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Inside:

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10 Thoughts  
for Rosh Hashana

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**Rabbi Aaron Lankry**

*Marah D'asra*  
305-332-3311  
alankry@gmail.com

**Rabbi Daniel Coren**

*דומ"צ - מגיד שייעור*  
914-645-4199  
rabbidac@gmail.com

**Rabbi Nachum Scheiner**

*Executive Director*  
*Rosh Kollel, Kollel Boker & Night Kollel*  
845-587-3462  
rabbisheiner@18forshay.com

**Sholom Ber Sternberg**

*Director of Operations*  
office@18forshay.com

**Shmulie Fruchter**

*Facilities Manager*  
manager@18forshay.com

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CANDLE LIGHTING	6:59 <sup>PM</sup>
MINCHA in tent Aleph	7:00 <sup>PM</sup>
CHABAD MINCHA	7:09 <sup>PM</sup>
SHKIYA	7:17 <sup>PM</sup>

**SHABBOS SHACHRIS MINYANIM:**

VASIKIN followed by Daf Yomi Shiur, 20↑	5:51 <sup>AM</sup>
Shachris 1 18 Main	8:00 <sup>AM</sup>
Shachris 2 Tent x	9:15 <sup>AM</sup>
Shachris 3 BAIS CHABAD 20↑	10:00 <sup>AM</sup>
Shachris 4 18 Main	10:30 <sup>AM</sup>

PIRCHEI	2:00 <sup>PM</sup>
PIRKEI AVOS PEREK Hay and Vav	
MINCHA FOLLOWED BY SHALOSH SEUDOS	6:55 <sup>PM</sup>
SHKIYA	7:15 <sup>PM</sup>
MAARIV 1	7:55 <sup>PM</sup>
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Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag  
and 12 min. before Shkia

**NEITZ**

S 6:32 | M 6:33 | T 6:34 | W 6:35  
T 6:36 | F 6:37 | SH 6:38

**SHEMA- Magen Avraham**

S 9:00 | M 9:00 | T 9:01 | W 9:01  
T 9:01 | F 9:02 | SH 9:02

**SHEMA- GRA**

S 9:42 | M 9:42 | T 9:42 | W 9:43  
T 9:43 | F 9:43 | SH 9:44

**TEFILA- GRA**

S 10:45 | M 10:45 | T 10:46 | W 10:46  
T 10:46 | F 10:46 | SH 10:46

**CHATZOS**

S 12:52 | M 12:52 | T 12:52 | W 12:51  
T 12:51 | F 12:51 | SH 12:50

**PLAG**

S 5:54 | M 5:53 | T 5:51 | W 5:50  
T 5:49 | F 5:47 | SH 5:46

**SHKIA**

S 7:14 | M 7:12 | T 7:10 | W 7:09  
T 7:07 | F 7:05 | SH 7:04

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Rabbi Lankry *Dear Kehila,*

## Haftorat Netzavim Vayelech

This week's Haftora is the last of the seven that give *nechama* to the nation. The Navi writes that the greatest consolation is the fact that Hashem himself will return to us. Now that every other dimension of redemption is in place, the time has finally arrived for Hashem to rest His Divine Presence amongst His people. Eretz Yisroel has been revived, Jerusalem has been rebuilt, the exiles have returned en masse, but the ultimate objective has yet to be seen. In response to this, the prophet Yeshaya quotes the Jewish people saying, "I will be gladdened by Hashem, my soul will rejoice in my G-d." (61,10).

Chazal in *Yalkut Shimoni* (505) view the Jewish people's response to be specifically related to the return of Hashem to Jerusalem. The Jewish people respond to all the magnificent prophecies of their glorious future and proclaim that their true source of happiness is but one, the return of Hashem to His beloved people. They sorely long for the privilege of sensing the presence of Hashem amongst them and feeling the closeness and love He has for His people. They resolve that they will be gladdened and happy only through His return to them.

The Rambam in his commentary to the *Mishna Sanhedrin* speaks about the various groups of people that believe in the ultimate reward that comes from performing the *mitzvot* of Hashem.

The first group thinks that the reward is *Gan Eden* where we enjoy every type of pleasure there is. A place where we eat and drink without any effort and we live in the most magnificent homes, we sleep in the most comfortable beds with silk covers and tapestry. A place surrounded with rivers of flowing wine and all kinds of pleasures at hand. *Gehenim* with all kinds of pain and suffering is the opposite of this potential good.

The second group thinks the great reward is the days of *Mashiach*. Then we will all live like angels with eternal lives, and we will dominate the world. The land will give forth woven clothing and baked bread, and all kinds of instant pleasures. The worst thing is to not be included as part of those days, therefore we should all do *mitzvot* to take part of those days.

The third group thinks the greatest reward is the resurrection of the dead, when we will be reunited with all our loved ones from the past. The worst thing is missing that opportunity.

The fourth group thinks that the pleasures are here and now. If we do the *mitzvot* then we will obtain all the goodness in this world. If we don't, we live miserable lives.

