS

After mentioning the written law, we also mention the oral law.	וְחִידוֹתֵם מְשִׁתְּעִשׂוֹת Who revel in their riddles (the Oral law)
A. We cry in prayer so that we will be acknowledged and You will accept our prayers; B. We cry in prayer for salvation.	זוֹעֲקִים לְהִשְׁמָעוֹת They cry to be heard (i.e. for attention)
We yearn for Your salvation.	חוֹכֵי יְשׁוּעוֹת They yearn for salvation
A. The Jewish People who cling to You, trust in You rather than in other powers; B. We yearn for Your salvation so that we can cling to You.	טְפוּלִים בְּךָ שְׁמָעוֹת Listen to those who cling to You
A. The Jewish People understand the times that are most propitious for prayer; B. The Jewish People know how to calculate the time of the future redemption.	יּוֹדְעֵי בֵּין שְׁמָעוֹת They understand Your times
We pray in a bowed position on Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.	כוֹרְעִין בְּשׁוֹמְעוֹת They bow to You and plead
We toil in our Torah study to understand Your halachos,	לְהִבִּין שְׁמוּעוֹת To understand the lessons
That were heard directly from Your mouth.	מִפִּיךָ נִשְׁמָעוֹת Which were heard from your mouth
You, Hashem, who gives salvation,	נוֹתֵן תְּשׁוּעוֹת Giver of salvations
A. Should gather together the Jewish People who are small in number. B. Just as the bulls, offered as korbanos, diminish each day of Sukkos, so too, the nations should decrease	קְפוּרוֹת מִשְׁמָעוֹת Gather the counters (the sages)
We study and teach the torah, called testimony	עֲדוֹת מִשְׁמִיעוֹת That teach the testimony
Hashem is the force behind all salvation and therefore,	פוֹעֵל יְשׁוּעוֹת Doer of salvations

(He) Should send us Moshiach who will provide us with salvation.	צַדִּיק נוֹשְׁעוֹת Send the righteous one (Moshiach) for the saved
A reference to the city of Yerushalayim.	קִרְיַת תְּשׁוּעוֹת For the city of salvations
In the future when Yerushalayim is redeemed, it will be filled with people as it once was.	רָגַשׁ תְּשׁוּאוֹת With emotional cheers
A. A reference to the three-hour battle of Gog and Magog which according to tradition will occur on Sukkos; B. A reference to the shalosh regalim when we would ascend to the Bais Hamikdash and witness overt miracles; C. We should merit to return to Yerushalayim with throngs of people and daven for three hours a day, one hour per tefilah.	שָׁלֹשׁ שָׁעוֹת In three hours
Hashem should hasten all of our salvations.	תַּחֲשִׁישׁ לְתִשְׁוֵעוֹת Hasten our salvation

אם נצורה כְּכַבֵּת

Although all opinions agree that we do not take the lulav and esrog and walk around the bimah on Shabbos, there is a difference in customs whether to recite hoshanos on Shabbos. Our custom accords with the opinion that recites hoshanos on Shabbos.

The foundation of this hoshanah is rooted in the fact that Shabbos observance protects the Jewish People.

This is evidenced from the fact that in maariv during the week we say שומר עמו ישראל לעד, emphasizing the need for protection, whereas on Shabbos we do not conclude the 2nd berachah after shema with a reference to Hashem’s protection. The reason is that our Shabbos observance protects us. Throughout this hoshanah we emphasize different aspects of our Shabbos observance and invoke it to protect us.

Just like an eye needs protection even from something soft, so too, the Jewish People require Divine protection from foreign influences that would prove harmful to it.	אם נצורה כְּכַבֵּת A nation protected like the pupil of Your eye
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UNDERSTANDING HOSHANOS

