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from: **Rabbi Yissocher Frand** <ryfrand@torah.org> reply-to: do-not-reply@torah.org to: ravfrand@torah.org date: Sep 5, 2018, 5:32 PM subject: Rav Frand - The Sound of a Shofar or a Donkey?

Parshas Netzavim The Sound of a Shofar or a Donkey?

These divrei Torah were adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissocher Frand's Commuter Chavrusah Tapes on the weekly portion: CD # 1131 – Asking for Personal Needs On Rosh Hashana? Good Shabbos & K'siva V'chasima Tova! The Mishna says [Rosh HaShanah 27b] that someone who passes the back side of a shul or someone whose house is next to a shul and he hears the Shofar has fulfilled his obligation if he intends to fulfill the mitzvah while listening to the sounds of the shofar. Lacking such intention, he has not fulfilled the mitzvah. The Mishna concludes that two people can hear the identical sound and one will have fulfilled the mitzvah while the other will not have fulfilled the mitzvah. The reason is that the first one had 'intent of heart' and the second one did not have 'intent of heart.'

The Tolner Rebbe, shlit"a, wonders why the Mishna needs to cite two different cases – the case of the person passing by the shul and the case of the person whose house was next to the shul. Apparently the principle is exactly the same in each case and we could have clearly inferred one case from the other. In many contexts, the Gemara states, "The Tanna is not like a peddler who has to put out all of his wares." Why, here, does the Mishna mention both cases?

The Tolner Rebbe asks a second question. The Gemara seeks to bring a proof from this Mishna that "mitzvos tzerechos kavanah" (commandments are only fulfilled when the person performing the commandment has in mind to fulfill the particular mitzvah). The Gemara refutes this proof by claiming that it is possible to argue that when the mitzvah speaks of "having intent" it does not mean having intent to fulfill the mitzvah (which would indicate that mitzvos tzerechos kavanah). It merely means that the person has intent to hear the sounds! The Gemara does not seem to understand this answer and asks "What do you mean "have intention to hear the sounds"? – he did hear the sounds! The Gemara answers that he has to know that the sound he is hearing is that of a shofar (as opposed to thinking that he is listening to the sound of a donkey braying).

This Gemara seems strange. The Tolner Rebbe asks – which Jew walks by a shul on Rosh Hashanna and hears the sounds of Tekiah Teruah Tekiah, etc. and thinks to himself "hmm – must be a donkey braying?"

[I will admit that the answer he gives requires somewhat of a Chassidic spirit somewhere deep in the recesses of the listener's bones to fully appreciate. But the basic point he makes is a very beautiful and fundamental idea.] The Gemara [Rosh Hashannah 11a] tells us that Yosef left prison on Rosh Hashanah, based on the pesukim "Blow the shofar at the moon's renewal, at the time appointed for our festive day... He appointed it as a testimony for Yosef when He went out over the land of Egypt...I removed his shoulder from the burden..." [Tehillim 81:4-7] Now, why is that fact of interest to us? Is the Gemara merely telling us a historical fact that the day when Yosef left the dungeon happened to be on the First of Tishrei?

The Tolner Rebbe says that Chazal make the point that Yosef came out of prison on Rosh Hashana to teach us something: A prison, in Biblical times, did not resemble, in any way, shape or form, today's prisons. I am not talking about minimum security facilities set aside for white collar crimes. Even a maximum security prison today in Texas – where it is 120 degrees in

the summer, and the prisoners are living in eight by ten cells without air conditioning – they are still living in the Taj Mahal compared to prisons in Biblical times. In Biblical times, they dug a hole in the ground, a dungeon, and they threw the prisoners in. There was no ventilation and there was no sanitation. It was literally living in a rat hole. For those old enough to remember this, think back to what the prisons looked like for the POWs (prisoners of war) during the Vietnam War. That was already in “civilized times.”

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

And yet, something miraculous happens. They take him out of this pit. They put him in front of the most powerful man in the world and he is asked to give advice. Did they not know of the concept of PTS (Post Traumatic Stress syndrome)? It was miraculous that he was sane. And yet, Yosef came out, they gave him a haircut, they gave him new clothes, and they put him in front of Pharaoh – the most powerful man in the world – in the presence of all his advisors. They told Yosef, “Let’s hear what you have to say about the matter?”

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

When Chazal say that Yosef left prison on Rosh Hashanah, the message they are trying to teach us is that people can feel imprisoned – they can feel imprisoned by their lusts, by their evil inclinations, by their troubles.

Nebech, people have so many problems and it weighs them down. They feel literally like they are walking around with a ball and chain. However, the lesson of Yosef is that — in a flash — you can go from the greatest depths to the highest heights. A person can rid himself of his imprisoners and his tormentors and his captors and that can all happen in one fell swoop.

This is what King Solomon alludes to in Koheles when he says “For from prison, he went out to rule...” [Koheles 4:14]. This is why it is so important for us to know that on Rosh Hashanah, Yosef left prison. It is because we too can all leave our “prisons” on this day of the New Year.

