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INTERNET PARSHA SHEET ON Rosh Hashana / Haazinu/Shuva - 5772

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See pg. 8 below The Why's, How's, and What's of Eruv Tavshilin By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

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Rabbi Aryeh Striks striks@vths.org via vths.ccsend.com

Mussar HaTorah Torah insights into human nature from the weekly parasha.

Based on the talks of **Rabbi A. Henach Leibowitz zt"l** (Rosh HaYeshiva of Yeshivas Chofetz Chaim - RSA) and dedicated in his memory.

Rosh HaShana 5772

Have a Kesiva V'Chasima Tova! Sincerely, Rabbi Aryeh Striks
Valley Torah High School

"On that day a great Shofar will sound..." (Musaf) Rosh HaShana. The Almighty sits in judgement in the heavenly court. Celestial angels prosecute and defend, with the fate of every human being hanging in the balance. The prosecuting angel is about to present his case against us when, suddenly, he hears a series of piercing shofar blasts emanating from the earthly realm. Confused, he panics, assuming it to be the shofar heralding the arrival of the Mashiach, and therefore the end of the angel's existence. According to the Talmud (Rosh HaShana 26a), this is one of the reasons we blow the shofar on Rosh HaShana – to confuse the prosecuting angel, thereby rendering him unable to perform his job.

The evil inclination (soton), the prosecuting angel and the angel of death are one and the same, our sages tell us. He is quite capable at his task, and succeeds in trapping even the most intelligent of us in his snares of sin. Granting him a great degree of wisdom, how can we understand his perennial gullibility, falling for the same ruse year after year for so long? We feel quite certain that these blasts are not the sounds of the shofar of the Mashiach; how much more certain should he be, the one responsible for causing us to sin and thereby postponing the final redemption?

Rabbi Isaac Sher, a great mussar luminary of the last generation, answered this question. Our archenemy, the soton, is no fool. His fear is well-grounded. He is acutely aware of how close we are to bringing Mashiach. This year's shofar blast could very well be announcing the Moshiach's arrival. It depends only upon us.

With each passing year that we remain in exile we become more skeptical of the possibility of our redemption. We ask: "If the teshuva – repentance – of our pious ancestors was not sufficient to bring it about, how can our teshuva be enough to merit the ultimate redemption?" The Chofetz Chaim addressed these doubts: The Jewish people are one organism, transcending not only personal and geographical boundaries, but also the bounds of time and history. Our collective sufferings are cumulative, from the slavery in Egypt continuing through the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, the Crusades, Inquisition, pogroms and massacres and more recently the Holocaust. Our blood and tears have stained the soil of every land that our people have found themselves. But every drop of blood and every tear is counted and weighed by the Almighty. If we can feel the pain and suffering of our people, past and present, then we can cry to our merciful Father in heaven, "Even if our teshuva is not as complete as it should be consider

it together with our suffering as a people, throughout history, and put an end to our exile!"

We do not have the perspective of the soton to know exactly how close we are to redemption. But we must bear in mind that every little bit of extra effort on our part could be the teshuva which tips the heavenly scale to the side of merit for ourselves, and the entire Jewish people. It is within our grasp – we need only reach for it. May this be the year in which the soton's fears, and our hopes and prayers, are realized.

Rabbi Frand on Rosh **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** ryfrand@torah.org
reply-toryfrand@torah.org, genesis@torah.org
Sep 27, 2011 at 5:05

This dvar Torah was adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: Tape # 825, The Shuls of Gaza -- A Halachic Perspective. Good Shabbos! The Uniqueness Of Rosh HaShana's Judgment

Special MP3 shiur for Rosh Hashana: The Story of the Shofar That Would Not Blow – ONLY \$0.99 for the Download To download, go to www.yadychiel.org and click on the Teshuva button.

The second Mishna of tractate Rosh Hashana teaches "On Rosh Hashana all who enter the world pass before Him (for judgment) like Bnei Maron" (sheep being counted). However, the Gemara there quotes an opinion that "Man is judged daily" [Rosh Hashana 16a]. At first glance, these two opinions seem to conflict with one another.

Apparently, Judgment either occurs once a year or it occurs on a daily basis. The two opinions seem to be mutually exclusive.

Rav Eizele Charif tries to reconcile these statements by introducing the concept that that in reality, there are two types of judgment. When a person starts his year, it has been determined that he has certain abilities, a certain status, and certain physical and financial attributes. A status quo for the coming year is determined on Rosh HaShana. However, this "baseline" can be altered during the year -- for better or for worse -- based on the actions of the individual during the year.

However, when we approach the judgment of the New Year, there is no status quo. We do not approach the Almighty with a presumption of what has been (chazaka d'm'ikara). We do not walk into Judgment on Rosh HaShana with the idea "I have been alive until now, I will remain alive this coming year; I have been healthy and wealthy until now, so it will all continue indefinitely during the coming year". That is not a correct attitude on Rosh HaShana.

During the year, our allotment and budget has already been determined. We have been budgeted a certain amount of dollars, and health, and success in our endeavors and we proceed to spend against that pre-determined budget, even though that budget can be raised or lowered within the parameters of "Man is judged daily". However, when Rosh HaShana's judgment for the New Year arrives, there is nothing that is a given.

Rav Pam once commented on the Penitential prayer that we say in Selichos prior to and during the Yomim Noraim (Days of Awe), "Like paupers and beggars do we come before You, knocking on Your door." The simple interpretation is that we are paupers because we do not have sufficient good deeds to our credit. However, Rav Pam says that it is to be interpreted literally -- when we appear before the Almighty on Rosh HaShana we are penniless. What does it mean we are penniless? I have money in the bank, I have a portfolio, I have a house, and I have assets! What does it mean, "I'm a pauper"?

Rav Pam explains that it means that nothing is a given. We start out afresh. There are not any "chazakas". "You were healthy until now, but today there is a fresh judgment regarding what is going to happen now and for the coming year." "You had success until now. Today there is a fresh Judgment."

The reason we do not tremble before the Yom HaDin is because it is very hard for us to actually believe this idea. If a person is 50 years old,

he figures that he has been through all this previously and things always seem to remain fairly stable. He assumes "Look, I just went for a physical and the doctor says I am doing quite well." "I have been in my business or profession for 30 years; some years I do a little better and some years a little worse, but I have always had a steady income. What do you mean that I might not have parnasa this coming year?" We tend to assume that we are going into the Day of Judgment with a strong status quo in our favor. That is not true. It is very difficult for us to internalize this concept but the status quo is not guaranteed.

If we think about things we have seen and heard about during the past year, it will become all too clear how life can change in a minute. People are swept away by natural tragedies, by sudden changes of fortune, by unexpected diagnoses, and by unforeseen political changes. These sudden changes in one's health or fortune or personal status are the most shocking things that can happen to a person. Yesterday, everything was wonderful. Overnight, things can change in such a way that a person is no longer able to function. However, such events do occur. That is the Day of Judgment of Rosh Hashana. There are no presumptions of status quo. We cannot be lulled into this false sense of security that we have been healthy, wealthy, and wise until now, presumably it will continue like that as well.

On Rosh Hashana, all bets are off. Like paupers and penniless people do we knock on Your doors. This is the reality. This is why the Din of Rosh Hashana is so awesome and scary.

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

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Covenant & Conversation
Thoughts on the Weekly Parsha from
Lord Jonathan Sacks

Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Commonwealth

<http://www.chief Rabbi.org/tt-index.html>
Ha'azinu 5769 In the glorious song with which Moses addresses the congregation, he invites the people to think of the Torah – their covenant with G-d – as if it were like the rain that waters the ground so that it brings forth its produce: Let my teaching fall like rain and my words descend like dew, like showers on new grass, like abundant rain on tender plants. G-d's word is like rain in a dry land. It brings life. It makes things grow. There is much we can do of our own accord: we can plough the earth and plant the seeds. But in the end our success depends on something beyond our control. If no rain falls, there will be no harvest, whatever preparations we make. So it is with Israel. It must never be tempted into the hubris of saying: "My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me" (Deut. 8: 17). The sages, however, sensed something more in the analogy. This is how the

Sifri puts it: Let my teaching fall like rain: Just as the rain is one thing, yet it falls on trees, enabling each to produce tasty fruit according to the kind of tree it is – the vine in its way, the olive tree in its way and the date palm in its way, so the Torah is one, yet its words yield Scripture, Mishnah, laws and lore. Like showers on new grass: just as showers falls upon plants and make them grow, some green, some red, some black, some white, so the words of Torah produce teachers, worthy individuals, sages, the righteous and the pious. There is only one Torah, yet it has multiple effects. It gives rise to different kinds of teaching, different sorts of virtue. Torah is sometimes seen by its critics as overly prescriptive, as if it sought to make everyone the same. The midrash argues otherwise. The Torah is compared to rain precisely to emphasize that its most important effect is to make each of us grow into what we could become. We are not all the same, nor does Torah seek uniformity. As a famous Mishnah puts it: When a human being makes many coins from the same mint, they are all the same. G-d makes everyone in the same image – His image – yet none is the same as another. (Mishnah Sanhedrin 4: 5) This emphasis on difference is a recurring theme in Judaism. For example, when Moses asks G-d to appoint his successor, he uses an unusual phrase: “May the Lord, G-d of the spirits of all mankind, appoint a man over the community” (Num. 27: 16). On this, Rashi comments: Why is this expression (“G-d of the spirits of all mankind”) used? [Moses] said to him: Lord of the universe, You know each person’s character, and that no two people are alike. Therefore, appoint a leader for them who will bear with each person according to his disposition.

One of the fundamental requirements of a leader in Judaism is that he or she is able to respect the differences between human beings. This is a point emphasized by Maimonides in *The Guide for the Perplexed*: Man is, as you know, the highest form in creation, and he therefore includes the largest number of constituent elements. This is why the human race contains so great a variety of individuals that we cannot discover two persons exactly alike in any moral quality or in external appearance . . . This great variety and the necessity of social life are essential elements in man’s nature. But the well-being of society demands that there should be a leader able to regulate the actions of man. He must complete every shortcoming, remove every excess, and prescribe for the conduct of all, so that the natural variety should be counterbalanced by the uniformity of legislation, so that social order be well established. (Guide, II:40)

The political problem as Maimonides sees it is how to regulate the affairs of human beings in such a way as to respect their individuality while not creating chaos. A similar point emerges from a surprising rabbinic teaching: Our Rabbis taught: If one sees a crowd of Israelites, one says: Blessed be He who discerns secrets – because the mind of each is different from that of another, just as the face of each is different from another. (Berakhot 58a)

We would have expected a blessing over a crowd to emphasize its size, its mass: human beings in their collectivity. A crowd is a group large enough for the individuality of the faces to be lost. Yet the blessing stresses the opposite – that each member of a crowd is still an individual with distinctive thoughts, hopes, fears and aspirations.