<p>A. The Jewish People study the Torah that re-stores the soul;</p> <p>B. The reason Hashem “protects like the pupil of Your eye” is because we study the Torah and study the laws of Shabbos (see next phrase).</p>	<p>בוֹנֵנָה דָּדָה נֶפֶשׁ-מְשִׁיבָה She studies (lit. understands) the laws of Shabbos</p>
<p>Moshe Rabbeinu enacted that we should study the laws of Shabbos on Shabbos.</p>	<p>גּוֹמְרֵת הַלְכוֹת שַׁבָּת She studies the laws of Shabbos</p>
<p>A. The Jewish People observe even the restriction against transporting objects on Shabbos which is a minor prohibition (מלאכה גרועה);</p> <p>B. We follow Hashem’s command to publicly teach the laws of Shabbos.</p>	<p>דּוֹרֶשֶׁת מִשְׁאֵת שַׁבָּת Explains the rules of transporting objects on Shabbos</p>
<p>Although there is a debate whether the two-thousand amos, techum restriction is Biblical or Rabbinic, hints to the restriction can be found in pesukim.</p>	<p>הַקּוֹבְעֵת אֲלֵפִים תְּחוּם שַׁבָּת Who establish the two-thousand (amos) boundary of Shabbos</p>
<p>The author praises one who was travelling and upon the arrival of Shabbos ceases his journey in honor of Shabbos.</p>	<p>וּמְשִׁיבָה רָגְלָה מִשַּׁבָּת She keeps her feet from breaking the Shabbos</p>
<p>A. We remember (זכירה) Shabbos by reciting kiddush and guard (שמירה) it by refraining from melachah;</p> <p>B. The Midrash explains that these words instruct us to add to Shabbos at the beginning and end of Shabbos (see upcoming phrases).</p>	<p>זָכוֹר וְשָׁמֹר מְקִימָה בְּשַׁבָּת She keeps זָכוֹר and שָׁמֹר on Shabbos</p>
<p>The Jewish People hasten to accept Shabbos early as well as rush to prepare what is needed for Shabbos.</p>	<p>חָשָׂה לְמַהֵר בִּיאַת שַׁבָּת Rushes to hasten in the Shabbos</p>
<p>A. When something delicious is obtained, it is saved for Shabbos;</p> <p>B. One who toils on erev Shabbos will have food to eat on Shabbos (Avodah Zarah 3a).</p>	<p>טוֹרַחַת כָּל מִשְׁשָׁה לְשַׁבָּת Who for six days work for Shabbos</p>
<p>A. The Jewish People push off the conclusion of Shabbos;</p> <p>B. The Jewish People observe Shabbos with patience and in a relaxed state until the conclusion of Shabbos.</p>	<p>יוֹשֶׁבֶת וּמִמְתְּנָה עַד-כְּלוֹת שַׁבָּת She sits and patiently waits until the end of Shabbos</p>

We honor and find delight in Shabbos as enumerated in the upcoming phrases.	כְּבוֹד וְעֵנֶג קוֹרְאָה לַשַּׁבָּת She calls Shabbos an honor and delight
A. We honor Shabbos by wearing Shabbos clothes; B. According to some versions it should say לַשַּׁבָּת, meaning that we change to Shabbos clothes in advance of the arrival of Shabbos.	לְבוֹשׁ וְכוֹסוֹת מַחְלִיפֵת בַּשַּׁבָּת Who changes their clothes and dress for the Shabbos
A. We prepare food and drinks for Shabbos; B. Even one with many servants should personally be involved in preparing food Shabbos.	מֵאֲכָל וּמִשְׁתֶּה מְכִינָה לַשַּׁבָּת She prepares food and drink for Shabbos
A. She saves sweet and delicious fruits to enjoy on Shabbos; B. Sweet and delicious fruit is eaten on Shabbos so that one can recite 100 berachos.	נֵעֵם מְגִדִּים מְנוּעָמַת לַשַּׁבָּת She partakes of sweet and delicious fruits on Shabbos
She has three meals on Shabbos in fulfillment of the Rabbinic enactment.	סְעוּדוֹת שְׁלֹשׁ מְקִימַת בַּשַּׁבָּת She has three meals on Shabbos
She uses two loaves, like the double portion of manna that fell on erev Shabbos.	עַל-שְׁתֵּי כֶּכָרוֹת בּוֹצֵעַת בַּשַּׁבָּת She breaks bread on two loaves on Shabbos
Chazal identify four different domains, relevant for Shabbos.	פוֹרְטַת אַרְבַּע רְשִׁיּוֹת בַּשַּׁבָּת Distinguishes 4 domains on Shabbos
A. We kindle Shabbos lights since the first Shabbos of creation was not dark; B. One candle is for זְכוֹר and the second is for שְׁמוֹר. The candles give honor to the Shabbos meal	אֶזְוִי הַדְּלָקַת נֵר מְדַלְקַת בַּשַּׁבָּת She fulfills the command to kindle Shabbos lights
We sanctify the day by reciting kiddush with a cup of wine.	קְדוּשַׁת הַיּוֹם מְקַדְּשֶׁת בַּשַּׁבָּת She recites kiddush on Shabbos
A. We don't daven the regular Amidah since Shabbos is a time for pleasure and enjoyment rather than for pain by davening for what we don't have. B. The Amidah is comprised of praises rather than requests.	רַנֵּן שְׁבַע מְפַלֵּל בַּשַּׁבָּת She prays the seven berachos of the amidah on Shabbos

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Chazal mandated that seven people read from the Torah on Shabbos.	שְׁבַע בְּדַת קוֹרְאָה בַּשַּׁבָּת She reads seven portions of the Torah on Shabbos
In the merit of her fulfillment of the laws of Shabbos, she should inherit a portion in the world that is completely Shabbos (World-to-Come).	תִּנְחַלֶּנָּה לְיוֹם שְׁכָלוֹ שַׁבָּת Causes her to inherit the day that is completely Shabbos

אָדוֹן הַמוֹשִׁיעַ

In most years this hoshanah is recited on the sixth day of Sukkos, the day before Hoshanah Rabbah. During the previous five days, none of the hoshanos mentioned rain since rain on Sukkos is a sign of curse and that Hashem is rejecting our service of Him. However, on day six, the Torah already hints to rain (See Taanis 2b) and thus, the theme of this hoshanah revolves around rain.