The fifth group thinks it's the combination of all of the above as one.

The Rambam explains that these beliefs are all NOT TRUE! The Rambam gives a parable of a young child who receives a candy as incentive to learn. As he gets older, the reward is a toy and then a bike. Later it becomes a car or a good *shidduch* opportunity, a job, and a reputation of being a smart man etc. However, the real pleasure a person receives from learning is that they have obtained knowledge and become a complete person.

The greatest pleasure and reward of Torah and *mitzvot* is having a close relationship with Hashem. When you are part of Hashem's world, all of the other pleasures are worthless, even the lofty ones when we have become angelic. The resurrection, and *mashiach* too, are trivial in comparison. *Mashiach*, *Techiyat Hamaytim* and living eternally are good, but there is nothing like going home to Hashem and being His child again. We should all just yearn to be embraced by Hashem and live with Him as one; that is the greatest and highest pleasure.

We yearn every day for *mashiach* but not simply in order to end the suffering of this life. Rather, it is a means to get closer to Hashem. The goal of the *techiya* and angelic life is not simply to see our loved ones and live eternally; rather, it is to be eternally connected to Hashem.



## Apple and Honey

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

We are a week away from taking the dip into the honey. For many years I was to be involved in *kirov rechokim* and now with *kirov kerovim* as well and throughout all this time, I have posed one of my favorite questions: What is the secret of the apple in honey? How does the apple dunking transform the coming year and make it sweet? When I ask this question, people are curious and are forced to think much deeper into the meaning of this act. In truth this question is not just a conceptual one. It's a halachic one too. There is a prohibition of *ניחוש* which means to create omens and attribute powers to them that may have an effect on one's life. Yet the Gemara and the Shulchan Aruch offer a list of fruits and vegetables that one should eat on Rosh Hashana and the Rama adds the apple in honey. Surely these can be perceived as omens of sorts. How are these two adaptations reconciled?

The answer is not so simple. One explanation is hinted at in the words of the Mishna Berura who writes that when eating these items one should be reciting a prayer. This indicates that the essence of the act really isn't the fruit and vegetables. Rather it's the trigger that one receives from the items that inspires us to call out and pray to Hashem. This would be the simple explanation for combining the apple and honey.

However R Shlomo Kluger in his commentary to the Shulchan Aruch entitled *Chochmas Shlomo* gives us a much deeper understating of the apple and honey combination. R Kluger says that the idea represents the concept *כל מה דעביד רחמנא לטב עביד* -- whatever the merciful one does is for the best. In fact, the Shulchan Aruch in *סימן ער* writes that there is an obligation for a person to always say these words. It is interesting to note that most people don't use these words, but say instead an abbreviated version of the words—*גם זו לטובה*, this too is for the best.

One could say that this is just easier and shorter to recite but the Baal Shem made a beautiful distinction between the two sayings. The difference is based on who said each statement. The first was said by Rabbi Akiva when he was alone in the forest with only a rooster, donkey and a candle. Slowly each item was taken away from him and in the morning that the flame went out, he realized that it had actually saved his life. He found out later that during the night a group of bandits looted and killed the entire neighboring village and if not for the light going out and the donkey and rooster making noise, his location would have been found and he too would have been harmed.

The second statement, *גם זו לטובה*, is based on Nachum ish Gumzu who was Rabbi Akiva's rebbi. The statement was mentioned following on a mission that he was sent on to save the Jews. He was given a box of precious stones to deliver to the king and on the way he stopped overnight to sleep at an inn. During the night, the innkeeper stole the precious stones from the box and filled it instead with earth. Nachum went on his way in the morning not suspecting a thing and when he opened the box in front of the king, it was earth he found and not precious stones. The king was quite upset with a present of earth and was about to send Nachum off to prison when one of the guards (who happened to be Eliyahu Hanavi) suggested that it might be the same earth that Avraham Avinu used to fight the 4 mighty kings and that it had special powers. The king agreed to try it out and he successfully vanquished his enemies. Nachum was rewarded with great wealth and on the way back to his home town, he stopped by the same inn and told the people there, including the innkeeper, what had ensued. They were, of course, shocked and decided to knock down their house and bring the earth to the king. Obviously it didn't work out as they wished.

What is the difference between the two great rabbis and why is it that the Shulchan Aruch tells us to choose Rabbi Akiva's words? And how does this connect to Rosh Hashana and the dipping of the apple in the honey? Let me know what you think.

Wednesday Night 8pm – Smichas chaver Rabbi Coren Office  
Shabbos Morning - Vasikin Minyan & 8:00am Minyan

# Hilchos Esrog – Source for the disqualification of chaseir

by Rabbi Nachum Scheiner



When it comes to finding a nice *esrog*, there is also a disqualification of *chaseir* – missing.