The same was true for the relationship between the sages. A Mishnah (Sotah 9: 15) states: When R. Meir died, the composers of fables ceased. When Ben Azzai died, assiduous students ceased. When Ben Zoma died, the expositors ceased. When R. Akiva died, the glory of the Torah ceased. When R. Hanina died, men of deed ceased. When R. Jose Ketanta died, the pious men ceased. When R. Jochanan ben Zakkai died, the luster of wisdom ceased . . . When Rabbi died, humility and the fear of sin ceased. There was no single template of the sage. Each had his own distinctive merits, his unique contribution to the collective heritage. In this respect, the sages were merely continuing the tradition of the Torah itself. There is no single role model of the religious hero or

heroine in Tanakh, the Hebrew Bible. The patriarchs and matriarchs each had their own unmistakable character. Moses, Aaron and Miriam emerge as different personality types. Kings, priests and prophets had different roles to play in Israelite society. Even among the prophets, “No two prophesy in the same style”, said the sages. Elijah was zealous, Elisha gentle. Hosea speaks of love, Amos speaks of justice. Isaiah’s visions are simpler and less opaque than those of Ezekiel.

The same applies to even to the revelation at Sinai itself. Each individual heard, in the same words, a different inflection:

The voice of the Lord is with power (Ps. 29: 4): that is, according to the power of each individual, the young, the old, and the very small ones, each according to their power [of understanding]. G-d said to Israel, “Do not believe that there are many gods in heaven because you heard many voices. Know that I alone am the Lord your G-d.” (Shemot Rabbah 29: 1)

According to Maharsha, there are 600,000 interpretations of Torah. Each individual is theoretically capable of a unique insight into its meaning. The French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas commented: The Revelation has a particular way of producing meaning, which lies in its calling upon the unique within me. It is as if a multiplicity of persons . . . were the condition for the plenitude of “absolute truth”, as if each person, by virtue of his own uniqueness, were able to guarantee the revelation of one unique aspect of the truth, so that some of its facets would never have been revealed if certain people had been absent from mankind.

Judaism, in short, emphasizes the other side of the maxim *E pluribus unum* (“Out of the many, one”). It says: “Out of the One, many”. The miracle of creation is that unity in Heaven produces diversity on earth. Torah is the rain that feeds this diversity, allowing each of us to become what only we can be.

Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, begins tonight. And . . . in the synagogue we’ll blow the shofar, the ram’s horn, as a kind of summons to us to get back on track in our lives. Asking G-d to write us in the book of life helps us remember our aims and aspirations in life. And we need such moments of reflection, individually and as a society, because otherwise the sheer pace and pressure of events can stop us noticing that for all our efforts we’re still no nearer our destination. Here’s an example. I’m fascinated by the cars I see on my way to work. There are 4 wheel drive MPVs that can take you anywhere from the North Pole to the Sahara desert. There are sports cars that can go from zero to a hundred miles an hour in less than six seconds. Each one is a miracle of technology. A hundred and fifty years ago, all there were, were horses and carriages, as low tech as you can get. A hundred and fifty years ago the average speed of traffic in London was ten miles an hour. And today? You guessed it: ten miles an hour. A car was supposed to get you from A to B more rapidly, but the faster we built cars the more congested the roads became. Or take work. In the 1960s when I was studying economics, we believed that automation would transform the economy so much that work would shrink to twenty hours a week and the biggest problem we’d have was what to do with all our leisure time. Yet instead, we found ourselves working harder than ever; and now our mobile phones and emails mean that work pursues us into places and times outside of work, interrupting even the little leisure we have left. I’m not suggesting there’s any easy answer, but we’ll never get where we want to be if we don’t stop, from time to time, to check how far we’ve come – which is what we do in the synagogue once a year. The shofar is the satellite navigation system of the soul, reminding us of our ultimate destination, telling us how far we’ve yet to go. Perhaps we all need something like the Jewish New Year, to remind us of the ideas and hopes that once inspired us and should inspire us still, thanking G-d for our achievements, asking for His help in the tasks that still lie ahead. Shanah tovah. May it be a good year for us all.

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Rabbi Hershel Schachter

The Light of Torah

In the tefillos of Rosh Hashonah we assume that Adam ha'rishon was created on the first of Tishrei. That day at that time was a Friday which today is impossible; according to the calendar that we use, Rosh Hashonah can never fall out on a Friday. Even though that day was the sixth day of creation, we refer to Rosh Hashonah as ze ha'yom techilas ma'asecha - the beginning of the creation of the world, because the first five days were pre-historic since there was no human being there to notice anything.

In the tefillos of Rosh Hashonah we mention that on this day of Rosh Hashonah we should all recall what happened on that very first Rosh Hashonah. The midrash tells us, commenting on the posuk in Tehillim, "Hashen ori v'yishi" that "ori" is a reference to Rosh Hashonah and "yishi" is a reference to Yom Hakipurim. On that very day that Hashem created Adam ha'rishon, he granted him illumination by instructing him to observe the basic mitzvot that apply to all of mankind. The Talmud comments that the posuk in Borchy Nafshi, "Toshes choshech vihi layla" is a reference to olam ha'zeh. Many issues in this world are very unclear just like in the middle of dark night; there are mitzvot that people think are really aveiros and there are aveiros that people consider to be mitzvot. Without illumination granted by Hashem through the laws of the Torah, we will remain "in the dark". Rosh Hashonah for Adam ha'rishon was his day of kabbolas ha'Torah.

According to the tradition recorded in the midrash, Adam ha'rishon sinned on that very same first day that he was created. He was judged and punished on the same day and Hashem notified him that just as I have judged you on this day, so too will I judge your descendants in all future generations on this day. The fact that Rosh Hashonah is the yom ha'din is never mentioned in Tanach but is an oral tradition from Adam ha'rishon.

The story of the "original sin" does not really play a significant role in Jewish theology. It was recorded in the Torah, however, to teach us certain aspects about sin that are relevant to all of us today.

1. According to one midrash, if Adam ha'rishon would have waited until leil Shabbos, he would have been permitted to eat the fruits of the eitz ha'daas. He could not even contain himself for a few hours. We all have to train ourselves to realize that it is not that essential to have instant gratification. Hashem created us all to enjoy the world but it is not that absolutely necessary to have pleasure all the time. The Jewish farmer plants a tree and he does not eat of its fruits until a few years go by. The shochet slaughters an animal but he does not eat of the meat until he first checks the lungs. It is not that terrible to postpone a bit having pleasure from the world. 2. The reason Adam and Chava could not control themselves and sinned by eating from the eitz ha'daas is because the fruit seemed so delicious and appealing. When we read the pessukim in parshas Beraishis, the Torah gives the exact same description with respect to all the trees in Gan Eden. They were all delicious and appeared very appealing. But we always have the attitude that the grass is greener on the other side. We always think that "stolen waters are sweeter". To the reshaim, who have violated aveiros, the yetzer ho'rah appears like a strand of hair. They realize that they did not get any more pleasure from doing the aveiros than they would have had doing the mitzvot. To the tzaddikim who never violated the aveiros, the yetzer ho'rah appears as if it were a gigantic mountain. They conjure up in their mind an image of what tremendous pleasures one would certainly receive if he were to violate the aveiros. But the truth of the matter is that any forbidden pleasure has a parallel in the realm of heter. One can enjoy olam ha'zeh by keeping mitzvot to the same extent that the reshaim enjoy doing aveiros. 3. When Hashem confronted Adam

ha'rishon and told him that he would be punished for having sinned, He says "ki sho'mata l'kol ish'techa". The midrash understands that expression to mean that Chava coaxed her husband to eat along with her from the forbidden fruit by crying in front of him. Very often we sin because we give in to social pressure. On Rosh Ha'shonah and all year long we should take to heart the details of the original sin and realize that it simply does not make sense to violate the mitzvot of the Torah.

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RABBI ELI BARUCH SHULMAN

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Outline of Shabbos Shuva Drasha 5766

Delivered at YI of Midwood

1) Over last few years spoken about various deep issues – בחירה – חפזית, י"ג מידות etc.

This year – somewhat different. Talk about the society around us, and a particular challenge that it poses.

R' Hutner cites מסורה from גר"א: Last כפירה will be כפירה in man. That is really today's theme.

2) Each morning during this past month of Elul we have blown the שופר.

The Tur explains that on שבועות Moshe had gone up to הר סיני to receive the Torah, but 40 days later it had come to a tragic end when the Jews fell into the terrible trap of idol worship, when they fashioned the הזהב.

And then, after Moshe prayed and implored for 40 days, הקב"ה told him to once again ascend הר סיני to receive the second לוחות. And so on לוחות ראש חודש אלול Moshe again went up to הר סיני, where he spent forty days, culminating on יום כיפור.

On that לוחות ראש חודש אלול, as Moshe went up the mountain - "the sound of the shofar was sounded in the encampment so that they would not once again err after idol worship."

3) ע"ז שופר Ba שופר. Somehow שופר represent opposite of ע"ז. Explore that -Furthermore: Nothing in אידישקייט is simply commemorative. If we continue to blow שופר each אלול it must be that we also need the ע"ז to sound and warn us against ע"ז.

Let us understand that. After all, I don't many of us have graven images stashed away in our attic; or have any plans to open a שטיבעל in which idols will be prayed to. So why should we continue to blow שופר as a warning against falling into the error of ע"ז?

4) So much of energy of אידישקייט was addressed to opposing ע"ז.

Many, many מצוות, exhortations of משה רבינו and נביאים – Hard for us to realize – universal human condition. What was the appeal of ע"ז?

Rambam – בימי דור אנוש.

Rambam was a philosopher – gives us philosophy of ע"ז.

But such a universal phenomenon – every human culture until אידישקייט – is not just a philosophy. What is the psychology of ע"ז? What was its psychological appeal?

5) Human beings are unique in the capacity to create. R' Chaim Volozhin – צלם אלקים means that only man is a creator.

And while R' Chaim talks about spiritual creation – it is also true that man has a unique ability to make things that have a power and beauty and life of their own. And that is really mysterious and amazing.

Man is capable of great things; of great works of engineering; of sublime music; of brilliant invention; of profound literature; of beautiful art.

Music is not born inside the musician; yet he creates it. Same with all human creativity. It is a kind of יש מאין.

Part of the power of art – what makes it so powerful – is our perennial amazement at the fact that a human being can create

something that is not simply utilitarian – not just a tool, but something that stands alone, separate from its creator, and demands our attention in its own right.

Story of Pygmalion reflects that wonder at man's ability to make something which lives outside of himself.

6) There is certainly wonder in man's ability to create. ע"ז is born in that wonder – in the impulse to fall down in adoration of our own creations.

But – there are two ingredients in ע"ז. One is the worship of man's creation; and the other is his debasement of himself.

When a person looks at what man has created – two possible reactions: a – Can see in it reflection of man's greatness, ability to create, aspect of צלם אלקים –

Or – disbelieve in himself, and come to conviction that somehow idol must have created itself, worked through me –

Significance of expression: ויצא העגל הזה – created itself.