With this preface, the Tolner Rebbe says, we can now answer our two original questions:

The first case of the Mishna is someone passing by outside a shul and he hears the shofar blowing. Fine. This is the case of a regular person. But the second case – “or his house is next door to the shul.” So, the question is – if his house is right next to the synagogue, why is he not coming to shul on Rosh Hashanah? What is he doing listening to the shofar from his house? The answer is that we are speaking about someone who has no interest in going to shul. This person is so far removed from Rosh Hashanah that when he hears the shofar blast, he thinks it might be a donkey braying. What kind of a Jew can think such a thing? The answer is we are speaking of a Jew who is that far away from proper behavior and thoughts on this holy day. Nevertheless, the Mishna is teaching us that “No!” If in one minute, he says “Hey! That is a shofar” then that recognition can lift him out of the dungeon. In that one minute, he can experience “from the trash heaps, He lifts up the destitute.” [Tehllim 113:7]

We may wonder “Who hears a shofar sound on Rosh Hashanah and thinks he is hearing a donkey?” However, do you know how many millions of Jews there are in the world like that? I once saw a statistic, perhaps my numbers are wrong – but there are 6,000 seats in Reform Temples on Long Island. Do you know how many tens of thousands of Jews live on Long Island? So where do all these Jews go to shul? There is nowhere near enough space in all the Reform Temples on Long Island to fit all the Jews who live there!

Where do they go? They don’t go anywhere. They don’t even know it is Rosh Hashanah. There are many “traditional Jews” there who do “at least”

go to Eddie’s of Roland Park (a non-kosher Baltimore deli) and buy their “traditional New Year’s dinner” – tsimmes with honey and raisin challah – and still not go to shul. However, beyond that, there are tens of thousands more Jews there who do not have any connection with their religion – not even to Challah and honey! They walk right past the Beis HaKnesses and do not walk in. They hear a shofar blowing from the Shul next door to them and they can only wonder – is there such a thing, is there not such a thing?

The Mishna is teaching us that they can come out of their desperate situation. They can hear it and say “Hey! That is a Shofar.” It can make an impression on their hearts.

Even we, fine upstanding Jews — observers of Torah and Mitzvos, Bnei Torah, students who learn Daf Yomi, and who daven 3 times a day with a minyan — we too all have our “tormentors” and we all feel imprisoned to some extent by our evil inclinations and desires.

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

Transcribed by David Twersky; Jerusalem DavidATwersky@gmail.com
Technical Assistance by Dovid Hoffman; Baltimore, MD
dhoffman@torah.org This week’s write-up is adapted from the hashkafa portion of Rabbi Yissochar Frand’s Commuter Chavrusah Series on the weekly Torah portion. A listing of the halachic portions for Parshas Nitzavim/Vayeilech is provided below: Rav Frand © 2018 by Torah.org.
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from: Shabbat Shalom <shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org> reply-to: shabbatshalom@ounetwork.org date: Sep 6, 2018, 10:34 PM

The World is Waiting for You

Britain’s Former Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks Something remarkable happens in this week’s parsha, almost without our noticing it, that changed the very terms of Jewish existence, and has life-changing implications for all of us. Moses renewed the covenant. This may not sound dramatic, but it was.

Thus far, in the history of humanity as told by the Torah, God had made three covenants. The first, in Genesis 9, was with Noah, and through him, with all humanity. I call this the covenant of human solidarity. According to the sages it contains seven commands, the sheva mitzvot bnei Noach, most famous of which is the sanctity of human life: “He who sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for in the image of God did God make man” (Gen. 9:6).

The second, in Genesis 17, was with Abraham and his descendants: “When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the Lord appeared to him and said, ‘I am God Almighty. Walk before Me and have integrity, and I will grant My covenant between Me and you ... I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you throughout the generations as an eternal covenant.’” That made Abraham the father of a new faith that would not be the faith of all humanity but would strive to be a blessing to all humanity: “Through you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”

The third was with the Israelites in the days of Moses, when the people stood at Mount Sinai, heard the Ten Commandments and accepted the terms of their destiny as “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.”

Who, though, initiated these three covenants? God. It was not Noah, or Abraham, or Moses, or the Israelites who sought a covenant with God. It was God who sought a covenant with humanity.

There is, though, a discernible change as we trace the trajectory of these three events. From Noah God asked no specific response. There was nothing Noah had to do to show that he accepted the terms of covenant. He now knew that there are seven rules governing acceptable human behaviour, but

God asked for no positive covenant-ratifying gesture. Throughout the process Noah was passive.

From Abraham, God did ask for a response – a painful one. “This is My covenant which you shall keep between Me and you and your descendants after you: every male among you shall be circumcised. You must circumcise the flesh of your foreskin. This shall be the sign of the covenant between Me and you” (Gen., 17:10-11). The Hebrew word for circumcision is *milah*, but to this day we call it *brit milah* or even, simply, *brit* – which is, of course, the Hebrew word for covenant. God asks, at least of Jewish males, something very demanding: an initiation ceremony.