A sub-theme of this hoshanah is Yeshua – salvation. This is based on Chazal’s numerous statements that connect the falling of rain and salvation (Taanis 7b). The connection is also found in the pasuk **וּשְׁאִבְתֶּם מִיָּם בַּשָּׁשׂוֹן מִמַּעֲיָי הַיְשׁוּעָה** – The water libation on the mizbeach is done so that the year’s rain will be blessed and both water and salvation are mentioned in the pasuk.

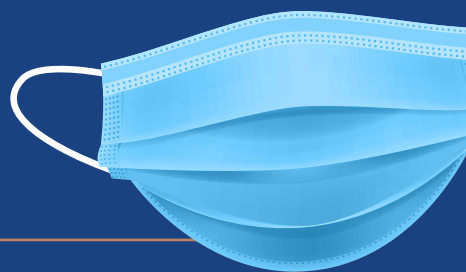
A. Hashem is the Master who saves the Jewish People; B. Usually servants protect their master but Hashem is the Master who saves His people.	אָדוֹן הַמוֹשִׁיעַ Master who saves
A. You alone have the power to save; B. The gemara in Taanis relates that Hashem possesses the key to rain which is the subject of this hoshana.	בְּלִתֵּךְ אֵין לְהוֹשִׁיעַ There is no savior other than You
A. Sefer Ikarim notes that mankind’s power involves taking life, whereas Hashem’s power is to grant life. B. Rain is an expression of Hashem’s power to grant life	גִּבּוֹר וְרַב לְהוֹשִׁיעַ Mighty, with great power to save
A. We are impoverished in terms of mitzvos but Hashem still saves us; B. We are low by virtue of the exile and are in need of salvation.	דָּלִיתִי וְלִי יְהוֹשִׁיעַ I was brought low and He saved me
Hashem is a G-d who saves, in contrast to idols who are gods that do not have the power to save.	הָאֵל הַמוֹשִׁיעַ G-d who saves

A מציל is one who saves a poor person in his moment of distress whereas a מושיע provides long term and lasting salvation.	וּמַצִּיל וּמוֹשִׁיעַ He rescues and saves
We cry out to Hashem who then saves us. This is mentioned as we daven for rain because rain falls only after we daven numerous tefilos.	זֹעֲקִין תּוֹשִׁיעַ Save those who cry out to You
Save the nation that hopes for Your salvation, even when we do not verbalize our yearning for salvation.	חוֹכְרֵיךָ הוֹשִׁיעַ Save those who wait for You
Provide nourishing rain for the Jewish People who are called Your lambs.	טֹלְאֵיךָ תִּשְׂבִּיעַ Nourish Your lambs
Cause the grain in the field to increase and multiply.	יְבֹול לְהַשְׂפִּיעַ Cause an abundance of crops
The trees and herbs that grow in the field should increase and provide salvation.	כָּל-שִׁיחַ תִּדְשָׂא וְתוֹשִׁיעַ Trees and vegetation should grow and bring salvation
The land should not be held accountable for the sins of the people and withhold needed vegetation.	לִגְיַא כָּל-תְּרֻשִׁיעַ Do not do bad to the valley
A. The fruit should be sweetened by the rain and provide salvation; B. Fruit which lost its sweetness when the Bais Hamikdash was destroyed should be restored to its original sweet taste.	מְגַדִּים תַּמְתִּיק וְתוֹשִׁיעַ Sweeten the good fruits and save us
Hashem should bring clouds that will provide rain, thereby causing the grass and herbs to grow.	נְשִׂאִים לְהַסִּיעַ Bring clouds that contain rain
Hashem should bring large and thick clouds so that an abundance of rain will fall.	שְׁעִירִים לְהַנִּיעַ Move the clouds so that the rain can fall
Hashem should not withhold clouds from the world. The Midrash explains that the term ענן is related to עניו because during times of abundance people act humbly and generously share with one another.	עֲנִיִּים מְלַקְמִינֵי Do not restrain the clouds

UNDERSTANDING HOSHANOS

Hashem should open His hand and provide rain so that we should be satiated.	פֹּתַח יָד וּמַשְׂבִּיעַ You, who open the hand and satiate
A. Satisfy those who are thirsty with an abundance of rainwater; B. Hashem should satisfy the Jewish People who thirst for closeness with Hashem.	צִמְאֵיךָ תִשְׂבֵּעַ Satisfy Your thirsty ones
Save those who call out to You in prayer.	קוֹרְאֶיךָ תוֹשִׁיעַ Save those who call to You
Save the Jewish People who are called Your beloved.	רְחוּמֶיךָ תוֹשִׁיעַ Save Your beloved
A. Save the Jewish People who seek Your presence; B. Hashem, who seeks good for the Jewish People, should save them.	שׁוֹחֲרֶיךָ תוֹשִׁיעַ Save those who seek You in prayer
A. Save the Jewish People who are Your wholesome ones; B. The term תְּמִימִין is a reference to the descendants of Yaakov who was called אִישׁ תָּם.	תְּמִימֶיךָ תוֹשִׁיעַ Save Your wholesome ones

PROGRESSIVE... AND PROUD OF IT!