7) מעשה עצמו לפעור. Debase oneself. That is the essential act of idolatry – to debase oneself in front of one's ידים מעשה ידים.

So ע"ז has two moments – elevation of מעשה ידים, and debasement of self.

8) And therefore שופר is the opposite of ע"ז. Why?

Spoke in the past – שופר represents ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים.

נפש חיה – רוח ממלא. ויפח באפיו – Into – dead body.

Paralleled in חלל ריק – שופר, into which נשימה, creates קול.

Symbolic of fact that man is created בצלם אלקים, that he is חלק אלוהים ממעל.

Imbues sense of man's greatness, mirrors creator.

And that is the opposite of ע"ז. ע"ז represents the ultimate debasement of man, who feels reduced by his creations. שופר is the recognition of the גדלות האדם, who carries within himself the נשמת בורא עולם given him by the שופר.

9) We're used to thinking that against idea of idolatry, חידוש posed idea of G-d. Only half of truth. Against ע"ז it also posed idea of man, created בצלם אלקים, and therefore master of the physical world around him, rather than its slave.

The pagan world had no such belief. Both Aristotle and Plato held that most humans are by nature slavish and suitable only to be slaves. Most do not have natures worthy of freedom and proper to free men.

Judaism gave the world the concept of human dignity – חביב אדם – שנברא בצלם.

Expressed in כבוד הבריות as הלכה.

Idea that eventually affected West profoundly – that human beings are ends, not means; that each human life has value; that human beings have moral stature.

10) The 20th century was not kind to the idea of human dignity. From the point of view of modern history, of course, it seems absurd to say that human beings are uniquely valuable. In the twentieth century, more than a hundred million persons in Europe alone died by violence, often in a way they could not have foreseen even in their worst nightmares. In our century, history has been a butcher's bench, and the words human dignity have often sounded empty.

Then, too, there are the intellectual assaults that the nineteenth and twentieth century launched against the idea of man as צלם אלקים – Darwinism, Marxism, Freudian psychology, behaviorism etc.

Modern astronomy has reduced man's place in the cosmos to an infinitesimal speck.

11) But there has been another assault on human dignity. Because for the first time, perhaps, since the overthrow of paganism – men are beginning to feel themselves smaller than their creations.

As the technologies that underlie our modern existence become more and more powerful, more and more ubiquitous, and more and more incomprehensible – we, the very people who wield them, feel ourselves smaller and smaller.

We are surrounded on all sides by powerful machines that we don't understand. We live in cities whose complexity and size is beyond our comprehension. Our lives are filled with machines that allow us to do a million things which we know we could not do without them, but whose inner workings are a mystery to us. Modern man is totally dependent on machines at whose effects he marvels and whose workings are a complete mystery to himself.

And all around him huge energies are being harnessed to tremendous, inscrutable ends. And the cumulative effect is to make him feel smaller and smaller.

There is really an irony here. It might have been thought – all this power at our disposal – we can throw our voices half way around the world, span the ocean in hours, gather huge amounts of information off the ether in moments – would enhance כבוד ותחסרהו מעט מאלקים והוד והדר – would create men who would be תנטרהו.

But if we look carefully at the culture around us, and the changes in the culture over the last century, we see just the opposite. Never have human beings felt so small, so unimportant, so lacking in moral stature, so dwarfed by their creations – as in the modern world.

12) We see that at every level of the culture –

From the lowest level. Open a TV – the images that pour out. I'm not talking about פריצות – I'm talking about the view of human nature that is displayed. The wallowing in self-abasement, the self-parody, the total lack of anything remotely resembling moral decision making and moral stature.

Look at the modes of dress. Once upon a time a self-respecting person would not walk out in the street unless he was dressed in a way that reflected his dignity. Today look at a crowd of people in the street – people walk around as if they were in their own bathroom. And that reflects a deep lack of self-respect that has seeped into every pore of the culture.

And at the highest level of the culture: The dominant intellectual fashion: that moral decisions are meaningless, that free will is illusory, that the mind itself is mindless – that it is basically a software program running on the brain, no more conscious than a computer program, consciousness itself is a delusion. It seems amazing that anyone could adopt such a belief that flies in the face of our most intimate and constant experience – yet this is the dominant intellectual dogma today, and little by little it is filtering into society.

Benjamin Franklin – advocated keeping diary of one's moral growth, how did I do each way in various character traits. Can you even imagine someone doing that today? We can imagine someone trying to sell a computer program in which you keep a log of your moral development – a kind of Quicken for מידות? How absurd!

Why? Because the whole idea of moral progress has been forgotten. To most people today it would be as absurd to monitor their moral progress as it would be to monitor the moral progress of their pet dog. And that represents a true loss in our societies' conception of man.

13) And here we see before our eyes the Gaon's prediction coming true: The last great כפירה is not in G-d, but in man.

14) And all of this affect us – and affects us deeply. Because this lack of belief in ourselves – in our importance before the רבש"ע – in our moral stature – this lack of belief that what we do – how we behave – our virtues and our sins – is important – of supreme importance – has seeped into our bones, and corrodes our own religiosity.

I don't need to tell you that our youth have a very hard time today. And without doubt they face נסיונות that we never faced – a

far more hedonistic culture, the poison of the internet and so on. But perhaps a more insidious danger – which affects our youth and our adults and ourselves – is the lack of belief in our own importance. An erosion of the belief that one's moral **שיעור קומה** matters.

R' Chaim Volozhin begins his **נפש החיים** – his handbook of how a Jew should live his life – with a disquisition on the meaning of man's being created **בצלם אלקים**, in which he elaborates on the cosmic significance of every single act that a person does. Every word he speaks, every movement, every **מצוה** and every **עבירה**, have cosmic importance. R' Chaim makes that his point of departure, because only if a person believes in his own importance, in the significance of everything that he does – only if he believe deeply that the choices that he makes, the **מצוות** that he does, the Torah that he learns – are important the **רבש"ע** – can he begin to live a life of **עבודת השם**.

One of the giants of Mussar was the Alter of Slobodka. He put tremendous emphasis on this point – that no spiritual growth is possible unless a person believes in his own significance. He insisted that his **תלמידים** deport themselves with the dignity that befits a **צלם אלקים**, a Jew, and a **תורה**.

The stories about his insistence on this are legion. For example – a new **בחור** once unbuttoned his shirt in order to take out his **ציצית** to kiss them during **ק"ש**. The Alter reprimanded him – "We don't do that here; it's not nice to unbutton your shirt in public". Another **תלמיד** walked with a stoop; the Alter told him to put on **pince-nez**, which would force him to walk upright so his glasses wouldn't fall off.

I remember when I was a **ראש ישיבה** **מי ישיבה בחור**, R' Shneur Kotler, used to tell us in the name of his grandfather **ראז"מ** that every **בחור** should have a notebook in which he would record his thoughts on the **גמרא** – not that they would necessarily be so earth-shattering, but because it inculcates the habit of mind that my thoughts matter – and that is the first step, and the necessary step, towards intellectual growth.

It's hard to strive for advancement in Torah if we don't think our Torah matters.

It's hard to strive for **תפילה בכונה**, if we don't think that we're important enough for the **רבש"ע** to care about our **תפילה**.

It's hard to make sacrifices for **עהרליכקייט**, if we don't think our integrity a prize beyond price – if we don't think that "he that filches from me my good name

Robbs me of that which not enriches him,
And makes me poor indeed".

15) The whole idea of **זכרונות – להפך כל רוח ונפש** – is the radical idea that each individual is important enough to have the **רבש"ע** undivided attention.

16) Here, I would suggest, is an agenda for us. Let us try and recover this central and radical belief in our own significance. I don't want to be misunderstood. I'm not talking about self-confidence; that is the confidence in my own skill and prowess. I'm talking about something else – about belief in my own significance as a moral being, the belief that my learning and my davening and my mitzvos, my honesty and integrity, my character – have some transcendent importance, that they matter to the **רבש"ע**.

We have to take ourselves seriously – because only then can we take our **תפילה**, **תורה**, **our integrity** – the entirety of our **אידישקייט** – seriously; because the **רבש"ע** takes them seriously.

Let us ask ourselves: When we come to shul to daven, do we believe that our davening matters? If we would, then the davening would be much more meaningful to us.

My grandmother every week would tell us insights that she thought of in the words of the **סידור** while davening. Do we even know what the words are?

Talking in shul – part of problem – we have trouble imagining that He's listening. We know our neighbor is listening. It is a failure of visualization.

When we sit down to learn – do we take our own learning seriously? I mentioned R' Shnuer – notebook. Not only for **yeshiva bochurim**. If you have a question, a thought – on **Gemara**, on **Siddur**, on **Chumash** – something you heard and want to remember – write it down.

I used to work with manuscripts. Had a large collection of notebooks written by **בעלי בתים**, in which they would write down **ווערטלעך** they had heard, or thought of on their own. They weren't necessarily great scholars; what they wrote down were **ווערטלעך** that caught their fancy, questions that they had on the **גמרא** or on the **חומש**, and so on. What a beautiful practice! And what a sense of confidence in the significance of one's own learning that represents.

I mentioned earlier the Alter of Slobodka. A typical **שמועס** – how exalted world is, since He took "trouble" to create it. And crown of creation – man. Among men, the **עם הנבחר** are **כלל ישראל**. And among them, those who study Torah are the elite. And even in that circle, Slobodka – where Torah is combined with **מוסר** and the study of man – is the highest point of development. So each **תלמיד** must weigh his every action, to make sure he behaves in a way that suits his exalted position.