From the Israelites at Sinai God asked for much more. He asked them in effect to recognise Him as their sole sovereign and legislator. The Sinai covenant came not with seven commands as for Noah, or an eighth as for Abraham, but with 613 of them. The Israelites were to incorporate God-consciousness into every aspect of their lives.

So, as the covenants proceed, God asks more and more of His partners, or to put it slightly differently, He entrusts them with ever greater responsibilities.

Something else happened at Sinai that had not happened before. God tells Moses to announce the nature of the covenant before making it, to see whether the people agree. They do so no less than three times: “Then the people answered as one, saying, ‘All that the Lord has spoken we will do’” (Ex. 19:7). “The people all responded with a single voice, ‘We will do everything the Lord has spoken’” (Ex. 24:3). “The people said, ‘All that the Lord has spoken we will do and heed’” (Ex. 24:7).

This is the first time in history that we encounter the phenomenon enshrined in the American Declaration of Independence, namely “the consent of the governed.” God only spoke the Ten Commandments after the people had signalled that they had given their consent to be bound by His word. God does not impose His rule by force.[1] At Sinai, covenant-making became mutual. Both sides had to agree.

So the human role in covenant-making grows greater over time. But *Nitzavim* takes this one stage further. Moses, seemingly of his own initiative, renewed the covenant:

All of you are standing today before the Lord your God—your leaders, your tribes, your elders and officials, all the men of Israel, your children, your wives, the strangers in your camp, from woodcutter to water-drawer — to enter into the covenant of the Lord your God and its oath, which the Lord your God is making with you today, to establish you today as His people, that He may be your God, as He promised you and swore to your ancestors, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. (Deut. 29:9-12)

This was the first time that the covenant was renewed, but not the last. It happened again at the end of Joshua’s life (Josh. 24), and later in the days of Jehoiada (2 Kings 11:17), Hezekiah (2 Chron. 29) and Josiah (1 Kings 23: 1-3; 2 Chron. 34: 29-33). After the Babylonian exile, Ezra and Nehemiah convened a national gathering to renew the covenant (Nehemiah 8). But it happened first in today’s parsha.

It happened because Moses knew it had to happen. The terms of Jewish history were about to shift from Divine initiative to human initiative. This is what Moses was preparing the Israelites for in the last month of his life. It is as if he had said: Until now God has led – in a pillar of cloud and fire – and you have followed. Now God is handing over the reins of history to you. From here on, you must lead. If your hearts are with Him, He will be with you. But you are now no longer children; you are adults. An adult still has parents, as a child does, but his or her relationship with them is different. An adult knows the burden of responsibility. An adult does not wait for someone else to take the first step.

That is the epic significance of *Nitzavim*, the parsha that stands almost at the end of the Torah and that we read almost at the end of the year. It is about getting ready for a new beginning: in which we act for God instead of waiting for God to act for us.

Translate this into human terms and you will see how life-changing it can be. Many years ago, at the beginning of my rabbinical career, I kept waiting for a word of encouragement from a senior rabbinical figure. I was working hard, trying innovative approaches, seeking new ways of getting people engaged in Jewish life and learning. You need support at such moments because taking risks and suffering the inevitable criticism is emotionally draining. The encouragement never came. The silence hurt. It ate, like acid, into my heart.

Then in a lightning-flash of insight, I thought: what if I turn the entire scenario around. What if, instead of waiting for Rabbi X to encourage me, I encouraged him? What if I did for him what I was hoping he would do for me? That was a life-changing moment. It gave me a strength I never had before.

I began to formulate it as an ethic. Don’t wait to be praised: praise others. Don’t wait to be respected: respect others. Don’t stand on the sidelines, criticising others. Do something yourself to make things better. Don’t wait for the world to change: begin the process yourself, and then win others to the cause. There is a statement attributed to Gandhi (actually he never said it,[2] but in a parallel universe he might have done): ‘Be the change you seek in the world.’ Take the initiative.

That was what Moses was doing in the last month of his life, in that long series of public addresses that make up the book of *Devarim*, culminating in the great covenant-renewal ceremony in today’s parsha. *Devarim* marks the end of the childhood of the Jewish people. From there on, Judaism became God’s call to human responsibility. For us, faith is not waiting for God. Faith is the realisation that God is waiting for us.

Hence the life-changing idea: Whenever you find yourself distressed because someone hasn’t done for you what you think they should have done, turn the thought around, and then do it for them.

Don’t wait for the world to get better. Take the initiative yourself. The world is waiting for you.

[1] Of course, the Babylonian Talmud argues that at Sinai God did impose the covenant by force, namely by “suspending the mountain” over the people’s heads. But the Talmud then immediately notes that “this constitutes a fundamental challenge to the authority of the Torah” and concludes that the people finally accepted the Torah voluntarily “in the days of Ahasuerus” (*Shabbat* 88a). The only question, therefore, is: when was there free consent?