RABBI HERSEL BECKER

MARA D'ATRA YOUNG ISRAEL OF KENDALL, FL

RECENTLY, A DECISION was made to mandate the wearing of masks in our Shul in Miami due to the uptick of Covid. How do I feel about it? Obviously, there is the concern for the health and well-being of everyone, in our community and beyond. Additionally, there is a sinking feeling about the inconveniences associated with taking precautions. Moreover, there is once again the idea that no one really knows what is happening. Regardless of the mask policy, I feel we are being given another chance to step up and address our response to this pandemic.

The entire world had been overcome with contagious disease. Rather than address any matters in society that needed to be changed and improved, the focal point remained, "Mask or no mask?" I frequently cited the Torah, "Do not make for yourself a god of maseichah, masks," don't let your focus be misdirected. Of course, precautions and safety measures had to

be regulated. Yet, masks headed the list of societal concerns.

When Covid first struck, people wondered why it was happening. Clearly, I could not explain the decisions from Above. However, I did not understand the puzzlement. The Great Flood wiped out a civilization steeped in immorality and lawlessness. Take a look around. It seems that the world as a whole has become more degenerate. What distinguishes our society from theirs?

Additionally, we all experienced levels of isolation that were unprecedented. We were separated, not only from friends and colleagues, but also from close family. One would think that under those circumstances, we would come to value people more than ever. Regretfully, we witnessed the escalation of discord, disregard, and disdain. Hate, rather than the merit of issues, has been the guiding force in politics. This mode of behavior has crept into society at large. Rather than



PROGRESSIVE... AND PROUD OF IT!

sharing ideas and being open to consider another's position many people refuse to even lend an ear or give the time of day to someone who doesn't subscribe to the same political script.

With the lessening of Covid restrictions, as the world began to open its doors, we as a people have endured an unusual series of calamities resulting in the loss

of lives: on Lag Ba'Omer in Meron, Shavuot at the Karlin-Stolin Beis Midrash in Israel, and shortly thereafter in Surfside, Florida. In all three

disasters, people fell on top of each other. Each subsequent catastrophe was an escalation of terror. In Meron, it was only people. In Karlin-Stolin, it was people and bleachers. In Surfside, it was people along with concrete and steel.

The Torah warns of what can take place to a society that refuses to adhere to the direction of Hashem. It states, "v'kashlu ish ba'achiv, they will stumble one upon the other." The Klei Yakar notes that, at a time of exile, you would expect people to be united, especially compassionate, and caring for each other. In sharp reprimand, he notes that rather than reflecting that mindset during times of travail, Klal Yisrael has amongst them those who seek to harm and destroy their own.

Rashi presents an explanation that expands on the literal meaning of one stumbling upon another, with the concept, Kol Yisrael arevim zeh lazeh, all of Israel are responsible one for the other. This means that the fate suffered does not reflect on the individuals whose lives were taken. Indeed, in Meron there were obvious tzaddikim whose lives were lost. Rather, since

everyone is responsible for all, the affliction is viewed as affecting the entire nation.

Moshe Rabbeinu sought to understand why

our nation suffers more than any other. Once he saw that there was someone in Klal Yisrael who would malign him, he expressed that he knew the answer! In this day and age when we have witnessed an uptick in anti-Semitism, it is tragic to see that Jews, whether in politics or in their businesses, have come forth shamelessly to condemn their brothers and sisters.

I don't think people would consider the founders of Ben and Jerry's to be experts in Jewish history and the origins of our connection to Eretz Yisrael. Yet, they brazenly have taken action to harm our people, declaring that their positions are consistent with their progressive associations.

It is tragic to see that Jews have come forth shamelessly to condemn their brothers and sisters.



A person once came to an elderly Rav, claiming that his ways were antiquated. The Rav responded, "At the Seder we declare, 'At first our ancestors were idol-worshippers.' Afterwards we received the Torah at Mt. Sinai. You have it wrong," said the Rav, "You are the one who is antiquated! I'm the one who is the Progressive!"

The month of Elul is a time for introspection. The fact that this month coincides with a rebound of Covid concerns should be taken as another chance to right the wrongs in the world. We must be strong in our convictions and not fall victim to those who demand progress while they are actually regressing to ancient ways of immorality and lawlessness. We are responsible for each other! We must redouble our efforts to reach those who have not yet learned to appreciate the blessings of a Torah life. We must feel in our hearts and demonstrate by our actions that we are truly

one people.