He created a magnificent world, and man is the purpose of creation. And among men **כלל ישראל** are the **עם הנבחר**. And among **כלל ישראל** those who carry the flag of Orthodoxy, who are true to **תורה** and **אידישקייט**, are the elite. And within Orthodoxy, the Brooklyn community – with its many **yeshivos**, with its thousands of **shuls**, with its myriad **shiurim** and **chesed** organizations, occupies a special place. And within Brooklyn, our own shul – with its broad spectrum of **מתפללים**, with its wide array of **שיעורים**, with its tolerance and its **camaraderie**, has a special **חביבות**. Let us therefore weigh our every action, our every **תפילה**, our **תורה** commitments, our **חסד** with each other, in such a way that they will not disgrace us – and that we will indeed all of us merit to be written and sealed **בספר החיים**, together with all of **כלל ישראל**.

from Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh kohn.kby@gmail.com reply-
tokohn.kby@gmail.com to Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh
<kohn.kby@gmail.com> date Tue, Sep 27, 2011 at 8:25 PM
subject Rosh Hashanah and Shabbat Shuva

Wishing everyone, wherever you may be, a year of brachot- health, happiness, security and safety, prosperity, and fulfillment. Lshanah tovah tikateivu vetachateimu,

Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh

Haftarah: "Return, Israel, unto Hashem, your G-d"

Hamashiach Harav Avraham Rivlin, shlita

In the Midrash Rabbah (Bereishit Parsha 84) on the pasuk, "Reuven returned to the pit" (Bereishit 37:29), Chazal interpret the word "returned" as referring to teshuva. Chazal say: Hashem said: Never did a person sin before me and do teshuva, and you opened with teshuva first. By your life (I swear), your descendent will rise up and open with teshuva first. Who is this? Hoshea (according to Chazal Hoshea was from the tribe of Reuven), as it says, "Return, Israel, unto Hashem your God." (Hoshea 14:2) The commentators to the Midrash wonder about this, since both Adam and Cain preceded Reuven in doing teshuva. Chazal taught: "Adam met him (Cain) and said to him, 'What was done with your sentence?' He said, 'I did teshuva and reached a settlement' ... Immediately Adam said, 'A Psalm, a song for the Sabbath day.'" (Bereishit Rabbah 22:28) If Adam and Cain did teshuva, what is the meaning of "and you opened with teshuva first" that is said about Reuven? The Etz Yosef to the Midrash (Parsha 84) explains: "Cain and Adam did teshuva only under pressure and punishment." An additional answer is said in the name of the Kotzker Rebbe, that whereas Adam and Cain sinned with knowledge and intent, Reuven sinned for the sake of Heaven, since he was claiming his mother's disgrace. If so, the chiddush

is that even on a sin such as this you have to do teshuva. We can add to this what is said in Masechet Shabbat 55b: "Whoever says Reuven sinned is simply mistaken." The teshuva of Reuven comes to teach us that even on a sin that is not really a sin one should do teshuva. The Malbim, in his commentary to Hoshea, explains that the pasuk, "Return, Israel, unto Hashem your G-d," refers to teshuva out of fear, whereas the pasuk, "Take words with you and return to Hashem," is referring to teshuva out of love. Therefore, it says in the first pasuk, "unto Hashem," not quite reaching Him, while the second pasuk, "to Hashem," refers to complete and absolute teshuva. Maran Rosh Hayeshiva zt"l expands on this in his Asufat Ma'arachot, and explains based on this why it says in the first pasuk, "Hashem your G-d (Elokecha)," the attribute of justice. If a person does not do teshuva even out of fear, the kindness inherent in the possibility of teshuva, which he rejected, turns into a source of punishment for him. On the other hand, in the second pasuk it says only, "Hashem," the attribute of mercy. There is no possibility of turning the mercy into punishment because he at least possesses teshuva out of fear. Another difference: The first Pasuk, which is written in a singular form, is fitting for teshuva out of fear, which is a private teshuva. However, the second pasuk is written in a plural form, since teshuva out of love is a teshuva for the general public and the whole society. It is possible that this is essentially what the Etz Yosef writes, that Cain and Adam did teshuva out of fear, under pressure and punishment – "Unto Hashem your G-d." Reuven innovated teshuva out of love, as his descendant said: "Take words with you and return to Hashem."

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The Brisker Rav relates the following parable: There was a man who earned his livelihood by smuggling illegal goods across the border from one country to another. He would have customers in different cities, that he would sell to once he got there. How did he actually transport the goods? He would hire an unassuming wagon driver, load up the back and settle down for the journey. The smuggler himself knew exactly what he was carrying and knew the repercussions of what he was doing. He understood he was committing a crime. A few hours before they would even reach the border he would begin to get extremely edgy and nervous, for he understood what was at stake. The wagon driver, on the other hand, had no reason to be nervous. As they approached the actual border the wagon driver would get a little nervous, naturally, for there were times when you can encounter a nasty border guard who could cause problems if he so desires. The only one, who had no fear at all, as they approached the border, was the horses. They were oblivious to what was going on, had no clue what they were carrying and unaware of the ramifications that could have existed should they get caught. Says the Brisker Rav, people who understand the magnitude of the Yom HaDin-are nervous for months. They understand the severity of what can occur. The ones who don't really have a complete grasp of what's going on only get anxious a day two before. The only ones who don't get nervous at all are the horses-the people who have no inkling of what is at stake. There's a frightening Medrash in parshas V'zos haBracha (ois 6). The Medrash states 'there are ten pasukim in the Torah that refers to the death of Moshe Rabeinu. It teaches us that even though the Torah alludes to the death of Moshe ten times; his fate had not been sealed until the Beis Din Hagadol saw 'shehaya kal b'eini Moshe.' The aveira that Moshe committed was 'light' in his eyes. Moshe says to the Ribono Shel Olam 'klal Yisroel did many more aveiros than I ever did and each time they sinned I was able to daven to you for them and you forgave them. But I commit one aveira -just one-and I'm punished so severely and I can't be forgiven?' It was at that point that Hashem swore by His heavenly name that Moshe would not merit entering eretz Yisroel.' There are certain times when we sin, and we have an attitude of 'nu nu, everyone does it' or 'I'm no worse than him.' What we don't realize is

that the attitude of 'no fear' can sometimes carry more weight than the actual aveira itself. Man was created with a yetzer hara whose job it is to see that we commit as many aveiros as possible and 'live life to the fullest.' But he doesn't stop there; he tries to get you to make light of it and say 'you're not the only one that does this. It's not the end of the world.' As rough of a battle that one may have with the yetzer hara-even in a not so severe situation-one must be careful not to make light of it as by doing so will only add to the severity of it-and possibly outweigh the sin. One who approaches the Yom Hadin without the proper fear and understanding of what is at stake-that itself can sometimes be worse than the actual aveira. The opposite can be true too-a person who works on himself to develop a fear of what's at stake and of what's about to happen—that pachad hadin (fear of judgment) itself, says Reb Yisroel Salanter, can actually save someone from a negative judgment. Rav Yisroel Salanter brings proof from the Mishna Berura (siman ????) that says 'even though we all go into Rosh Hashana hoping to come out in favor of a good judgment, nevertheless, one must approach with fear, and tremble from the intensity of the din-and in that zechus we will emerge victorious.' Wishing everyone a ksiva vichasima tova. May we merit the coming of Moshiach this year, speedily-in our days. **WE NEED YOUR HELP TO CONTINUE. PLEASE CONSIDER SPONSORING AN ISSUE, FOR ANY OCCASION. FOR DETAILS EMAIL: ari@vertluch.com.**

<http://www.ou.org/chagim/roshchodesh/tishrei/aseretyemai.htm>

The "Aseret Yemai Teshuvah,"

Ten Days of Repentance

OU.org

In "Halachah," Jewish Law and "Machshavah," Jewish Thought

Some of what follows is based on these works: "The Festivals in Halachah," by Rabbi Shlomo Yosef Zevin, ZT"L, translated by Rabbi Shlomo Fox-Ashrei, and published in 1981 by Mesorah Publications (NY) and Hillel Publications (Jerusalem) and on the work "Aspaklarya," by Rabbi Shmuel Avraham Adler, published by Aspaklarya in 1996 (Jerusalem)

The term "Aseret Yemai Teshuvah" is not found in the Talmud Bavli, although the days referred to are mentioned there. The expression used in the Bavli is "the ten days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom HaKippurim." In the literature of the Geonim, we also find "the ten days from the beginning of Tishrei to Yom HaKippurim," "the first ten days of the month of Tishrei," "(the time) between Rosh HaShanah and Yom HaKippurim." But the term commonly used now, "Aseret Yemai Teshuvah," is also found in early sources. It is used in the Talmud Yerushalmi, by Pesikta Rabbati, a Midrash, and it is also found in the literature of the Geonim. But ever since the days of the Rishonim, literally the "first" or the "early" ones, referring to post-Talmudic and Geonic times; actually Torah scholars from approximately the eleventh century through the fifteenth, "Aseret Yemai Teshuvah" is the most popular title for this period of time in the Hebrew Calendar.

The special character of these days, as will be explained below, manifests itself in emphasis on "Teshuvah," Repentance, "Tefilla," Prayer and "Zehirut," Spiritual Vigilance.

Additional insights:

Lengthening of Time Strength of a Community and a Biblical Hint Reborn on the Tenth Day Fair Compensation Total Concentration Enthusiasm for "Teshuvah" Enlightenment, Joy and Salvation A Two-Stage Process "Behavior Modification" Teshuvah as the Main Element in the "Aseret Yemai Teshuvah"

The Mitzvah To Eat or Not to Eat? Shabbat Shuvah The Mitzvah of Teshuvah

The Act of "Teshuvah," is an act applicable and appropriate for all times of the year; it is therefore not a "Mitzvat Aseh SheHaZman Garma," a time-bound Positive Commandment. Therefore, since women are not obligated only in time-bound Positive Commandments, "Teshuvah" is applicable to men and women during the entire year.

However, in the words of the RAMBAM in "Hilchot Teshuvah," "The Laws of Repentance" (2:6), "Despite the fact that "Teshuvah" and crying out to HaShem are always timely, during the Ten Days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom HaKippurim it is exceedingly appropriate, and is accepted immediately, as it says, 'Seek HaShem when He is to be found' (Yeshayahu 55:6)."

The source of this statement of the RAMBAM is Masechet Rosh HaShanah (18a) where it is written, "Seek HaShem when He is to be found - these are the days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom HaKippurim."

The RAMBAM continues in "Hilchot Teshuvah" (3:4) "...Every person should view himself all year as if he were half innocent and half guilty. And that is the way he should look at the world as well, as if it were half innocent and half guilty. If he would do just one sin, he would thereby tip both himself and the entire world towards the "guilty" side, and cause it great destruction. And If he would do just one "Mitzvah," he would tip both himself and the entire world towards the "innocent" side and cause for himself and for them salvation, as it says "The Righteous Person is the Foundation of the World" - because his being righteous tipped the world for good, and saved it."

"And because of this, the whole House of Israel have accustomed themselves to give more "Tzedakah" (Charity), and to do more good deeds, and to engage in "Mitzvot," from Rosh HaShanah through Yom HaKippurim more than, than the rest of the year. And they have all adopted the custom of rising at night during this ten-day period and praying in the synagogues prayers of supplication and entreaties until daylight."

In our time, most communities rise up early in the morning, except on Shabbat and Yom Tov, to say "Selichot," special prayers composed over the generations by religious and literary geniuses, capturing the penitential spirit appropriate for the occasion.

Fasting as Part of the "Teshuvah" Process

Fasting is a classic response of the Jewish People to danger, as we see in Megilat Esther, where Queen Esther decreed three days of fasting by the Jewish citizens of Shushan when she learned of Haman's genocidal plot against the Jews, before she took the dangerous step of entering the King's Throne-Room without being invited.

Stressing the point of Fasting on Shabbat, which is in general viewed as contrary to the Spirit of the Day, Rav Natronai Gaon said "...These days are different from the rest of the year, and hence our ancestors were accustomed to fast during this period, both on Shabbat and on the weekdays."

However, both Geonim and Rishonim objected to the idea of fasting on "Shabbat Shuvah," the Shabbat between Rosh HaShanah and Yom HaKippurim, and especially to fasting on Rosh HaShanah itself. The principal objection to fasting on Rosh HaShanah is based on an explicit verse in the Book of Nechemiah 8:10, where we find Ezra telling the Jewish People, "Go, eat fat meat and drink sweet wine ..., for today is holy to our L-rd."