[2] See Brian Morton, ‘Falsar words were never spoken,’ *New York Times*, 29 August 2011. The closest he came was, “If we could change ourselves, the tendencies in the world would also change. As a man changes his own nature, so does the attitude of the world change towards him. ... We need not wait to see what others do.”

from: torahweb@torahweb.org date: Sep 5, 2018, 8:35 PM subject: Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg - Rosh Hashana: A Time to **Think About Someone Else**

Rabbi Eliakim Koenigsberg

Rosh Hashana: A Time to Think About Someone Else Parshas *Nitzavim* is always read right before Rosh Hashana. At first glance, the connection between the two seems to be the fact that at the end of the parsha the Torah mentions the mitzvah of teshuva. The posuk says, "This mitzvah that I command you today is not difficult for you...it is in your mouth and your heart to do it (30:11, 14)." The Ramban explains that this refers to the mitzvah of teshuva. It seems logical that before the Day of Judgement we should read a parsha that mentions the concept of teshuva. But perhaps there is another connection between Parshas *Nitzavim* and Rosh Hashana.

In the beginning of the parsha, the Torah discusses the concept of *arvus* - that each member of Klal Yisrael is responsible for his fellow Jews. The posuk says, "The hidden aveiros are for Hashem, but the revealed ones are for us and our children forever (29:28)." Chazal explain that this means that if a Jew does an aveirah publicly, and others can stop him but they do not,

then they are also held accountable. "Kol Yisrael avreivim zeh bazeh - all Jews are responsible for each other (Shavuos 39a)."

This is one application of the concept of arvus. But the concept of arvus extends far beyond this situation. In its ultimate sense, arvus means that every Jew must take responsibility for the welfare of every other Jew. The first example of arvus in the Torah is when Yehuda tells Yaakov Avinu that he will take responsibility for Binyamin. "I will personally guarantee him; from my hand you can demand him (Mikeitz, 43:9)." Yehuda was willing to risk his own future to protect Binyamin. That is what arvus means in the fullest sense of the word - to care about another Jew to the extent that one is even willing to sacrifice for him. The principle of arvus requires that a Jew should never see himself as just an individual. But rather, he should always view himself as part of Klal Yisrael.

This mindset - seeing oneself as part of the tzibbur - is the kind of perspective a person should have on Rosh Hashana. In Sefer Melachim II, the Navi describes how the Isha HaShunamis (the woman from Shunem) provided for Elisha HaNavi's needs. At one point, Elisha asked her if he could do her a favor in return. "Can I speak to the king on your behalf? (4:13)" The Zohar (Noach, Beshalach) explains that Elisha spoke to her on Rosh Hashana and he was asking if he could daven for her. He was saying, "Can I ask something of the Melech HaMishpat (the King of Judgement) on your behalf?" But the Isha HaShunamis responds, "No, please don't do anything special for me. I would just like to be amongst my people." Chazal praise the Isha HaShunamis for this statement, because it showed that she understood that in times of crisis, it is always better to be part of a tzibbur.

This idea is echoed by the Gemara (Brachos 30a), "A person should always join together with the community." The Gemara explains that for this reason, Chazal formulated tefilla in the plural form - "Remember us for life...inscribe us in the Book of Life...purify our hearts to serve You in truth." Chazal instituted that we use the plural form in tefilla so that a person should never stand alone.

Why is this so important? One answer is that when a person joins together with the community and expresses his tefilla as part of the community, he acquires the merits of the community. The Meshech Chochmah writes (Beshalach 14:24) that an individual is punished more than a tzibbur. Only an individual is subject to the punishment of kareis, not a tzibbur. When there is unity in a group, the individuals of that group can be saved from punishments they would have been worthy of as individuals. Similarly, when a person connects to a community, his individual faults are considered insignificant compared to the merits of the community. That makes it easier for him to merit a favorable judgement.

This is one goal of davening in the plural form - to put oneself together with the tzibbur. But there is another purpose as well. By formulating tefilla in the plural form, Chazal wanted to remind us that we should daven not only for ourselves, but for others as well. It is not enough to simply daven together with the tzibbur. To truly connect with the tzibbur, we must daven for other members of Klal Yisrael as well. That is why Chazal instituted that we conclude the Shemoneh Esrei during the Aseres Yemei Teshuva by saying, "We should be remembered and inscribed before You in the Book of Life, we and Your entire people, the House of Israel." We emphasize that we care not just about ourselves and our families. We care about all of Klal Yisrael.

This is the ultimate level of arvus - to empathize with another Jew, to care for him and to share his pain. When we daven for other Jews and we show that we care about them, we truly unite together with the tzibbur of Klal Yisrael, and that can help us tap into the merit of the tzibbur.

May each one of us be inscribed this Rosh Hashana - we and all of Klal Yisrael - for a year of health and happiness and much bracha.