What is the source for the disqualification of *chaseir*? Tosfos (34b) states that we learn this from the word וּלְקַחְתֶּם, which is explained to mean that a person must take the four minim completely, and a half-job is worthless. This includes the requirement to take all four, and it is all or nothing. It also includes the requirement to take a complete *esrog*.

## Chaseir – a disqualification on the 1st day or all the days?

However, Tosfos raises the following question: there seems to be a difference between these two requirements. The requirement of taking all four species is applicable to the entire Sukkos, whereas the requirement to take a complete *esrog* is only for the 1<sup>st</sup> day.

Interestingly, we also find this concept in regards to the requirement of *lachim*, owning the four species, where there is a similar discrepancy and some requirements learned from this pasuk apply to the entire Sukkos, and some are only for the 1<sup>st</sup> day.

As we know, on the first day of Sukkos one must own the *lulav* and *esrog*, in order to fulfill the mitzvah. However, the rest of Sukkos, one may use a borrowed *lulav* and *esrog*. This is learned from the word “*lachim*,” it must be yours. On the other hand, we find that an *esrog* from an *arlah* tree – the first three years of the tree, when one may not derive any benefit from the fruits – is disqualified the entire Sukkos. This regulation is also learned from the word “*lachim*” – it must be usable for all your needs. The question is obvious: when is it disqualified for the entire Sukkos and when is it limited to the first day?

Tosfos in the beginning of the perek addresses this very question and explains that the rule of thumb is as follows: Taking the four species on the first day of Sukkos is a Scriptural requirement and all of the regulations apply. However, the other days, it is only a Scriptural requirement in the Beis Hamikdash; today it is a rabbinical mandate, in order to remember the Beis Hamikdash.

Tosfos, therefore, suggests that the only regulations that were stipulated by the Chachamim in regards to the other days were the ones that are built in to the actual taking of the four species. Hence, the requirement to take all four and having *hadar* is required throughout

Sukkos, but an *esrog* which is *chaseir* and is just missing a part or a borrowed *lulav* and *esrog* is only disqualified on the first day.

**Rabbi Nachum Scheiner**

**מוהל מומחה**

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One important point to add is that although a *chaseir* is kosher on the other days, the Raavad and the *Bikurei Yaakov*, among others, posit that it is still better to try to use a *shaleim*. This is not because of the requirement of *hadar*; rather it is because of the regulation of “*v’anveihu*,” which is the general requirement to beautify mitzvos.

## In conclusion

An *esrog* which is *chaseir* and is just missing a part is only considered a disqualification on the first day, and can be used on the other days of Sukkos.

## Rabbi Scheiner

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# Singing My Sins?



Rabbi YY Jacobson

“Coronation Night” – that is how one of the great spiritual masters would define the night of Rosh Hashanah.

In a 1974 sermon, Rabbi Yosef Dov Soloveitchik (1903-1993), one of the great Jewish thinkers of the last century, related that when he was a young child learning in *cheder* (Jewish day school), in the Russian village of Chaslavitch, in the days preceding Rosh Hashanah, he could recognize in his teacher an extraordinary sense of trepidation.

“Our teacher, who was a Chabad Chassid (disciple), said to us: ‘Do you know what Rosh Hashanah is? The Rebbe the Tzemach Tzedek would call the night of Rosh Hashanah – ‘Karanatzia Nacht’ (‘Coronation Night’).

“Do you know whom we will be coronating?” the teacher asked the children.

The young Soloveitchik prodigy responded in jest: “Nicholas”. (This was a number of years before the 1917 Russian Revolution, when Nicholas still served as the Russian czar).

And the poor teacher of Chaslavitch responded: “Nicholas? He was coronated years ago, why do we need to coronate him again? Besides, he?! He is not a real king...”

“Tonight, my dear children, we coronate G-d; we place a crown on G-d...”

“And do you know who places the crown?” The teacher continued. “Yankel the Tailor, Berel the Shoemaker, Zalman the water-carrier, Yossel the painter, Dovid the butcher...”

Rabbi Soloveitchik concluded: Over the years I have given many sermons and written many discourses on the concept of Rosh Hashanah, but nothing ever made me feel the true depth and power of the day as the words of my childhood teacher. Every year, when I recite in the Rosh Hashanah prayers the words, ‘Rule over the whole world in Your glory,’ I remember my teacher in Chaslavitch.

## The Essence

How much of Judaism is compressed in this brief conversation between teacher and students? In a few words, a poverty-stricken Jewish teacher in a small shtetl in Russia gave his seven-year-old students the core, the essence, the very marrow of Jewish existence, of Jewish thought.

Now he needed not explain to them why they should marry Jewish girls, continue living as Jews, be proud of their Jewishness, as so many teachers and educators today. It was more than obvious: Who would want to miss out on the opportunity of coronating G-d?

## Why Bother?

But why does G-d need us to coronate Him? If G-d created us, does He really need us to declare Him king; He is the boss regardless?