Rav Hai Gaon expresses doubt even about fasting on the weekdays, for these Ten Days were set aside as a time of Prayer and Confession, and of Return to HaShem in one's heart. However, those who wish to and are able to fast on these days, may do so.

"Shabbat Shuvah"

The special character of this Shabbat, as opposed to all others, is that it is focused on assembling congregations of the Jewish People not only to commemorate HaShem's Act of Creating the Universe and of His taking the Jewish People out of Egypt, but also to direct their attention to the need to Return to Him. Thus the custom of the Shabbat Shuvah Drashah, an inspirational sermon delivered by the religious leader of the community, usually combining "Halachah" and "Aggadah," but the basic purpose of which is to provide "Hitorerut," inspiration, that will cause the listeners to examine their deeds and return to HaShem.

In the Halachic Literature, we find the following remarks by the "Mateh Moshe," "It is customary (that the Rav) deliver a talk on this Shabbat ... in order to awaken the People to Repentance; and I have found support for this custom in 'Midrash Mishlei,' where it is written, 'The Holy One, Blessed Be He, said: When the "Chacham," or "Sage," sits and teaches ("doresh"), I cancel and forgive the trespasses of Israel." Hence it is proper to deliver a talk on this Shabbat, in order that He pardon their sins; and you may find another support for this in the Zohar on Parshat Vayikra."

"The 'Mateh Ephraim' writes, 'It is the custom throughout Israel, in all the places of their dispersion, that the Rav of the City deliver a talk on that Shabbat before the assembled multitude, and many books mention the fact that this 'Drashah' should aim at awakening the heart to Teshuvah, with words of admonition and moral teaching ... in any case, the great and righteous men of each generation have always spoken to the People (on Shabbat Shuvah) with eloquence and profundity and Halachic discourse.'"

As mentioned, the "Shabbat Shuvah Drashah" is an ancient tradition. Moshe Rabbeinu probably delivered one on the Plains of Moav, and most of the righteous leaders of Israel who followed him, probably did the same.

An Early Shabbat Shuvah Drashah

One of the most inspiring "Drashot" ever given to the People of Israel came from the mouth of Hoshea, the Prophet and his close contemporary, the Prophet Yoel.

The Haftarah read on this Shabbat opens with a section from Hoshea, beginning with, "Return, O Israel, for you have stumbled in your sin." (Hoshea 14:2) After reading the fourteenth and last Chapter of Hoshea, many communities continue with a portion from the Prophecy of Yoel beginning,

"Blow the Shofar in Zion, Proclaim a Sanctified Day of Fasting; Call for an Assembly."

"Gather the People, Sanctify the Congregation, Assemble the Elders; Gather the Children and those who Nurse from the breast; Let the Groom go out of his room, and the Bride, From her Bridal-Canopy."

(Yoel 2:15-16)

and ending,

"And you shall know That I am in the midst of Israel, And I am your G-d, And there is no other."

(Yoel 2:27)

Prayer in the "Aseret Yemai Teshuvah"

Two Changes Four Insertions One Point Two Changes

Two changes that are made in the Prayers during this ten-day period are

The change in the Third Blessing of the Shemoneh Esray, of "HaE-l HaKadosh," The Almighty G-d, Who is Holy," to "HaMelech HaKadosh," "The Holy King" In the eleventh Blessing, the replacement of "Melech, Ohev Tzedakah U'Mishpat," "The King Who loves Righteousness and Justice," to "HaMelech HaMishpat," "The King, The Justice." The change to "The Holy King" emphasizes the principle that in Judaism, G-d, King of the Universe, is on the side of the downtrodden; the orphan and the widow. His Holiness is expressed in withdrawal from the abuse of power. As Rabbi Yochanan said, "Wherever you find the infinite might of HaShem mentioned, right there do you find mention of His infinite humility."

On Rosh HaShanah, we are confronted by the Awesome Might of HaShem, the Judge of All the World. It will help us to keep in mind that although in any contest between us and the "Ribbono shel Olam," the Master of the Universe, we are vastly the underdog, yet, HaShem is on the side of the underdog! As it is written, "VeHaE-lohim yevakesh et haNirdaf," "G-d (and the Name signifying the Attribute of Justice is used) is on the side of the pursued." ("Kohelet"/Ecclesiastes 3:15)

When one looks at the words "HaMelech HaMishpat" and translates them, the result is "The King, The Justice." At first glance, this is not meaningful. But "Kol-Bo" explains it, along the lines of the RAMBAM, who says that the knowledge of HaShem is not like our knowledge. For, though it resides in our minds, we and our knowledge are, in a sense, "separate." Whereas, with HaShem, His Knowledge and His Self are One. Similarly is it with HaShem, explains "Kol-Bo," and His Justice. When we dispense Justice, though the thoughts reside in our minds, we and they are, in a sense, "separate." But again, not so with HaShem, for Whom, His Justice and His Self are One.

Four Insertions

"During the Period of the Geonim other additions to the Shemoneh Esray Prayer were instituted for the Ten Days of Teshuvah. The sentence beginning "Zachrenu" - "Remember us for life ..." was added to "Avot," the Blessing of the Patriarchs; "Mi Kamocho" - "Who is like You..." was added to the Blessing of "Gevurot," which praises the Powers of HaShem; "Uchesov" - "And inscribe for life..." was added to "Hodaah," the Blessing of Thanksgiving, and "BeSefer" - "In the Book of Life..." was added to the final Blessing of the "Amidah," "Sim Shalom," the Blessing of Peace."

There was much controversy concerning these insertions, mainly because in general, one is not permitted to make requests for the fulfillment of one's personal needs in the first three or the last three of the Blessings, because the theme of these is "Praise of G-d" and "Gratitude to G-d," respectively, where the focus is upon G-d, not upon Man.

However, the Halachic Authorities have agreed that these insertions should be allowed on this occasion, in response to the fact that on these Days, HaShem is considered "B'himatzo," especially near to us, and accepts our petitions for our own needs more freely than usual.

A Point of "Dikduk," Grammar

A dispute arose in connection with one of the insertions, namely "Zachrenu LeChayim,..." "Remember us for Life." Tur writes in the name of the Maharam MiRutenberg that the word "LeChayim;" specifically, the "e" following the "L" in "Le" is to be written and pronounced with a "shevav," the sound of the "e" in "the," rather than with a "patach," the sound of the "o" in "hot." Why? Or What's the difference?

Because the "patach" pronunciation may suggest "not life," as it does in another context.

Rav Yaakov Emden, however, in his famous Siddur, writes that according to the principles of grammar, the "patach" sound should be used, because its meaning includes the "definite article," "the," so that what we are asking for is the life. For

one's whole intent this day is on that specific life which really is life; namely, the Life of the World-to-Come. But most prayer books spell the word with a "shevav," "Lechayim," simply asking for life.

Spiritual Vigilance

What is the nature of this vigilance? "It is 'zehirut,' vigilance, in one's actions and in one's "chassidus," piety." The "Rishonim," the "Early" or "First Ones," derive from this requirement of extra vigilance the following specific form of spiritual vigilance, that is established as Halachah in the "Shulchan Aruch," "Even a person who normally is not careful to avoid bread baked by non-Jews, should be careful about this during the "Aseret Yemai Teshuvah."

The "Acharonim," the "Later" or "Last," Torah scholars from about the sixteenth or seventeenth centuries through the nineteenth, draw a further logical conclusion. If, in connection with bread baked by non-Jews, which in the opinion of certain "poskim," rabbis who decide specific questions of "Halachah," is entirely permissible, one should exercise special care, then one should certainly exercise special care with regard to other matters, be they in the realm of Laws involving the relationship between Man and G-d and certainly those involving the relationship between Man and Man.

Lengthening of Time

The Zohar states that the "Writing of the Verdict" and the "Sealing of the Verdict" should have taken place on the very same day! But HaShem, in His Mercy, as it were, "lengthened the time," and gave the Jewish People more "time" in which to do "Teshuvah," which He would accept readily, atone for their sins and raise them to the level of holiness of "Yom HaKippurim."

Strength of a Community and a Biblical Hint Concerning the Ten Days

"Rabbi Shmuel, son of Ainaya, said in the name of Rav, 'From where do we know that a decree against a community is not sealed?'

The Academy responded, 'Not sealed? Is it not written "Your sin is sealed before Him?'

He answered, 'Even though it is sealed, the decree can easily be torn up, as it says, "As HaShem our G-d in all our calling to Him!'

'Is it not written, "Seek Him when He is to be found" '

'That is talking about an individual; here we are speaking about a community'

'And when is it possible for an individual to have his decree torn up?'

Rabbah bar Avuha said, 'That refers to the ten days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom HaKippurim.'

'And Biblical support is found for this, from the account in Shmuel 1, where we find the verse, "After ten days had passed, HaShem struck Naval (who had sinned against David) down." '

To what do these 'ten days' refer?

Rabbi Nachman said in the name of Rabbah bar Avuha, 'These are the ten days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom HaKippurim.' "

(Rosh HaShanah 18a)

Reborn on the Tenth Day

Here it says "And you shall make a burnt offering to HaShem." But else where it says, "You shall bring a burnt offering to HaShem! Why the discrepancy?

Rabbi Yitzchak answered, "Why does it say 'And you shall make?' - The Holy One, Blessed Be He said to Israel, 'Repent on these Ten Days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom HaKippurim, and I will honor you on Yom HaKippurim and I will re-make you as a new creation!'

(Pesikta; Parshah 40: "In the Seventh Month")

Fair Compensation

Rabbi Nehorai said, "Why were ten days of Divine Compassion granted the Jewish People? It was compensation for the Ten Tests that 'Avraham Avinu' "took" and passed, as it were, with "flying colors;" therefore, HaShem gave his descendants the Ten Days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom HaKippurim.

And corresponding to the Ten Commandments that the Jewish People accepted wholeheartedly, did HaShem promise that if the Jewish People would do "Teshuvah" during the Ten Days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom HaKippurim, that He would accept it wholeheartedly!

(Tana Devei Eliyahu Zuta; Chapter 22)

Total Concentration

"...If a person would know that his judgment was about to come before a King who was only a human being, would he not tremble greatly and seek desperately for means to survive, and would use all of his energy to seek means of escape!"

"... It is therefore most appropriate for each person who fears HaShem to minimize his regular activities, and his thoughts should be controlled, and he should allocate time in the day and in the night, to spend time by himself examining his ways, and to get up early and to engage in Repentance and improvement of his ways. And to think deeply, and to pray and offer supplication, and he should realize that the time is right and his prayers will be accepted now, as

it says, "At a proper time I shall answer you and on the Day of Salvation I will help you (Yeshayahu 49)."