The observation of Moshe years earlier that a people would be subject to anti-Semitism if they were so lowly that they could turn against each other, was addressed and remedied.

Indeed, one of the merits of our people that led to our redemption from Egypt was that there was no slander of Jew against Jew. Now we seem to be facing this same issue once again.

The Talmud states that when calamity befalls the world, Klal Yisrael especially must take heed. We face this New Year with a new version of an old issue. Let us face this challenge with the determination that when life turns a corner we will not revert to the "normal." Rather, let us begin now to face life with a new perspective, an advanced level of appreciation for one another, and a determination to be a proud Progressive source of Torah light for the entire world.

THE ANATOMY OF A LUNAR ECLIPSE

RABBI BARUCH DOV BRAUN

MARA D'ATRA, YOUNG ISRAEL OF AVENUE J



ASTRONOMERS RECOGNIZE three kinds of lunar eclipses:

The first type occurs when the moon passes, not directly behind the earth, but through an outer, faint shadow cast by the earth. The effect is quite subtle and virtually unnoticeable to an amateur.

The second, what is known as a partial eclipse, occurs when the moon passes partially through the earth's inner, more distinct shadow. From earth, in mid-eclipse, one can see that a piece of the moon is darkened and obscured by the earth's shadow.

The third type is a total lunar eclipse, whereby the entire moon passes directly behind the earth, through its inner shadow. The reddening of the moon during this event cannot be missed even by the most casual observer.

These three degrees of lunar obscuration have a parallel in the Jewish calendar every year when Rosh Hashanah and Rosh Chodesh overlap on the first day of the month of Tishrei.

The defining feature of Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Judgment, is the sounding of the shofar. This central obligation is first expressed in Bamidbar where the Torah gives Rosh Hashanah the moniker, "A Day of Shofar Blasts,"¹ and is later reiterated in Tehillim, "Blow the shofar at the moon's renewal (ba'chodesh), at the time appointed (ba'keseh) for our festive day."² This translation of the verse in Tehillim follows the opinion of Rabbeinu Tam. (Yaakov ben Meir, 1100-1171) However, Rabbeinu Meshulam (Meshulam ben Yaakov d.1170) dissents and translates the word keseh as "concealment": "Sound the shofar on our festive day (Rosh Hashanah) that conceals the holiday of the renewal of the month

1 Bamidbar 29:1; see also Vayikra 21:24.

2 Tehillim 81:4.



(Rosh Chodesh).” How so? The usual sin-offering brought monthly on every Rosh Chodesh is not offered on Rosh Hashanah, the first day of the month of Tishrei.

According to Rabbeinu Meshulam, the verse in Tehillim echoes what is suggestive in the Torah when it outlines the annual sacrifices offered on Rosh Hashanah. Every Rosh Chodesh is marked with a burnt-offering and a sin-offering.³ Yet, when the Torah lists the additional offerings that are brought to celebrate Rosh Hashanah, it notes that these additional offerings are brought “besides the burnt offering of the new month,”⁴ which implies that indeed the sin-offering of Rosh Chodesh is replaced by the special sin-offering of Rosh Hashanah.⁵

Other classic commentators notice this implication, but do not draw such dramatic conclusions. Instead, they posit that the omission of the sin-offering of the new month reflects, not any sacrificial change, but a liturgical one. On Rosh Hashanah, we should make no mention of the fact that it is also Rosh Chodesh in our daily prayers and blessings.⁶ This, too, is the meaning of the verse in Tehillim when it states that when we sound the shofar

on Rosh Hashanah, the new month will be obscured. Still, other commentators detect an even more subtle concealment of Rosh Chodesh on Rosh Hashanah. Ritually speaking, nothing is omitted from the usual Rosh Chodesh observance. Rather, the concealment alluded to in the Torah and spelled out in Tehillim anticipates a sociological occurrence: engrossed with the greater day of Rosh Hashanah, it will not even dawn on the minds of the Jewish People that it is Rosh Chodesh, too. All our preoccupations and preparations will be exclusively dedicated to the Day of Judgment.⁷

Like a lunar eclipse, which occurs when the sun, earth, and moon align, Rosh Chodesh, the celebration of the new moon, is eclipsed on Rosh Hashanah when they annually align. Why? The question is more compelling for those who believe that on Rosh Hashanah either the Rosh Chodesh sin-offering is omitted from the sacrificial service or that we ignore the new month in our tefillos in shul. Yet, even according to the position that the eclipsing of Rosh Chodesh is most subtle and merely sociological, the phenomenon is apparently significant enough to be captured in Tehillim.

³ Bamidbar 29:11, 15.

⁴ Ibid. 29:6.

⁵ BT Rosh Hashanah 8b; see Tosafos ibid., d”h She’ha’chodesh; BT Eruvin 40a, d”h Zikaron, BT Beitzah 16a, d”h Ba’keseh.