Yet here lay one of the great and daring ideas of Judaism. G-d, the perfect endless one, desired to be king not through power or by the dictates of nature. He desired to be chosen as king; He wanted a relationship with someone distinct of Him who would freely choose to construct a bond with G-d.

So an infinite, omnipotent G-d suspends His infinity, suppresses His endlessness and concealed His omnipotence, in order to allow space for an intelligent, independent and self-oriented human being who is then capable of choosing G-d as his or her king.

## The Night

This, the spiritual masters explained, is the meaning of Rosh Hashanah, the day when the first human was created. It is the day when small, frail, vulnerable and lowly human beings invite G-d to serve as their King.

G-d could place His own crown on His head, but then He would be a dictator, not a king; the relationship would be coerced not chosen. So G-d waits all year for this great moment for which the entire universe was created – the moment when you and I coronate Him as our king.

Rosh Hashanah is the most moving day in the Jewish calendar. More than any other day, it embodies the meaning of human existence and the vulnerability of a G-d who linked His fate to man’s.

Happy Coronation Night.

Womens Shiur **Tuesday** 9:30am (18 Main)  
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## UFARATZTA

### ELUL: EESH L’REIEIHU UMATANOS L’EVYONIM

-Continued from last week’s BET-

In short: On a market-day, when the Tzemach Tzedek was on the way to shul for *shacharis*, the merchant Mordechai Eliyahu asked the Tzemach Tzedek for a loan. The Tzemach Tzedek answered, when I come back from *shul*, come to my house and will give you the money.”

As the Tzemach Tzedek entered the *shul*, he

## GEMILUS CHASSADIM IS GREATER THAN GIVING TZEDAKA

thought of what Reb Elazar said: Give a coin to a poor person and then *daven*. He also remembered what our Rabbis said that a *gemilus chassadim* is greater than *tzedaka*. The holy Tzemach Tzedek thought to himself that he did not do the right thing by not giving Mordechai Eliyahu the money that he needed right away.

The Tzemach Tzedek returned home, took the money and went to the marketplace looking for Mordechai Elyohu. In the meantime, many merchants gathered with their goods on displays in wagons, and after great effort, the Tzemach Tzedek found Mordechai Eliyahu and gave him the rubles he asked for. Then he returned to the *shul*

to *daven*.

When the Tzemach Tzedek donned his *tallis* and *tefillin*, the Alter Rebbe suddenly appeared to him with a shining, happy face and said to him, “whoever gives a free loan to a person with a full heart, without any ulterior motives, or does a favor to another with love, fulfilling the commandment of “*V’ahavta L’reiacha Kamocho*,” the gates of the heavens above are open to him!”

---- from Rebbe’s letter. *Otzar Igros Kodesh B’nai Hayeshivos* edition P111

**Erev Rosh Hashana: Yom Holedes of the Tzemach Tzedek, 3rd Chabad Rebbe.**



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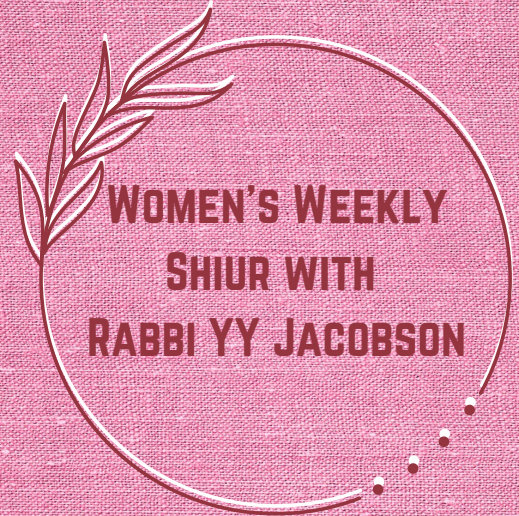
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# Gan HaTorah

- RABBI YAKOV YOSEF SCHECHTER

## TIME TO RENEW OUR CONNECTION WITH HASHEM –

### DON'T LET IT GET STALE

“אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני ד' אלקיכם” – The first *Medrash* of *Parshas Nitzavim* discusses *halachos* of *Tefillah*, the *zmanim* of *tefillas* and what happens if one misses them. What is the connection between this *parshah*, and the *Halachos* of *tefillah*?

The word “תפילה” denotes connection. *tefillah* is all about man cleaving to Hashem. It is very difficult for a being of flesh and blood, one who is tainted by the *nachash*, the *yetzer hara*, to bring himself close to Hashem. Avrohom was the first to accomplish this feat, to transcend this physical world, and to form a personal bond with Hashem through the medium of *tefillah*. Avrohom Avinu was able to establish *Shachris*, the morning *tefillah*, which is symbolic of a world illuminated by Hashem’s attribute of loving-kindness, when Hashem looks upon mankind with favor. Avrohom’s *tefillah* begins with the morning light. The word “בקר”, morning, is related to the word, “ביקור”, discernment, because it is a time of clear vision. A time to discern between one object and another. The morning *tefillah* is a period of clarity, when one can clearly see *Hakodosh-Boruch-Hu*.