"Indeed our Rabbis have said, 'Seek HaShem when He is to be found' - this refers to the time between Rosh HaShanah and Yom HaKippurim; and it is a Positive Biblical Command to raise one's spirits to Return in Repentance on Yom HaKippurim ... "

"Shaarei Teshuvah" 2:14

Enthusiasm for "Teshuvah"

"... a strong indication ... on these Awesome Days, not to be unemotional; rather, one should perform all the forms of Service specified for the Seventh Month (the Month of Tishrei) with extra enthusiasm and great feeling, and with this approach, one can stand up straight and be 'victorious in one's trial.' "

"And every person, according to the level of his enthusiasm is the degree of his 'victory' in his trial, as it says, 'And you, who cleave to HaShem, your G-d, you are all alive today.' "

"Shem MiShmuel," Parshat Nitzavim 675

Enlightenment, Joy and Salvation

"CHAZAL remark, with regard to the verse, 'Seek HaShem when He is at hand,' that this refers to the days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom HaKippurim."

"It is possible to connect the Midrash just cited to another, said on the verse (uttered by King David in 'Tehilim/Psalms 27), 'HaShem is my Light and my Salvation, Whom shall I fear?' that 'my Light' refers to Rosh HaShanah and 'my Salvation' refers to Yom HaKippurim."

"And this is the connection: On Rosh HaShanah, illumination comes to the heart from the great theme that HaShem is King of the Universe... Through that recognition, one comes 'close' to HaShem, in a sense, and now is able to seek Him while He is at hand."

"And now we can also understand what David means by 'Whom shall I fear?' For with the recognition of HaShem as Absolute King, there is no longer anyone (except HaShem Himself) to fear. On the contrary, from this recognition, there is also born within the individual great 'joy,' as it says, 'The lantern of the righteous shall burn brightly and the lantern of the wicked shall be extinguished.' "

"For through the revelation of the illumination of the Kingdom of HaShem on Rosh HaShanah, that 'point of truth' appears in the souls of Israel; and this is the meaning of 'Your light and your Truth, they will lead me.' Because by the illumination of this point of Truth that appears on Rosh HaShanah, HaShem leads the souls of Israel through the "Aseret Yemai Teshuvah," so that 'He is near to those who call upon Him' until the climax of the Revelation of Salvation on Yom HaKippurim."

Rav Tzaddok HaCohen, in "Pri Tzaddik," on Masechet Rosh HaShanah 27

A Two-Step Process

"The entire purpose of Rosh HaShanah is to raise the human being and to bring him to a state wherein he is elevated above his normal everyday life, to a point where his spirituality is aroused and he is 'above his sins.' And this is the meaning of the words, 'Happy is the one who is raised above his sins.' "

"However, if the process would terminate here, where one's physical acts and thoughts have not been purified, it is clear that the process is incomplete. But a necessary first step has been taken - the individual can now view himself - his acts and thoughts - and realize what has to be done. And that is where the Acts of Confession and Repentance become crucial, because it is by them that the individual is able to 'clean up,' as it were, his earthly act..."

"But it is necessary that the Light of the World that came upon the scene on Rosh HaShanah itself participate, laser-like, in the cleanup and improvement. And this is the purpose of Yom Kippur, for on that Day, Man and the World receive the final boost (to mix metaphors) from Hashem, that fixes their sins and grants them atonement..."

Free translation of "Shiurei Daat" - Part 2, Page 213

Behavior Modification

"The entire purpose of Elul is to inspire with enthusiasm and to increase one's pre-occupation with acts that will strengthen one, so that one can move from the state of extreme weakness, in which he began, to the state of strength."

"And we find in the Shulchan Aruch that in the 'Aseret Yemai Teshuvah,' one should adopt practices that are fulfillments of Commandments on a very high and careful level, even those that we have not practiced previously; for example, not to buy bread baked by non-Jews, and the like. And, at first glance, one wonders why, what is the purpose of adopting a practice during these few days that we're not likely to follow in the future?"

"But the point is that CHAZAL by this example have shown us the true method of Repentance, that one must approach it with tremendous spiritual energy such that one will strengthen oneself and do many good deeds and particulars of Commandments, even if that behavior is beyond our present level. For an extreme

change in our behavior will prepare us and open us to the possibility of proper 'Teshuvah.'

"It is a form of 'behavior modification.' After we do the 'we will obey' in many matters, we will be able to achieve the higher level of integration into our personality, the 'we will understand' aspect."

"It is only through such a process of self-strengthening, that it is possible for us to pass through the 'Gates of Repentance' that HaShem, Blessed Be He, opens for us to an infinite extent."

Free Translation of "Michtav Me-Eliyahu," by Rav E. Dessler (Part 2, Pg. 56)

from Yeshivat Har Etzion office@etzion.org.il reply-to Yeshivat Har Etzion <office@etzion.org.il> toyhe-holiday@etzion.org.il date Mon, Sep 26, 2011 at 9:07 AM subject VBM-Special Rosh Hashana Package Part 1 hide details Sep 26 (2 days ago) YESHIVAT HAR ETZION ISRAEL KOSCHITZKY VIRTUAL BEIT MIDRASH (VBM) YHE-HOLIDAY: SPECIAL ROSH HASHANA 5772 PACKAGE (Part 1 of 2) In memory of Asher Hillel Palmer and his infant son Yonatan, HY"D. Ketiva ve-chatima tova.

The Akeida's Lesson for Penitents

Based on a sicha by Harav Yehuda Amital zt"l

Adapted by Aviad Hacoen Translated by Aliza Israel

R. Abahu asked: Why do we blow the shofar of a ram? God said: Blow with the shofar of a ram before Me, so that I will be reminded of the binding (akeida) of Yitzchak son of Avraham. And I will consider [the shofar blowing] the equivalent of your having bound yourselves before Me. (Rosh Hashana 16a) At the climax of the story of the akeida, God commands Avraham: Lay not your hand upon the lad, neither do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, seeing that you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me. (Bereishit 22:12) Rashi on this verse, quoting the sages, describes a conversation between God and Avraham: "Lay not your hand" – to slaughter. [Avraham] said to him: If this is the case, then I came [here] for nothing! I will just wound him, and I will draw a small amount of his blood. [God] said to him: "Do not do anything (me'uma) to him," Do not make a blemish (mum) in him. These words are both astounding and frightening. Avraham, our forefather, who is the archetype of kindness and mercy, is determined to injure his son, despite the fact that God had "changed His mind" and told him not to lay a hand on the boy. How surprising! The Rambam in Moreh Nevuchim (III:24) offers an unusual understanding of this story. Typically, the akeida is viewed as a symbol of the man of faith's blind obedience to God. The story represents the concept of putting "We shall do" before "We shall hear" (Shemot 24:7). In other words, this seems to be a situation where actions are taken without understanding their purpose. And while this idea is a fundamental tenet of divine worship, it is not expressed (according to the Rambam) in the story of the akeida. The Rambam believes that the goal of the mitzvot that are "without a reason" is to help us be subservient to God. We should do mitzvot in an unhesitating manner, as one who is commanded. However, according to the Rambam, this does not apply to the akeida. The purpose of the akeida was not to dull the emotions but quite the opposite, to strengthen the emotions. But these emotions do not arise in a momentary frenzy; rather, they are the measured, considered result of much consideration and pondering. Whereas the philosophy of paganism only understands the concept of fear of punishment, our forefather Avraham had a different approach: But the fact that he performed [the akeida] three days after he had received the commandment, proves the presence of thought, proper consideration, and careful examination of what is due to the Divine command and what is in accordance with the love and fear of God. There is no necessity to look for the presence of any other idea or of anything that might have affected his emotions. For Avraham did not hasten to kill Yitzchak out of fear that God might slay him or make him poor, but solely because it is man's duty to love and to fear

God, even without hope of reward or fear of punishment. We have repeatedly explained this. The angel, therefore, says to him, "For now I know [that you fear God]" (Bereishit 22:12), that is, from this action, for which you deserve to be truly called a God-fearing man, all people shall learn how far we must go in the fear of God. [Friedlander translation] Through the akeida, Avraham tried to teach the world something new. Therefore, he demanded that God would allow him to draw just a little bit of blood from Yitzchak's body. This action, he felt, would leave an impression on the entire world, and would instill the message that he wanted to share. The story of the akeida also highlights the significance of recognizing prophecy. Idol worship doesn't know what prophecy is. The act of the akeida teaches us how powerful prophecy can be. Despite the fact that Avraham had been promised "Through Yitzchak you will have children" (Bereishit 21:12), and now he was commanded to bring this same Yitzchak up as a sacrifice, Avraham never doubted the truth of the prophecy and did not question it. One of the main lessons of the akeida is that the act of repentance itself is something that requires thought and consideration. As in the akeida, so too in repentance it is not the temporary state of ecstasy that is primary. But rather, what is most fundamental is the true act of repentance, preceded by prior thought, consideration and the searching of the heart.

[This sicha was delivered on the second night of Rosh Ha-shana 5753 (1993).]

From: **Rabbi Kaganoff** Sent: Sunday, September 25, 2011 6:49 AM To: kaganoff-a@googlegroups.com Subject: **article on eruv tavshillin attached The Why's, How's, and What's of Eruv Tavshillin By Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff**

Question #1: Avrumie, who studies in a local yeshiva, asks me: "I will be eating my Yom Tov meals as a guest in different homes. Do I need to make my own eruv tavshillin?"

Question #2: Michal and Muttie are spending Rosh Hashanah near his Yeshiva and are invited out for all the meals. They have found an available apartment for Yom Tov and Shabbos, but do not intend to use the kitchen there at all. Someone told Muttie that, although he should make an eruv tavshillin so that Michal can light Shabbos candles, he should not recite a bracha when doing so. Is this the correct procedure?

Answer: With Rosh Hashanah falling on Thursday and Friday, and then, two and three weeks later, the second day of Sukkos and Simchas Torah in chutz la'aretz, many people will be asking these or similar questions. In order to reply accurately to the above inquiries we need to investigate several aspects of this mitzvah that the Sages implemented – particularly, the why's, how's, and what's of eruv tavshillin.

WHY DO WE MAKE AN ERUV TAVSHILLIN?

Although one may cook on Yom Tov, one may only prepare food for consumption on that day of Yom Tov. There is, however, one exceptional situation -- one may cook on a Friday Yom Tov for Shabbos, but only if one makes an eruv tavshillin the day before Yom Tov.

WHAT IS THE RECIPE FOR PRODUCING AN ERUV TAVSHILLIN?

It is fairly easy to make an eruv tavshillin:

1. **INGREDIENTS** On Erev Yom Tov, set aside two prepared foods, one cooked and one baked, that one is not planning to eat on Yom Tov. Many people use a hard-boiled egg for the cooked item, but it is actually preferable to use something more significant (Mishnah Berurah 527:8). (In all likelihood, the practice of taking a cooked egg originates in the pre-refrigeration era when most cooked items made Erev Yom Tov would spoil by Shabbos. A cooked egg can last a bit longer outside refrigeration, although I do not recommend leaving it unrefrigerated for more than two hours.)