⁶ Eruvin 3:9.

⁷ Ritva, BT Rosh Hashanah ibid.



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A clue as to why Rosh Hashanah obscures Rosh Chodesh can be found in the following midrash, which expresses the idea that the moon symbolizes various aspects of the Jewish People:

Rabbi Levi in the name of Rabbi Yosi bar Ilai said: “It is appropriate that the bigger one count according to the bigger and the smaller one to count according to the smaller. Eisav counts according to the sun, which is bigger, and Yaakov counts according to the moon, which is smaller.”

Rabbi Nachman said, “this is a good sign that Eisav follows the sun [solar calendar], which is great. For just like the sun rules at day but not at night, so too, Eisav has a portion in this world but none in the World to Come. Whereas Yaakov follows the moon [lunar calendar], which is small. Just like the moon rules at night but also at day, so too Yaakov has a portion in this world and in the World to Come.”⁸

The Jewish People’s association with the moon is reflected in the fact that the very first mitzvah given to the Jewish People as a nation, on the eve of their emancipation from Egypt, was the mitzvah to sanctify the new moon and order its yearly calendar according to the lunar cycle. Unlike the rest of the nations of the world that base their year on the solar calendar, this mitzvah would set the Jewish People

apart, orienting them to not only a different pattern of time but a completely different belief system and lifestyle. In other words, the Jewish People’s unique relationship with the moon represents their particular identity and destiny, which is affirmed every Rosh Chodesh.

The themes of Rosh Hashanah, however, are not specific to the Jewish People. Although its formal observance is exclusively commemorated by the Jewish People, the judgment that is rendered and the coronation of Hashem as King through the sounding of the shofar have universal implications. On this day, all peoples of the world are judged: “On Rosh Hashanah, all human beings pass before Him like young sheep, as it is said: ‘From heaven, Hashem looks down; He sees all mankind. From His dwelling place He gazes on all the inhabitants of the earth. He Who fashions the hearts of them all, who discerns all their doings.’”⁹ Likewise, all citizens of the world are expected to recognize their true King. The liturgy on Rosh Hashanah is replete with this hope. For example, we fervently pray on both days: “Let everything that has been made know that You are its Maker, let everything that has been molded understand that You are its Molder, and let everything with a life’s breath in its nostril proclaim: Hashem, the G-d of Israel, is King, and His Kingship rules

⁸ Bereishis Rabbah 6:3.

⁹ Tehillim 33:12–15; Rosh Hashanah 1:2.

overeverything.”

Unlike the holidays of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot, which commemorate the Jewish People’s particular historical experience, frame the country’s agricultural success in religious terms, and perpetuate a value system unique to the nation, Rosh Hashanah has a broader purview, with relevance beyond our territorial borders and cultural boundaries. Since on Rosh Hashanah universal interests are predominant, it follows that its observance should eclipse,

to some degree, Rosh Chodesh, which celebrates Jewish particularity.

Rabbeinu Tam, however, avoided this conclusion entirely, insisting that Teshuvah does not speak of concealment whatsoever on Rosh Hashanah. Recall that, according to him, the proper translation of the verse is: “Blow the shofar at the moon’s renewal (ba’chodesh), at the time appointed (ba’kesheh) for our festive day.” In fact, Rabbeinu Tam inserted into his text of the Rosh Hashanah liturgy an explicit reference to the Rosh Chodesh sin-offering brought on Rosh Hashanah. Similarly, in his opinion, the blessing

that is recited in the tefillos of Rosh Hashanah that concludes with a reference to “The Day of Remembrance,” includes both Rosh Hashanah and Rosh Chodesh, as both are referred to in the Torah with the phrase “remembrance.”¹⁰ How are we to explain these dramatically different approaches to the treatment of Rosh Chodesh on Rosh Hashanah?

In Tishrei, in the future the Jewish People will be redeemed in the final redemption with the coming of the Mashiach.

In our tradition, there are two basic schools of thought concerning the orientation of Judaism toward other nations of the world. Does the Torah embody a universal message or is

it only addressed to the Jewish People? Is Judaism only concerned with its own destiny or that of all mankind? These questions are at the heart of the debate between Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua regarding when the world was created and when the Jewish People will be redeemed:

Rabbi Eliezer says: In Tishrei the world was created; in Nissan the Jewish People were redeemed from Egypt; and in Tishrei, in the future the Jewish People will be redeemed in the final redemption with the coming of the Mashiach.

Rabbi Yehoshua says: In Nissan, the world was created; in Nissan, the

¹⁰ Eruvin 40a.