Yitzchok Avinu built upon his father’s great accomplishment, as he was mesaken a *tefillah* recited after the middle day, when the day fades and the evening comes in. The dwindling light of the afternoon period represents a time when *Hakodosh Boruch Hu*’s

loving kindness is mixed with strict judgment. Yitzchok showed us that even when there is a mix of light and darkness, one can still be *mispalet* to Hashem, and bring himself close to Hashem.

Yaakov accomplished that which was greater than both Avrohom and Yitzchok. Yaakov Avinu was mesaken a *tefillah* recited at night, in complete darkness. The darkness symbolizes a time when Hashem is turning His face away from mankind. Yaakov showed us that even when there is not a glimmer of light, a glimmer of hope, one can still break through to the Heavens with his *tefillah* and create a connection with Hashem.

Why was there a need for a new covenant if there was already one at Sinai? The purpose of a covenant is to make sure that the connection between Hashem and *Klal Yisroel* does not become old and stale. It must remain fresh. Moshe was about to leave this world, and *Klal Yisroel* feared that perhaps they would not be able to have that same connection to Hashem without Moshe. There was another *bris* made so that *Klal Yisroel* would know that even in a time of darkness, hopelessness, *Hakodosh-Boruch-Hu* is always there for us. We have a Covenant with Him, and all we need to do is call out to Him. Yaakov taught us that even in the darkest of darkness, *Hakodosh-Boruch-Hu* is there. We may not be able to see Him, but we must know that He is there. We must dig deep into the recesses of our hearts and be *Mispalet* to Him with all of our hearts. If we do so, we can break through the darkness and forge a deep connection with the *Ribbono Shel Olam*.

## Bringing it all Together

*Parshas Nitzavim* tells us that “today” we are all together (a reference to Rosh Hashanah). From the water carrier to leaders of our nation. The symbolism is powerful: we cannot stand in front of the Hashem unless we are *b’achdus*.

This is especially important to us today in a world that has never been more polarized. We might think that because of what we have and who we are, that we are better than others, but that’s just not the case. Hashem looks at us as one nation, each one of us is vitally important. In Hashem’s eyes there is no place for vanity.

But there is a deeper message here. *Lev yodaiya maras nafsho*. Deep down inside we all know what we have done wrong this year. When we prepare to do teshuva, a certain feeling could overtake us. A little voice inside of us might start to whisper: haven’t we done this all before? Didn’t we stand in shul last year on Rosh Hashanah and promise to change, and yet here we are again, so thoroughly unchanged!

Is our life a merry-go-round, on and off without any real regard for where we are ultimately going?

Can we really change the pattern?

Are we strong enough in our core?

These thoughts may lead us to spiritual malaise, *yeush*. The *Yetzer Harah* convinces us that we will never get it right...

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



So we simply go through the motions on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. There’s a different path to Teshuva. There have been days when we were not at our best. We may have had behaviors that are not worth repeating, and we know it. But just as our children will not behave better if we constantly remind them how bad they are, we cannot make self-criticism our focus.

*Atem nitzavim kulchem hayom*. The *posuk* says, all of you are here today; on Rosh Hashanah, all of your actions, both good and bad. Treating yourself kindly will increase your chances of changing greatly! Think of all the good things you did this year. The *chesed*, the learning, the *mitzvos*. The times you cared, really cared for another. Gaze on the entirety of your life, the entirety of your behavior when you stand before Hashem and you will be strong in your efforts to change in the coming year.

*Lulei he’emanti liros b’Tuv* (if I would only look at the good!) This a potent line that we say twice each day this time of year. The letters of the word *lulei*, rearranged, give “Elul.” And furthermore the gematria of “Elul” is the gematria of the word “chayim”/ life. For a good life in the coming year, we must look towards all the good we have done. This will bring out the Godliness inherent in our *neshoma* and sweeten all judgment.

Written by R’ Avrohom Hillel Reich based on a lesson and story by Harav Ben Tziyon Sneh Shlita



# WHY TESHUVAH WORKS

Rabbi Avraham Twersky

"It shall be that when many evils and distresses come upon it, then this song shall speak up before it as a witness for it shall not be forgotten from the mouth of its offspring, for I know its inclination" (Deut. 31:21).

Malbim interprets this verse as a Divine promise to be forgiving when the Children of Israel will do *teshuvah*, repent.

Malbim cites the Talmud which states that the prophet Elijah pleaded for the Israelites who had become idolatrous, saying to G-d, "It was You Who made it possible for them to go astray," and that G-d admitted, "Yes, I created the *yetzer hara*, the evil inclination" Forgiveness requires *teshuvah*: regret for having sinned and a sincere resolution not to repeat the sinful act. But why is *teshuvah* effective? If a person commits a crime and pleads before the judge, "I'm sorry I did it and I promise I will never do it again," this will hardly stop the judge from imposing a penalty.