PROCEDURE (2. Someone whose eruv will include people outside his family, such as the rav of a community, adds an additional step at this point: He has another person who does not usually eat at the rav's house lift the food used for the eruv tavshillin four inches or more. By lifting the food, the person I am going to call the zo'che acquires partial ownership in the eruv for those who will forget to make an eruv tavshillin. The zo'che then returns the food to the rav [Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 527:10- 12 and commentaries]. I will soon explain what the zo'che's involvement accomplishes.)

3. One then holds the eruv tavshillin, recites a bracha, Baruch Atta Hashem Elokeinu Melech haolam asher ki'deshanu bemitzvosav vetzivanu al mitzvas eruv, and declares:

This eruv permits us to bake, cook, wrap food to keep it hot (hatmanah), kindle lights, and make all other food preparations on Yom Tov for Shabbos (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chayim 527:12).

(4. Those who include other people in their eruv add the following clause at the end of this declaration:

For ourselves and for all others who dwell in this city.)

5. INSTRUCTIONS The foods that have now become the eruv tavshillin should not be consumed until one has completed all the Shabbos preparations.

6. YIELD The eruv tavshillin allows the members of this household to prepare food for Shabbos. The rav's eruv tavshillin will allow others who forgot to prepare food, subject to the details we will soon learn.

WHAT DO I DO WITH THE ERUV?

After one has completed preparing everything for Shabbos, there is no requirement to do anything with the eruv, although it is preferable to use the challah or matzoh (if one used this as a baked item) as the second loaf for the first two meals of Shabbos and to eat the entire eruv tavshillin as part of the third meal of Shabbos (seudah shelishis) in order to use the mitzvah item (that is, the eruv tavshillin) for other mitzvos, in this case lechem mishneh and the three Shabbos meals (see Mishnah Berurah 527:48). (For the same reason, many set aside the lulav and hoshanas after Sukkos to use as fuel for baking matzos or burning the chometz.)

If someone mistakenly ate the eruv tavshillin before Shabbos, one may continue the Shabbos preparations as long as at least an olive-sized piece of the cooked item remains, even if the entire baked item was consumed. However, if less than an olive-sized piece of the cooked item remains, one may no longer continue cooking especially for Shabbos, and should ask a shaylah how to proceed (Shulchan Aruch 527:15).

FORGOT TO MAKE AN ERUV

Someone who fails to make an eruv tavshillin may not cook or bake on Yom Tov for Shabbos, and needs to ask a shaylah how to prepare his Shabbos meals (see Shulchan Aruch 527:20-22). The Rishonim dispute whether he may kindle lights on Yom Tov for Shabbos when he has no eruv tavshillin (Shulchan Aruch 527:19). This dispute will soon become significant to our discussion.

WHY DOES THE RAV INCLUDE OTHER PEOPLE IN HIS ERUV?

As mentioned above, someone who did not make an eruv tavshillin may not cook on Yom Tov for Shabbos. The Gemara narrates the following story:

Shmuel saw that someone was very sad on Yom Tov and asked him why. The man responded, "Because I neglected to make an eruv tavshillin, and therefore I will be unable to cook for Shabbos." Shmuel explained that the man could rely on Shmuel's eruv tavshillin.

The next year Yom Tov once again fell on Friday. Shmuel again noticed that the man was sad, and again the man mentioned that he had forgotten to make an eruv tavshillin. However, this time Shmuel advised him that since he had repeated the negligence, he may not rely upon Shmuel's eruv (Beitzah 16b).

We see that the rav should include everyone in his city in his eruv tavshillin, lest someone forget to make an eruv, although everyone is required to create his/her own (Shulchan Aruch 527:7).

WHY DOES THE RAV HAND HIS ERUV TO SOMEONE ELSE?

A person must own or be a partner in the eruv tavshillin with which he fulfills this mitzvah. An eruv tavshillin automatically includes all regular members of this household, but how does it include other people? Having someone pick up the eruv tavshillin on their behalf makes them partial owners in this eruv tavshillin.

MUST I MAKE AN ERUV?

At this point, we can begin to analyze the two questions I mentioned at the beginning of the article. Avrumie, Michal, and Muttie will not be cooking on Yom Tov; does that exempt them from eruv tavshillin, or must they make one anyway? Is eruv tavshillin merely a license to cook for Shabbos on Yom Tov and therefore someone not preparing food has no need for one, or is there a rabbinic requirement to make an eruv tavshillin even when one will not be cooking? Furthermore, assuming that someone who will not be cooking does not need to make an eruv tavshillin, perhaps someone who will be kindling Shabbos lights must.

Let me begin by presenting two differing ways of understanding the function of eruv tavshillin, that I will describe as (A) matir, license, or (B) chovah, obligation.

A. Matir According to this approach, eruv tavshillin functions solely to permit one to cook on Yom Tov for Shabbos, so that one who is not planning to cook on Yom Tov for Shabbos has no requirement to make an eruv tavshillin. This opinion compares eruv tavshillin to the mitzvah of shechitah. One is not required to shecht an animal; however, someone interested in converting a bird or animal into food

must perform shechitah to do so. Thus, shechitah is a matir; it permits one to eat the meat, but one is not required to shecht an animal if one does not want to eat it. Similarly, eruv tavshillin permits one to cook for Shabbos, but one who does not intend to cook does not need to make an eruv.

Those following this approach will note that the other types of eruv (eruvei chatzeiros and eruvei techumim) are both types of matir that permit carrying or traveling that is otherwise prohibited.

According to this approach, Avrumie has no need for an eruv tavshillin since he has no intention to cook for Shabbos. We will discuss shortly whether Michal's kindling requires her to make an eruv tavshillin.

B. Chovah

On the other hand, one could argue that eruv tavshillin is different from the other two types of eruv, and is an obligatory act. This approach understands that Chazal created a rabbinic mitzvah requiring each individual or family to make an eruv tavshillin even if there is no intention to cook or bake on Yom Tov for Shabbos.

Why should eruv tavshillin be different from the other types of eruv? To answer this question we need to explain the reason for the rabbinic mitzvah called eruv tavshillin.

WHAT IS THE REASON FOR ERUV TAVSHILLIN?

Why did Chazal establish this mitzvah? The Gemara records a dispute why Chazal introduced eruv tavshillin: Was it for the sake of honoring Shabbos, or for the sake of honoring Yom Tov (Beitzah 15b)?

A. For Shabbos According to the first opinion, that of Rava, Chazal instituted eruv tavshillin to guarantee that one not become so involved in the Yom Tov feasting that one forgets to prepare proper meals for Shabbos. The eruv tavshillin therefore serves as a "red flag": "Don't forget to also produce delicious repasts for Shabbos!"

B. For Yom Tov The other approach, that of Rav Ashi, contends that eruv tavshillin reinforces the sanctity of Yom Tov by emphasizing that without the eruv tavshillin one may not cook on Yom Tov, even for Shabbos. A person thereby realizes: "If cooking for Shabbos (on Yom Tov) is forbidden without an eruv tavshillin, certainly one may not prepare food on Yom Tov for a subsequent weekday!"

How does this dispute affect Avrumie, Michal and Muttie?

The basis for treating eruv tavshillin as a chovah, an obligation, and not merely a matir, is Rava's opinion that eruv tavshillin's purpose is to guarantee that one celebrates Shabbos properly. In other words, eruv tavshillin is to remind us to cook for Shabbos. Clearly, this is not a matir, but a chovah. In Rava's opinion, eruv tavshillin is similar to the rabbinic requirement of kindling lights before Shabbos to ensure that one does not sit in the dark. Even someone who enjoys sitting in the dark is required to kindle lights before Shabbos since this is not a matir but a chovah. Thus, according to Rava, Avrumie must make an eruv tavshillin (or be included in someone else's), even though he has no intention to cook, because eruv tavshillin is a requirement that Chazal placed on every individual to remind him to prepare appropriate meals for Shabbos.

DO WE FOLLOW RAVA'S APPROACH?

However, the halacha does not follow Rava's opinion, but Rav Ashi's position that the purpose of eruv tavshillin is for Yom Tov's honor. As noted above, Rav Ashi contended that the reason for eruv tavshillin is to guarantee that people realize that Yom Tov is so holy that one may not cook on it for afterwards. According to this approach, one could argue that eruv tavshillin is simply a matir but that one who does not intend to cook for Shabbos need not make an eruv tavshillin, since if one is not cooking for Shabbos, it is unlikely that he will cook for the weekdays after Shabbos.

On the other hand, the usual halachic assumption is that when the Gemara quotes two disputing opinions, the disagreement only concerns the one point mentioned and no other issues. Thus, once we have demonstrated that Rava contends that eruv tavshillin is mandatory, we should conclude either one of the following two points:

1. That the issue of whether eruv tavshillin is a matir or a chovah is itself the focal point of the dispute between Rav Ashi and Rava.
2. That Rav Ashi and Rava agree that eruv tavshillin is mandatory and not merely a matir.

The difficulty with the first approach is that we see no evidence that Rav Ashi considers eruv tavshillin to be only a matir. On the contrary, the Gemara maintains that the dispute between Rav Ashi and Rava is whether eruv tavshillin is for the honor of Yom Tov or of Shabbos. Since Rava must maintain that eruv tavshillin is a chovah, and the dispute between them concerns only whether eruv tavshillin is for the honor of Yom Tov or of Shabbos, we should infer that Rav Ashi agrees that eruv tavshillin is a chovah. This analysis would conclude that Avrumie, Michal and Muttie are all required to make an eruv tavshillin. However, notwithstanding this

analysis, I have found no early source who states that eruv tavshillin is obligatory for someone who has no need to cook for Shabbos.

LITERATURE

Having discussed whether eruv tavshillin is a matir or a chovah we can now research whether the halachic literature produces any evidence supporting either side of this question. Analysis of the position of one recognized halachic authority demonstrates that he felt that eruv tavshillin is a matir, not a chovah.

A respected commentary on the Shulchan Aruch, the Maamar Mordechai (527:18), discusses the exact issue that I posed as Michal's shaylah:

Someone will not be cooking or baking on Yom Tov for Shabbos, but will need to kindle lights immediately before the entry of Shabbos. Does this person recite a bracha prior to making his/her eruv tavshillin?

The background to his question is the dispute of the Rishonim whether a person may kindle lights for Shabbos even if he did not make an eruv tavshillin. In other words, some Rishonim hold that an eruv tavshillin is not only necessary to permit cooking on Yom Tov, but it is also necessary to permit any preparations for Shabbos.

The Maamar Mordechai rules that since many authorities contend that kindling lights for Shabbos does not require an eruv tavshillin, someone not intending to cook for Shabbos should make an eruv tavshillin without reciting a bracha.