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

Rabbi Wein's Weekly Blog NITZAVIM

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

To my mind I would think that the greatest puzzle – even miracle – in human history is the survival of the Jewish people over these centuries of dispersion and persecution. When so many great and powerful nations have disappeared completely, even after ruling over vast amounts of territory and people for centuries, how is it that the Jewish people, not numerous and for the most of its history, powerless and stateless, has somehow been able to survive and even thrive? And yet the fact of this survival is undeniable, obvious for all the world to see and witness. In fact, the world credits us with much greater numbers than we have, as well as with much greater power and influence over world events than we can ever exercise. In short, this comment of Moshe that headlines the Torah reading of the week, that you are all as a people somehow standing and existing, is the most extraordinary prophecy of his entire career. It marches down the corridors of history and its obvious truth should have a great impact upon our lives and thoughts.

Moshe will complain later that the Jewish people are a feckless and foolish nation. This complaint is based simply on the fact that there always was and is a tendency within the Jewish world to ignore the obvious. King Solomon said that the Lord created us, that we should think and act in a straightforward manner but that we have always chosen to look for devious motives and overly clever behavior. In our time, the Jewish people, both in Israel and in the Diaspora, have accomplished wonders in rebuilding the nation after the desolation of World War II. And we have done so rapidly and over a very short period of time. The existence of the Jewish state in the land of Israel has been a main catalyst for this remarkable resilience and resurgence. With this physical rebirth there has also arisen a spiritual renewal that exists among many sections of the Jewish world and is not restricted only to certain groups. The prophet long ago foresaw that there was to arise a spontaneous hunger for spirituality, Torah values and knowledge and the study of the laws and tradition of the eternity granted to us at Sinai. That path was long ago stifled by circumstances and foreign ideas – even foreign gods – that infiltrated the Jewish world. However, in spite of the awful problems of assimilation and intermarriage, ignorance and delusional thinking that plague our generation, there is a feeling within us that somehow the great search for God and Torah continues within the Jewish people and will only increase in time to come. Shabbat shalom Rabbi Berel Wein

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com from: Mordechai Tzion toratravaviner@yahoo.com to: ravaviner@yahoo.com http://www.ravaviner.com/ Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva **Ha-Rav Shlomo Aviner** Shlit" a

Collection of Laws of Rosh Hashanah

[Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:235]

1. Lighting Candles We recite the blessing of Shehechyanu on both nights of Rosh Hashanah, even if one does not have a new piece of clothing or a new fruit (which he did not yet eat this season) before him. It is preferable, however, that there be a new piece of clothing or a new fruit (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 600:2). Question: Is it permissible to attach the candles in the candlesticks on Rosh Hashanah? Answer: Attaching the candles to the candlesticks for the second night is forbidden on account of [the prohibition of] "leveling" (Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata p.

76 #18), and this prohibition is no less important than the actual commandment of lighting the candles. One should therefore prepare two additional candlesticks before Rosh Hashanah or stick them into the candlesticks without attaching them on the holiday. On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, one may not prepare the candlesticks before the stars come out (definite nightfall), since we may not prepare on the first day of Rosh Hashanah for the second day. But it is permissible to light the candles before sunset, since one benefits from their light on the first day itself. Addition to the revised edition Question: I saw in the book "Am Ke-Lavi" (the original name of this volume of She'eilat Shlomo) that it is permissible to light on the first day of Rosh Hashanah before sunset (for the second day) because it is not considered preparation for the next day, since we benefit from the lights on the first day as well. What is the source for this law, since it does not follow the opinion of the Mateh Ephraim (599:9-11)? Answer: The Be'er Heitev writes: "The Levush (503:4) wrote: We customarily light the candles when it gets dark even before [reciting the prayer] "Barechu." And the Or Zarua wrote that there are women who recite the blessing before they go to Shul (for Maariv of the second day). And it is also written in the Shelah that it is a greater Mitzvah to do this than to light upon returning to their house since they would return to a dark house. And in Shul it is customary to light even when it is still day time since in a Shul it is always a Mitzvah to light candles, even in the day." And this is the ruling in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 514:5): "It is forbidden to light an idle light which one does not need, but [a light] of a Shul is not considered idle. It is permissible to light one even on the second day after Minchah and this is not considered preparing for a weekday, since in lighting it there is a Mitzvah for that time." And the Mishnah Berurah (#33) wrote: "There is a Mitzvah...that is to say, even if one does not need the light while it is still day, even so there is a Mitzvah to light it because of the honor of the Shul, and if it is already close to dark it is even permissible in one's house since he needs it at that time."

2. Annulment of Vows It is customary to release ones vows on Erev Rosh Hashanah or Erev Yom Kippur, but it is also possible to do this during the entire Ten Days of Repentance. One who is unable to do this should be released before three individuals when the opportunity arises (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 128:10).