*Teshuvah* is effective because G-d understands how vulnerable we are to the cunning and temptations of the *yetzer hara*. Therefore, if we realize that we have been duped by the *yetzer hara*, G-d takes this into consideration. The chassidic master, the Shpoler Zeide, used to plead for his people, "Master of the universe! You have placed temptations before people's eyes, but the punishments of *Gehinnom* (hell) are described in the books. If You had placed *Gehinnom* right before people's eyes and the temptations in the books, I assure You, no one would sin."

There is no justification for sin, but if a person who has sinned does *teshuvah*, G-d assumes part of the responsibility and forgives the sin.

This, Malbim says, is the promise in the above verse. "It shall be that when many evils and distresses come upon it, then this song shall speak before it as a witness . . . for I know its inclination." When the troubles that befall Israel will cause us to do *teshuvah*, G-d promises to forgive, because He knows the power of the evil inclination. This song, the Torah, "shall not be forgotten from the mouths of its offspring," and it will be a witness to plead in our behalf.

A person may be discouraged from doing *teshuvah*, thinking, "What's the use? I cannot expect G-d to forgive me for having disobeyed Him for so long." G-d promises that if a person does *teshuvah*, He will enter a plea in his behalf, assuming part of the responsibility for the person's behavior.

It is never too late for *teshuvah*.



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# 10 ideas for Rosh Hashanah / Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks

As we approach Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and the start of the Jewish year, here are ten short ideas which might help you focus your *davening* and ensure you have a meaningful and transformative experience.

Number one. **Life is short.** However, much life expectancy has risen, we will not, in one lifetime, be able to achieve everything we might wish to achieve. This life is all we have. So the question is: How shall we use it well?

Number two. **Life itself, every breath we take, is the gift of God.** Life is not something we may take for granted. If we do, we will fail to celebrate it. Yes, we believe in life after death, but it is in life before death that we truly find human greatness.

Number three. **We are free.** Judaism is the religion of the free human being freely responding to the G-d of freedom. We are not in the grip of sin. The very fact that we can do teshuva, that we can act differently tomorrow than we did yesterday, tells us we are free.

Number four. **Life is meaningful.** We are not mere accidents of matter, generated by a universe that came into being for no reason and will one day, for no reason, cease to be. We are here because there is something we must do; to be God's partners in the work of creation, bringing the world that is closer to the world that ought to be.

Number five. **Life is not easy.** Judaism does not see the world through rose-tinted lenses. The world we live in is not the world as it ought to be. That is why, despite every temptation, Judaism has never been able to say the messianic age has come, even

though we await it daily.

Number six. **Life may be hard, but it can still be sweet.** Jews have never needed wealth to be rich, or power to be strong. To be a Jew is to live for the simple things: love, family, community. Life is sweet when touched by the Divine.

Number seven. **Our life is the single greatest work of art we will ever make.** On the *Yamim Noraim*, we step back from our life like an artist stepping back from their canvas, seeing what needs changing for the painting to be complete.

Number eight. **We are what we are because of those who came before us.** We are each a letter in God's book of life. We do not start with nothing. We have inherited wealth, not material but spiritual. We are heirs to our ancestors' greatness.

Number nine. **We are heirs to another kind of greatness: to Torah and the Jewish way of life.** Judaism asks great things of us and by doing so makes us great. We walk as tall as the ideals for which we live, and though we may fall short time and again, the *Yamim Noraim* allow us to begin anew.

And number ten. The sound of heartfelt prayer, together with the piercing sound of the shofar, tell us that that is all life is – a mere breath – yet breath is nothing less than the spirit of G-d within us. **We are dust of the earth but within us is the breath of God.**

So, if you can remember any of these ideas, or even just one, I hope it will help you to have an even more meaningful experience over Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

## Still Standing! Rabbi Berel Wein

"You are all standing today..." (Dvarim 29:9)

After centuries of enslavement in Egypt and decades of wandering in a trackless and forbidding desert, our teacher Moshe points out the obvious. Namely, that the Jewish people are still standing strong and resilient and about to embark on the great adventure of creating Jewish national sovereignty in the land of Israel. However, often in life the obvious is not so obvious and we are unable to see what actually lies so clearly before us.

To my mind I would think that the greatest puzzle – even miracle – in human history is the survival of the Jewish people over these centuries of dispersion and persecution. When so many great and powerful nations have disappeared completely, even after ruling over vast amounts of territory and people for centuries, how is it that the Jewish people, not numerous and for the most of its history, powerless and stateless, has somehow been able to survive and even thrive?

And yet the fact of this survival is undeniable, obvious for all the world to see and witness. In fact, the world credits us with much greater numbers than we have, as well as with much greater power and influence over world events than we can ever exercise. In short, this comment of Moshe that headlines the Torah reading of the week, that you are all as a people somehow standing and existing, is the most extraordinary prophecy of his entire career. It marches down the corridors of history and its obvious truth should have a great impact



upon our lives and thoughts.