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Jewish People were redeemed from Egypt; and in Nissan, in the future the Jewish People will be redeemed in the final redemption with the coming of the Mashiach.¹¹

Certainly, these sages are not arguing about facts — about when these events actually occurred or will occur. Rather, their difference of opinion hinges on how to conceptualize these events. Nissan and Tishrei are not actual dates but code words expressing whether a given event has particular or universal significance, respectively. Since both sages define the Jewish People's emancipation from enslavement in Egypt as a moment that is primarily meaningful only to the Jewish People, they agree that it took place in Nissan. They diverge, however, when it comes to “dating” the beginning and end of time:

According to Rabbi Eliezer, the significance of the creation of the world and its ultimate redemption is not limited to the Jewish People but to all of mankind. Hence, these events take place in Tishrei.

Rabbi Yehoshua dissents, believing

that all of world history has been arranged for the sole benefit of the Jewish People. Consequently, both the creation of the world and its ultimate redemption take place in Nissan.

These two schools of thought reverberate in the debate between Rabbeinu Meshulam and Rabbeinu Tam regarding the relationship between

Rosh Hashanah and Rosh Chodesh:

Like Rabbi Eliezer, Rabbeinu Meshulam believes that the Torah's scope

transcends the particularism of the Jewish nation. The Torah intends to transform all of humanity. To achieve this ambitious goal, the Jewish People are called upon to be God's “firstborn”¹² and “a light unto the nations.”¹³ Therefore, the universal themes of Rosh Hashanah, which are the objectives of creation, are fundamentally independent of the Jewish nation's particular heritage. Not to lose sight of these universal aims, Rosh Hashanah conceals aspects of Rosh Chodesh.

Like Rabbi Yehoshua, Rabbeinu Tam asserts that the nations of the world are the background to the Jewish People's center stage. The Torah is a blueprint not for mankind, but only for

The Torah intends to transform all of humanity.

¹¹ BT Rosh Hashanah 10b–11a.

¹² Shemos 4:22.

¹³ Yeshayahu 49:6.



the ideal society to be created by the Jewish People alone. Even the themes of Rosh Hashanah, which are universally relevant, are only there to create a proper working framework within which the Jewish nation can thrive. In other words, the universal is truly subordinate to the particular. As a result, Rosh Chodesh can never be obscured by Rosh Hashanah.

The midrash mentioned above that compares the Jewish People to the moon extends the simile and concludes:

Rabbi Nachman said further: “As long as the light of the bigger one exists, the light of the smaller one isn’t visible.

Once the light of the bigger one fades, the light of the smaller one becomes visible. So long as the light of Eisav exists, Yaakov’s light is not visible. But once Eisav’s light fades, Yaakov’s light becomes visible.”¹⁴

Whether Judaism is a universalistic or particularistic enterprise may be a matter of interpretation. One thing, however, is incontrovertible: although throughout history the Jewish nation has been periodically eclipsed, with the darkness sometimes lasting for ages, its light will shine bright yet again.

¹⁴ Bereishis Rabbah 6:3.

THE CONTROVERSIAL YOMIM NORAIM SEATING CHART

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THE CONTROVERSIAL YOMIM NORAIM SEATING CHART

Question: Shuls often need to be creative with seating arrangements on the Yomim Noraim, as the shul is usually filled to capacity. This is especially true this year, where some shuls are still practicing some form of social distancing. May a shul convert part of its women's section into a men's section and respectfully request that women stay home?

Short Answer: Last year, R' Zilberstein shlita wrote a teshuvah ruling that a shul in general may politely request that women cede their spots to men. However, the shul may not ask the women to cede their spots for the Yomim Noraim.

Explanation:

I. WOMAN'S OBLIGATION IN MINYAN

As an initial matter, the poskim are

clear that a woman does not have any obligation or requirement to daven with a minyan.

The Shvus Yaakov (R' Yaakov Reisher, d.1733) has a fascinating teshuva on this topic. A person had a set long-standing minyan in his house. One room was for the men, and one room for the women. After the person got upset and one of the "congregants" and his wife, he wanted to forbid them from attending his house minyan. The Shvus Yaakov ruled that he was not allowed to forbid the man from attending, as the house was "muchzak" (established) as a shul even by the previous owner and thus is viewed as communal property. However, he can forbid the woman, even though she is also obligated to daven, because she is not obligated to daven with a minyan. Indeed, she does not count towards the ten required to create a minyan. [See also Piskei Teshuvos (O"C 90:8) who cites the Teshuvah M'ahavah as holding that women have no

obligation to daven with a minyan. Indeed, the Teshuvah M'ahavah writes vehemently against women even attending minyan based on the Zohar].

There are numerous ramifications that result from a woman's lack of obligation to daven with a minyan. The Ishei Yisroel (12:21:48), citing the Avnei Yashfe in the name of R' Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, rules that, as opposed to a man, a woman who comes late to shul should not skip pesukei d'zimrah in order to say shemoneh esrei together with the tzibbur because she has no obligation to daven with a minyan. [Notably, the Ishei Yisroel (ibid) cites R' Chaim Kanievsky shlita who disagrees, that since she is in shul already, she must follow the rules of davening with a minyan. However, R' Chaim is not suggesting that she has a separate obligation to come to shul to daven with a minyan].