3. Eating before the Shofar Blasts Question: Is our custom of eating before the Shofar blasts in consonance with Jewish Law? Answer: 1) In general, when it is incumbent upon a Jew to fulfill a Mitzvah he should first fulfill the Mitzvah and then eat afterwards. Nevertheless the basic law is that only an actual meal is forbidden before the fulfillment of a Mitzvah, and a small snack is permissible. But in the generations of the Achronim, they were very strict regarding eating a snack, and they only permitted it for someone who was extremely feeble (See Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 128:9. Sha'arei Teshuvah 584 #3). 2) It is now customary in all places, even amongst the pious, to permit eating a small amount. They support this on the basis of the law that a small snack is permissible. There is therefore no basis to prohibit it. See the comprehensive article of Rabbi Y. Segal in Noam vol. 14, which states that someone who has difficulty with not eating, and whose Davening continues until after midday – is permitted to eat something small. Summary: It is certainly preferable not to eat, in particular on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, since these Shofar blasts are a Torah Mitzvah, but for one who has difficulty waiting until the end, and whose ability to pray with proper concentration will be disturbed, it is permissible to eat something light. And one should obviously do so with awe and fear, and not for an inappropriate reason (In Shut Bnei Banim #14, Rav Yehudah Herzl Henkin disagrees with the above, but one can counter his argument).

4. Question: Is one required to recite another blessing over a Talit after the break between Shacharit and Musaf? Answer: Yes, since this is a significant interruption and the person's mind will be distracted from the Mitzvah of Talit (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 8, Mishnah Berurah #37).

5. Shofar One should not say "Baruch Hu U-Varuch Shemo" (Blessed is He and Blessed is His Name) during the blessing over the Shofar, because this blessing is also recited in order to fulfill his (the listener's) obligation, and "Baruch Hu U-Varuch Shemo" is considered an interruption (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 585). This is the general principle: any time during which it is forbidden to interrupt, one should not say "Baruch Hu U-Varuch Shemo." As, for example, during the blessing before the Shema in the morning and evening, during Baruch She-Amar and during Yishtabach. This also applies any time that a blessing is recited in order to fulfill one's obligation, as in Kiddush and Havdalah. But one may say "Baruch Hu U-Varuch Shemo" during the morning blessings, during the repetition of the prayer on Shabbat Evening in Me'ein Sheva, during Magen Avot and during the blessings for an Aliyah to the Torah.

6. Bowing in Shul When one bows on a stone floor, he should spread out a towel, handkerchief or piece of paper (but not a Talit bag, since it is disrespectful to put it on the floor). We do this because it is written in the Torah (Vayikra 26:1): "Nor shall you place a figured stone in your Land to bow down on it." This means that it is forbidden to bow down, even to Hashem, on a stone floor (except for one in the Temple. Rama in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 131:8). And because all of this refers to when one's face touches the ground, one should spread out the handkerchief in the place where one's face will be and not under the knees (Mishnah Berurah #40-41. Luach Heichal Shlomo). Question: Can women fall on their knees during Musaf on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, since women were not in the Temple courtyard and therefore would not bow? [In the book "Nefesh Ha-Rav" (pp. 214-215), Rav Soloveitchik rules that women should not prostrate on account of this reason]. Answer: Yes, they may. This is a Minhag. As long as there is a modest place and she does not have a bad back, a woman may prostrate.

7. Preparing on the First Day for the Second Day Question: Is it permissible to prepare on the first day of Rosh Hashanah for the second day? Answer: Regarding this issue, each day is considered as a holy day on its own, and just as we do not prepare on Shabbat for a weekday, so too we do not prepare on the first day of Rosh Hashanah for the second day, since there is room to say that perhaps the holiness of the second day is in fact a weekday in relation to the holiness of the first day (Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata p. 20 #58 and p. 59 #1). It is therefore forbidden to cook, wash dishes, prepare candles in the candlesticks, make beds, set tables, etc.. (ibid. 1, 58) on the first day in preparation for the second day. One must wait until after the stars have come out. One may, however, prepare on Rosh Hashanah for Shabbat when they are consecutive days, by making an Eruv Tavshilin (by setting aside, before the holiday begins, an eruv consisting of a cooked portion of food and a piece of bread or matzah. This is considered the start of the food for Shabbat and any further preparation of food is seen as a continuation of it, and is thus permitted). Addition to the revised edition If Rosh Hashanah falls on a Thursday and Friday, it is forbidden to prepare on Thursday for Shabbat even with an Eruv Tavshilin. The preparation may only be performed on Friday (Shut Yehaveh Daat 6:32).

8. Repentance Do not forget the essence of Rosh Hashanah: to perform Teshuvah, both in commandments between a person and Hashem and in commandments between a person and his fellow man.

from: Avi Zelefsky <avizelefsky@gmail.com>

date: Fri, Sep 30, 2016 at 4:20 PM

subject: **Rabbi Bezalel Rudinsky's** d'var Torah for Parshas Nitzavim.