Moshe will complain later that the Jewish people are a feckless and foolish nation. This complaint is based simply on the fact that there always was and is a tendency within the Jewish world to ignore the obvious. King Solomon said that the L-rd created us, that we should think and act in a straightforward manner but that we have always chosen to look for devious motives and overly clever behavior.

In our time, the Jewish people, both in Israel and in the Diaspora, have accomplished wonders in rebuilding the nation after the desolation of World War II. And we have done so rapidly and over a very short period of time. The existence of the Jewish state in the land of Israel has been a main catalyst for this remarkable resilience and resurgence.

With this physical rebirth there has also arisen a spiritual renewal that exists among many sections of the Jewish world and is not restricted only to certain groups. The prophet long ago foresaw that there was to arise a spontaneous hunger for spirituality, Torah values and knowledge and the study of the laws and tradition of the eternity granted to us at Sinai.

That path was long ago stifled by circumstances and foreign ideas – even foreign gods – that infiltrated the Jewish world. However, in spite of the awful problems of assimilation and intermarriage, ignorance and delusional thinking that plague our generation, there is a feeling within us that somehow the great search for G-d and Torah continues within the Jewish people and will only increase in time to come.



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# City of Refuge

Rabbi Eli Mansour

We are all familiar with the Rabbis' teaching that "Elul," the name of the month of repentance that precedes Rosh Hashanah, can be read as an acrostic representing the verse, "Ani le'dodi ve'dodi li" ("I am for my Beloved, and my Beloved is for me" – Shir Hashirim 6:3). This name expresses the responsibility we have during the month of Elul to work toward strengthening our connection to Hashem.

The Arizal (Rav Yitzchak Luria, Safed, 1534-1572), however, found a different – and far more mysterious – allusion in the name "Elul." He taught that the name "Elul" references a verse in the Book of Shemot (21:13) that speaks of a situation of accidental murder. The Torah there writes that if a person had no ill intent, "Ve'ha'Elokim ina le'yado" – and Hashem brought upon a situation whereby he mistakenly killed somebody, then "Ve'samti lecha makom asher yanus shama" – Hashem will designate a place where the killer can find refuge from the victim's angry relatives. This refers to the "arei milkat" – the cities of refuge where accidental killers were protected. The Arizal noted that the first letters of the words "Ina le'yado ve'samti lecha" in this verse spell the word "Elul."

According to the Arizal, then, Elul is our "city of refuge," where we seek protection.

We must understand, however, why we require the kind of protection provided for an accidental killer. We certainly have all made mistakes, and need to work to improve ourselves. But how many of us have mistakenly taken somebody's life? Why do we need an "ir miklat"?

To answer this question, let us consider a Halacha relevant to the unfortunate situation of a "goses" – a person who is breathing his final breaths of life. The Rambam rules that it is forbidden to even touch a "goses," or close his eyes, because this could cause the patient to die a moment sooner than he would otherwise. If one accelerates the patient's death, the Rambam writes, even by just a moment, then he is guilty of murder.

Rav Chaim Friedlander (1923-1986) noted the broader implications of this Halacha. If it is considered murder to take away one moment of life from an ill, incapacitated patient, then we cannot even imagine the severity of wasting time that could have been used productively. If we are healthy and able to produce, achieve, accomplish, give, contribute and make a difference, but we instead use our time for vain, useless activities – or, as they say in our society, if we "kill" our time – then we have, in a certain sense, committed suicide. We have taken time away from our own lives.

This is why we require Elul, our "city of refuge" where we repent – because we are guilty of inadvertent "murder." We of course never intend to waste our time. Nobody gets up in the morning planning to have unproductive day. But we get distracted, we get lazy, we are tempted by the many lures around us, and we end up wasting so much precious time, such that we commit "murder." Hashem has given us Elul as our "ir miklat," our opportunity to cure this ill, to earn atonement for the large chunks of time that we have "killed."

This Elul, as we have entered the "ir miklat," let us work on correcting the problem of our use of technology. Let us resolve to use our time properly, to limit our screen time, to direct our focus and attention on the things that really matter. And if we use our time well, then Hashem will give us more time here in His world, many more long, healthy years in which to achieve, be productive, and fulfill the mission for which we were sent here.

## פרשה געדחנקען סדר ר' יוסף רובינשטיין

בליקן: "שבת? מיר האבן נאך פילע אנדערע דאגות און זארגן, מיר טראכטן נאך נישט פון שבת!"

לויפט פארביי אין שעה, און ווידער שיקט דער רבי ארויס זיין משמש צו זען אויב די שטאטס אידן גרייטן זיך אויף שבת. ווידער איז זיין ענטפער: לא עת האספּהּ המקנהּ, די טאג איז נאך גרויס. און אזוי האט זיך איבערגע'חזר'ט עט ליכע מאל.