Additionally, the Avnei Yashfe (5:42) writes that it is much better for a woman to daven at optimal times than with a minyan. Although this rule is not always true by a man (i.e. mincha ketana vs. mincha gedolah), a woman is different, as she is not obligated to daven with a minyan.

Another potential ramification concerns shul dues and building funds. If a woman is not obligated to daven with a minyan, is she (for example, a single woman or widow), obligated to donate to the shul building fund? The

Meir Oz (150:1) leaves this question unanswered.

The Vilna Goan (in a letter to his family, "Alim L'trufah") writes that it is indeed preferable for his wife/daughters not to attend shul, as seeing other women in fancy clothes will lead to jealousy and lashon hara.

There is also the added factor, relevant primarily in chassidische circles, for women to stay home and not attend shul because of tznius issues for the men in shul. See Nishmas Shabbos (2:240).

II. A SPECIAL ZECHUS

Despite a woman's lack of an obligation to daven with a minyan, it is a special zechus for her to do so. Indeed, the sefer Halichas Bas Yisroel (2:26) notes this special zechus for a woman. The source (as cited therein in the footnotes) is from a Yalkut Shimon (Eikev 879) where a holy woman who used to daven daily with a minyan was able to thwart off death. Only when she missed three days of minyanim did she succumb to her death.

Indeed, the Chessed L'Alaphim (R' Eliezer Papo, d. 1828, Siman 104) writes that it is preferable that women go to shul to daven with a minyan. While he does not appear to be saying she is obligated to do so, he certainly stresses the advantages of her attending shul.

Moreover, the sefer Halichos Beisah

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(6:13) notes that the source of “schar halichah” (reward for walking to shul) is actually learned from a Gemara regarding a woman who walked to a farther shul and remarked to R’ Yo-chanan that she did not attend the closer shul because she wanted the special reward for walking a longer distance to shul.

Finally, the Avnei Yashfe (ibid) writes in the name of R’ Y.S. Elyshiv zt”l that a woman gets special reward for davening with a minyan. This fits nicely with the minhag of Rebbetzin Kanievsky, aleha hashalom (cited in B’nesivos H’halachah, p.28) that she davened with a minyan whenever possible.

III. WHO TAKES PRECEDENCE?

In light of the above, it would appear clear that if there is not enough room for men in the men’s section (and there is no option of making multiple minyanim), the shul should convert the women’s section into a men’s section, as men take precedence, as they have an obligation/mitzvah to daven with a minyan. Only if there is enough room for everyone, do we open up the shul for women as well.

However, last year, R’ Yitzchak Zilberstein, shlita (Pninei Chashukei Chemed, Vol. 3, p.12) wrote a teshuvah on this very topic in connection to Covid-19. First, he suggests that perhaps we should not prevent women from attending shul, as R’ Akiva Eiger, writing during the Cholera epidemic, advised the men & women -- both in shul and

at private house minyanim that were created to help stop the spread -- to space out their seating to avoid contagion. R’ Zilberstein says that you see that R’ Akiva Eiger preferred house minyanim than men davening in the ezras nashim and asking women to daven at home without a minyan.

However, R’ Zilberstein then cites a story with R’ Shach zt”l that he proposes proves otherwise. One Yomim Noraim when Ponovizh Yeshiva needed extra space for the bachurim to daven, R’ Shach was unwilling to split the ezras nashim in half and thereby remove half the women’s seats and give them to the bachurim, as he felt that there is a special zechus in the brokenhearted women (who would likely have been excluded) davening with the Yeshiva minyan. However, R’ Zilberstein writes that these brokenhearted women only provide this special zechus on the Yomim Noraim, where there is a special koach hat’filah. Throughout the year, on the other hand, it would have been preferable to replace the ezras nashim and fill it with male bachurim.

R’ Zilberstein subsequently retracts this opinion based on the Bris Yaakov (R’ Boruch Mordechai Lipschitz, a contemporary of R’ Yitzchak Elchanon Spector, late 1800s), who ruled that a shul must have a women’s section, as women are also obligated to daven and we find numerous references in the Gemara where women davened in a shul. R’ Zilberstein notes that this is not necessarily the case nowadays,

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when women otherwise would daven at home, not like in the time of the Bris Yaakov.

R' Zilberstein thus concludes that because men are obligated in minyan, and women are not, a shul can gently request that the women cede their spots and thus use the ezras nashim for men. Interestingly, he adds that the women should agree, as they take care of their husbands' well-being, and want to ensure that he has a place to sit in shul.

However, R' Zilberstein is clear that the Yomim Noraim are different. Based on the story with R' Shach, a shul may not make this request of women for the Yomim Noraim. A shul thus cannot use its women's section for men on the Yomim Noraim, unless there is enough room for all women as well.

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