In this week's parsha, nitzavim, the passuk states: "hanistaros ladoshem elokeinu v'haniglos lanu ulvoneinu ad olam la'asos es kol divrei hatorah hazos." The literal translation is that hidden things are for Hashem, and we should worry about them. The things that are revealed, however, are for us to do and accomplish. What is the meaning behind this?

Some answer that the passuk is talking about the responsibilities of each Jew to one another. A person only has responsibility for things that are noticeable. The ba'alei machshava say that the passuk is telling us that the main part of an action is the thought behind it. Surrounding people, however, are not aware as to how much a person puts into a mitzvah. A person is only able to impact others openly.

There is a mishnah in pireki avos that asks: What is the right way to choose? The mishnah answers: When somebody does something, he must act in away that those surrounding him would approve of his actions.

We find that Avraham Avinu asked others whether he should do the bris milah. Why did Avraham ask whether he should do a mitzvah? He didn't question all the other mitzvos!

R' Yaakov answers that Avraham wasn't asking whether he should do the bris or not. He was determined to do the bris; he just wasn't sure whether he should do it publicly or privately. Avraham was the pillar of goodness and kindness, and people might have looked at him negatively when they saw he would be putting others in pain.

We find this concept of being conscientious of other's thoughts throughout sha'as. The gemarah in shekalim says that the one who would go in to take the shekalim (who was definitely a distinguished individual) couldn't have any pockets or a hem. He couldn't even enter with his tefillin (everybody wore their tefillin throughout the entire day back then) out of the concern that he would cut his tefillin open and stick money in. The gemarah continues by saying that others would constantly talk with him in order to make sure that he didn't stick any money in his mouth. The gemarah even goes so far as to ask why don't we fill up his mouth up with water! The gemarah answers that we can't fill up his mouth with water because there was a beracha that he needed to make. It sounds like we would fill up his mouth with water had he not made the bracha. We see through the demonstration of the gemarah that it is always important to look how others might view a situation. The gemarah there even brings two pesukim to show its importance. One passuk was by the parsha of Reuven and Gad coming to Moshe Rabbeinu and asking if they would be able to live outside Eretz Yisroel. Moshe Rabbeinu responded that they needed to fight in the war because otherwise, everybody else would look at them and say that they "chickened out," even though Hashem said that Binei Yisroel would be successful in conquering Eretz Yisroel. The other passuk in the torah says "umotzo chain b'seichal tov bein elokim ba'adam." The Tiferes Yisroel asks: why do we need both pesukim? The Tiferes Yisroel answers that by the passuk by Reuven and Gad alone, we would only say that the person is responsible if it really looks like he is doing the wrong thing. It would not be farfetched to say that B'nei Reuven and B'nei Gad didn't want to enter Eretz Yisroel because they were afraid. The second passuk tells us that a person must go out of his way to make sure that nobody would think negatively of the action.

The Chasam Sofer says: When you live your life as a Jew, you have two responsibilities: one is between you and Hashem, and the other is between you and your friends - to find favor in their eyes. "It is easier to fulfill the first one than to live the last one." He continues, "people don't always have the right thoughts, and they think bad." The Chasam Sofer is worried about those people who are yentas, not just any people! What will the yentas say? "Because you did actions that were viewed negatively by others, your punishment will be much worse than any aveira you did to shamayim." And then he says: "I thought about it: I don't know that there is a person in this world that accomplished this commandment," which according to the Chasam Sofer, is more important than any mitzvah between the person and Hashem. And the Chasam Sofer continues: Who am I to judge the avos, the shevatim? But then he does. He says "still, it is torah." He then says "I believe that the reason why B'nei Gad and B'nei Reuven went into exile first is because even with going into eretz yisroel some Jews doubted them. Even after they did all that they were commanded, they didn't do it completely."

That is what our parsha is saying: "hanistaros ladoshem elokeinu," that's our obligation: "v'haniglos lanu ulvoneinu ad olam." The things that are hidden and only Hashem knows, it is our job to reveal and make sure that our intentions are revealed to everybody.

The gemarah in bava basra (22) says: when a talmid chacham came to the city they used to give him the market; meaning that he was able to sell his products first (to give him precedence). Rav Dimi, who was a big talmid chacham, came to a city and he asked that he should get that zechus. One of the amoraim told Rav Ada bar Raba "give him a test!" So they asked him a question: If an elephant swallows a basket and then it comes out whole from the bottom, does it have a din of gelalim, and it is no longer m'kabel tumah because it became part of the intestines of the elephant, or it is still a basket and it can still be m'kabel tumah. This is not an easy question to answer, and indeed, Rav Dimi didn't have an answer. The gemarah says that they didn't close the market for him and all of his produce got lost. Rav Dimi complained to Rav Yosef, and Rav Yosef responded "don't worry, Hashem will take care of it." Shortly after, the questioner, Rav Ada bar Raba, died.