ווארט אזוי דער צדיק אויף שבת איינזאם אין זיין צימער, ווען אויפאמאל הערט זיך די רעש פון די פילע געשעפטן וואס נידערן די לאַדן, און דאס געקלאנג פון די פארשפארענדע שלעסער דערגרייכן זיינע אויערן. אה, אט קומט שבת!

קערט זיך דער צדיק צו זיין משמש און זאגט: אט אזוי וועט זיין ווען משיח וועט קומען. דאס פאלק וועט זיין טרוד, פאריאגט און פארפלאגט, אומוואוסענד צו זיין אנקום, אבער דאן וועט ער פלוצים ערשיינען, און אלע וועלן פארמאכן די געשעפטן און אוועקווארפן די געלט-אַפּגאַט... אט איז משיח בן דוד דא! (דור דעה)

רבתי, לאמיר נישט זיין פארשלאפן אין ווערן געכאפט אין איבעראשונג מיט זיין אנקום!...

בס"ד

וְשַׁבַּת עַד ה' אֵלֶיךָ וְשִׁמְעֵת בְּקוֹלוֹ וְגו' בְּכַל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכַל נַפְשֶׁךָ. (ה, ב)

פארוואס שטייט נישט דא, אזוי ווי אין קריאת שמע: בְּכַל לְבָבְךָ וּבְכַל נַפְשֶׁךָ וּבְכַל מְאֹדְךָ – וועלכע אז"ל טייטשן 'בכל ממונך'?

נאר אז עס רעדט זיך דא פון באחרית הימים, ווען עס וועט שווער זיין צו דינען דעם רבש"ע מיט געלט, וויבאלד 'אין בן דוד בא וכו' עד שתכלה פרו' טה מן הכיס', איז נישט פארלאנג פונעם מענטש דעם קעשענע, בלויז דעם האַרץ און זעל. (שער בת רבים)

ביאת המשיח, האט דער רבי מענדעלע רימאנאווער זי"ע געזאגט, וועט זיין אזוי ווי ביאת שבת אין לעמבערג.

וואס איז דאס ביאת שבת אין לעמבערג? אט הערט: איין מאל האט דער רבי געוויילט אין לעמבערג אויף שבת, און אז דער שבת האט געברענט אין אים ווי א פייער, האט ער ארויסגעשיקט זיין משמש ערב שבת נאך הצות זען אויב כלל ישראל זענען שוין גרייט פארן שבת. געזען האט דער משמש אידן לויפן אהין און צוריק, האט ער אפגעשטעלט עמיצער אין זיין געלויף און גע-פרעגט ווען זיי גייען מקבל שבת זיין. ווארפט דער יעניגער אויף אים מאדנע



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# JOKES

As a scarecrow, people say I'm outstanding in my field. But hay, it's in my jeans

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I couldn't believe that the highway department called my dad a thief. But when I got home, *all the signs were there.*

What did the left eye say to the right eye? *Between you and me, something smells.*

What do you get when you cross a dyslexic, an insomniac, and an agnostic? *Someone who lays awake at night wondering if there is a dog.*

The year is 2032, and the United States has elected the first woman, as well as the first Jewish, president, Susan Goldfarb. She calls up her mother a few weeks after election day and says, 'So, Mom, I assume you will be coming to my inauguration?' 'I don't think so. It's a ten-hour drive, your father isn't as young as he used to be, and my arthritis is acting up again.' 'Don't worry about it, Mom, I'll send a US Air Force plane to pick you up and to take you home. And a limousine will pick you up at your door.' 'I don't know. Everybody will be so fancy-schmantzy, what on earth would I wear?' 'Oh Mom' replies Susan, 'I'll make sure you have a wonderful gown made by the best designer in New York.' 'Honey,' Mom complains, 'you know I can't eat those rich foods you and your friends like to eat.' The President-Elect replies, 'Don't worry Mom. The entire affair is going to be handled by the best caterer in New York, kosher all the way. Mom, I really want you to come.' So Mom reluctantly agrees.

On January 20, 2033, Susan Goldfarb is being sworn in as President of the United States. In the front row sits the new President's mother, who leans over to a senator sitting next to her and says: 'You see that woman over there with her hand on the Jewish Bible, becoming the President of the United States?' The Senator whispers back, 'Yes I do.' Says Mom proudly, 'Her brother's a doctor!'



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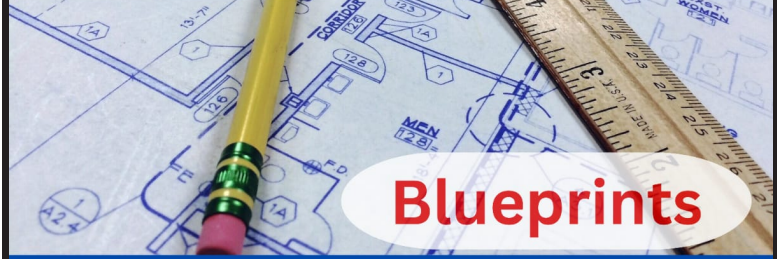
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