Implicit in the Maamar Mordechai's conclusion is that the purpose of eruv tavshillin is exclusively to permit cooking and baking on Yom Tov, and there is no independent requirement, no chovah, to make an eruv tavshillin. If the Maamar Mordechai felt that eruv tavshillin is a chovah and not merely a matir, the dispute whether one can kindle lights without an eruv tavshillin is irrelevant to whether one recites a bracha or not. Whether one needs the eruv tavshillin or not, one would recite a bracha for performing the mitzvah that Chazal instituted! Thus, the Maamar Mordechai clearly holds that eruv tavshillin is only a matir, and that one recites the bracha only if the matir is required.

However, the Maamar Mordechai's ruling is not obvious, even assuming that eruv tavshillin is only a matir and not a chovah. It is possible that one should recite a bracha on making the eruv tavshillin even if he has no intention to cook on Yom Tov, since the eruv permits him to cook should he choose to. Thus, the eruv tavshillin fulfilled its role as a matir in permitting him to cook, and for that alone he should be able to recite a bracha even if he has no intention to cook. Yet the Maamar Mordechai values the eruv tavshillin only if one intends to use it, whereas if one does not intend to use it, it is considered purposeless and warrants no bracha. Thus, according to the Maamar Mordechai, Michal and Muttie should make an eruv tavshillin without a bracha.

I was asked this shaylah once when the first day of Pesach occurred on Thursday. Those of us who live in Eretz Yisrael had no mitzvah of eruv tavshillin since, for us, Friday was not Yom Tov. However, we had several guests for Yom Tov who live in chutz la'aretz and observe two days of Yom Tov even while visiting Eretz Yisrael. For them, it was prohibited to cook on Yom Tov without an eruv tavshillin. However, they were not planning to cook on Yom Tov, since my wife and daughters, who observe only one day of Yom Tov, were doing the cooking. I suggested that they make an eruv tavshillin with a bracha, but out of deference to the opinion of the Maamar Mordechai, instructed that those reciting a bracha should participate in the cooking for Shabbos that will transpire on Yom Tov at least in a small way. Of course, I suggest that those of you faced with the same shaylah as Avrumie, Michal or Muttie ask your own rav for direction. I would be curious to know whether he agreed with me and, if not, for what reason.

THE HASHKAFAH OF PREPARING FOOD ON YOM TOV

The Torah refers to the Yomim Tovim as Mo'ed. Just as the word ohel mo'ed refers to the tent in the desert which served as a meeting place between Hashem and the Jewish people, so too, a mo'ed is a meeting time between Hashem and the Jewish people (Hirsch, Vayikra 23:3 and Horeb). Unlike Shabbos when we refrain from all melacha activity, on Yom Tov the Torah permitted melacha activity that enhances the celebration of the Yom Tov as a Moed. Permitting the preparations of delicious, freshly prepared meals allows an even greater celebration of this unique meeting time with Hashem.

Wishing everyone a Kesivah Vachasimah Tovah!!

Rabbi Berel Wein 28 Elul 5771 / 27 September 2011

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SHOFAR SOUNDS

Tuesday, September 27, 2011

The sounds of the shofar as heard on Rosh Hashana are of three different types and qualities. These sounds are regulated by halachic standards though, regarding the sound of the shevarim, there are different customs that prevail as to how the three short blasts of the shofar should be sounded. But the basic sounds – a long straight sound which is the tekiah; a sound of three short wails, the shevarim; and a staccato sound of nine very short blasts, the teruah – are accepted throughout the Jewish world as being the accepted and correct notes of the shofar.

Over the centuries much has been written about the significance of these sounds of the shofar. Halacha defines what the sounds should be and how they should be sounded. However Jewish thought expands upon the basic halachic requirements giving meaning and depth to the halachic requirements in terms of metaphor and guidance. Every sound that emanates from the horn of the shofar conveys to us a further moral lesson as to our lives and behavior. We must always realize that every commandment of the Torah is multi-faceted and we do ourselves and our faith a disservice if we deal with the Torah simply and naively. A knowledgeable Jew is always a sophisticated person who is able to see things below the obvious reality of the surface words and appreciate the infinite wisdom and complexity of God's Torah. One can never assume that one understands Torah completely but neither can one absolve one's self of the duty to pursue the meaning of Torah to its humanly possible ultimate. The tekiah with its long straight sound indicates the serenity in life that is so necessary for productive human and family life. It also indicates discipline and consistency. These are the items that constitute a successful and happy Jewish family and home. Children raised in a home of serenity, peace, discipline and consistency grow up to be people of self-worth and proud Jews. The presence of the Shabat day in our weekly lives introduces us to this supreme trait of serenity in a home. Shabat is one long twenty-five hour tekiah. That may also help explain why on Shabat the shofar is not sounded – Shabat itself, so to speak, becomes the shofar, certainly at least the tekiah part of the ceremonial sounding of the shofar. Its serenity and consistency sets the tone for the entire week and thus for all of our lives. It is not for naught that Jewish halacha views the observance of the Shabat as the basic identifying characteristic of a Jew's relationship to the observance of Judaism, Jewish law and tradition. The laws of halacha regarding the sounding of the shofar also demand that all of the other notes sounded must have a tekiah to proceed it and to succeed it. The tekiah – the serenity and consistency traits of human life – represents the bookends of all Jewish life. The tekiah comes first and it comes last. Without it the other notes are relatively meaningless. The shevarim represents the times of trouble, the wails that emanate from us when failure, tragedy and seemingly insurmountable problems loom before us. The wail from the human heart is a sound that is heard in Heaven. Perhaps the reason that there are different customs allowed by halachic practice regarding the shevarim sound is because no two human beings wail alike. Each tear in life is unique to the one who has shed it. The rabbis have taught us that our tears are stored, so to speak, in Heaven and counted by the Almighty. The Jewish people have shed an ocean of tears over our long history but those tears have congealed to become the foundation stone of our personal lives and our national existence. We cannot pass through this life without shevarim. But we can build upon those very sounds of wailing to construct a better future for all of us. The teruah is a call to action, to accomplishment, ingenuity and industry. It signals that passivity is unacceptable if the Jewish mission is to be realized. The short staccato sounds remind us that progress is often slow, step by step.

The rabbis in Avot taught us that it is not for us to complete the work but we are not absolved from attempting to achieve the ultimate goal of holiness and goodness. Redemption and self-improvement are processes and not necessarily a miraculous and sudden epiphany. We sound the shevarim and teruah consecutively in part of the shofar service to indicate that after troubles and even tragedy, resilience and positive action is required. Thus the sounds of the shofar come to point our way towards a serene, disciplined and active year that will be filled only with wails of joy and happiness. Chag sameach Shana tova Shabat shalom Berel Wein Recent Articles:

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Tashlich

Q: Is it permissible to carry Machzorim to Tashlich? A: Yes. It is permissible on Yom Tov to carry from one domain to another, and in the public domain. Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 518:1. It is also permissible to bring them back. Mishnah Berurah #6.

Q: And on Shabbat? A: It is forbidden to carry. And, in general, Ashkenazim and Jews from North Africa do not perform Tashlich on Shabbat. Mishnah Berurah 580:8.

Q: Is it permissible to walk 2000 Amah outside of the Techum Shabbat to perform Tashlich? A: No. The prohibition of Techum Shabbat is not waved. Siddur Tzahal, Nusach Achid p. 758.

Immersion in a Mikveh on Erev Rosh Hashanah

Q: Is immersing in a Mikveh obligatory on Erev Rosh Hashanah? A: Yes, this is the custom. Rama, Orach Chaim 581:4.

Q: When should one immerse? A: In the afternoon. Mishnah Berurah #26. And some authorities permit it in the morning. Emek Halachah 2:25. And this is how one should act if the Mikveh is extremely crowded in the afternoon.

Q: Do women immerse? A: Married women who are in a state of purity may do so. Chazon Ovadiah (Yamim Noraim, p. 59).

Q: Single women? A: No. Ibid.

Q: What should one do if he is unable to immerse in a Mikveh? A: Pour "9 Kavin" – 12.5 Liters – over himself. Mishnah Berurah #26. Or take a shower with a continuous, strong flow of water. Shut Minchat Yitzchak (4:21, 9:34. Chazon Ovadiah -Yamim Noraim, pp. 57-61. And see Shut Divrei Yetziv, Orach Chaim #13. Shut Shevet Ha-Levi 8:24. Piskei Teshuvot #326 note 14. Although Ha-Rav Chaim Kanievski said in the name of the Chazon Ish that a shower is not considered "9 Kavin" since it is not considered as a continuous flow).

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Verse on a Blackboard Q: Is it permissible for a teacher to write a verse on the blackboard? After all, it will need to be erased? A: It is permissible since it is written in order to be erased. But Hashem's Name may not be written.

Skirt Q: If I wear a long skirt that reaches down to the floor, do I need to wear socks as well? A: It is enough to wear a long skirt (Shut Shevet Ha-Levi 5:79).

Palestinian State Q: What will happen if the UN decides on a Palestinian State? A: Nothing. Terrorists, as is their way, are trying to hurt us, which they do in any event. And the Eternal One of Israel neither slumbers nor sleeps.

Whistling Q: My grandmother tells me that Jews should not whistle. Is it true? A: There is no prohibition against whistling. Outside of Israel, non-Jews whistled, so Jews refrained from doing so. In sum: Don't whistle in your grandmother's presence, out of respect for her.

Q: And on Shabbat? A: It is also permissible (Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:182).

Ends of Bread Q: What is the source for the custom of not eating the ends of a loaf of bread? A: It is an act of piety mentioned in Tzava'at Rabbi Yehudah Ha-Chasid #3. But it is surprising, and eating these pieces is permissible according to the basic halachah. Shut Minchat Yitzchak 9:8 #7.

Women Covering their Hair Q: Why do women cover their hair? If it is immodest, then shouldn't single women also cover their hair? A: Single women in Yemen did in fact cover their hair according to the ruling of the Rambam. But those who do not follow this custom explain that the hair of a married woman is a type of beauty saved for her husband, i.e. the prohibition creates an immodest situation. See Shut Igrot Moshe (Even Ha-Ezer 1:57, 4:32 #4).

Zoo Q: Is there a problem of "Tza'ar Ba'alei Chaim" (causing pain to animals) by having animals caged in a zoo? Is it permissible to visit a zoo? A: It is permissible since it is a human need. It is permissible to visit (Kum Hithalech Ba-Aretz #12).

Eating Before Buying Q: Can I eat food in the supermarket before I buy it? A: No. 1. Perhaps the store does not permit it. 2. It causes suspicion in front of others (that you won't pay for it). 3. "One who eats in the market is similar to a dog" (Kiddushin 40b. see Shut She'eilat Shlomo 2:443, 3: 81).

Flowers Q: Is it permissible to pick flowers in a public park? A: Certainly not. It is theft.

Found Object Q: I saw a coin on the street and went to pick it up. My friend saw what I was doing, pushed me aside and picked it up for himself. To whom does the coin belong? A: To him. Seeing an object does not acquire it. Baba Metzia. But he violated "Love your fellow as yourself."

Special thank you to Orly Tzion for editing the Ateret Yerushalayim Parashah Sheet