This is very difficult to understand, but what follows is even more difficult. The gemarah says that there was a fight between two amoraim: it sounds like there was pride in each claim. Each one held that Rav Ada bar Raba was killed because of him, and each one found a chap to support their claim. You would think that everybody would want to run away from this! Nobody would want to take the blame! But it seems not like that!

Tosfos explains that the machlokes was not in pride; it was in fear. Both were afraid they did something to cause his death. They were afraid that they caused Rav Ada bar Raba to look at them negatively, and therefore Hashem punished him. They were afraid that they were the cause of his death and if they did, Hashem would exact punishment from them.

The Cofetz Chaim says: if a person is choshed you, you are punished because he was choshed you and punished.

The Ba'al Shem Tov explains a passuk. The passuk says that if your aveirah will be as red as red wool, it will turn snow white. And if the aveirah will be as red as a toilah, which was like a red worm, it will be like white wool. The Ba'al Shem Tov asks: it is the same color! How do they make red wool? They take it from the blood of a toilah! He answers "when a person does an action, there are two parts to the action: your affect, and the other person's affect. As long as you only affected yourself you can do teshuva. Once you affected somebody else, that is a little different. That is the scariest part about being a Jew. Red wool doesn't make anything else red; it is an object that is red. If you do teshuva, it will turn as white as snow. But if the sin is making other people dirty, that is harder to fix.

This is our obligation. We must be concerned about the thoughts of every single person. And this is something that is very important to take into yomim nora'im.

from: Esplanade Capital <jeisenstadt@esplanadecap.com>
subject: Rabbi Reisman's Chumash Shiur - Audio and Print Version
Rabbi Yisroel Reisman – Parshas Netzavim 5775

1. As we prepare for Shabbos Parshas Netzavim and more than that to prepare for the upcoming Yom Hadin of Erev Rosh Hashono on Sunday and Rosh Hashono which follows. I would like to share with you a few thoughts. First a thought that I had this morning at the time of Selichos. I would like to share with you something that may give additional significance to the fact that we push ourselves to get up earlier than usual to say Selichos. The form of Selichos that we say every day is patterned after Mincha. Just like Mincha we say first Ashrei and Chatzi Kaddish the same with Selichos. Just like by Mincha we say Shemoneh Esrei followed by Tachanun and Kaddish Tis'kabeil so too by Selichos. Selichos followed by Tachanun followed by Kaddish Tis'kabeil. So that, Selichos is patterned after Tefillas Mincha.

Why pattern it after Tefillas Mincha? What is the idea in it? What is the purpose in it? It may be as follows. The Gemara says that Mincha is the greatest of the Tefillos as we find that Eliyahu Hanavi was Lo Nena Ela B'tefillas Mincha so to Mincha is the Tefilla which has the greatest opportunity to be answered. The Tur explains the reason for it. He says because typically Mincha time is the hardest time for a person to set aside time and Daven. In the morning you get up and you Daven. In the night the day is over and you Daven. In the middle of the day a person is in middle of business or in middle of whatever he may be doing and he has to remember and pull himself away and go Daven. That makes Mincha more significant. We see the idea that the Mesiras Nefesh, the pushing, just to get to the Mincha gives the Mincha very special significance.

Im Kain, we can understand the same thing about Selichos. The idea of Selichos is L'hakim B'ashmores Haboker, to get up earlier. Not everyone gets up B'ashmores Haboker but people get up earlier. The idea of Selichos is not to get up the same time and Daven longer and come later to your Sedorim or your Daf Yomi, the idea of Selichos is to get up earlier. Hakama B'ashmores Haboker. Just like at Mincha that makes it a more powerful Tefilla even if you have the same amount of Kavana that you would have had otherwise. The same thing with getting up in the morning, the Mesiras Nefesh of getting up earlier is what makes the Selichos have that extra dimension of significance. A thought regarding getting up for Selichos.

2. Let's move on to a thought in the Parsha which may explain something that we say in our Tachanun. In the Parsha we have between Sheini and Shlishi that a Bris is made as is found in 29:14 (כִּי אֶת-אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁנֶנּוּ פֹה, עִמָּנוּ עֹמֵד) A Bris is made with those who are here and with those who are not here. Who was not there? Rashi brings from the Medrash Tanchuma () that even the unborn generations are included in the Bris. Now you will ask how can someone make a Bris with someone who is not born yet. How can you make a Shevua with someone who is not born yet.

The answer is that there is a concept of Tzibbur Lo Meis. Individuals are individuals. You can't be Mashpia an individual who is not yet born. When a Tzibbur takes on something as an organized group. They take on a Kabbala, then Tzibbur Lo Meis, the Tzibbur still exists. The faces may change the bodies may change but the Tzibbur continues to be. So that we so many generations later are the same Tzibbur that was there 29:12 (לְמַעַן הָקִים-אֶתֶּךָ) that became Klal Yisrael.

We find this idea in many different places. For example, in the Teshuvah Chasam Sofer he has a Shaila. The Halacha is that Hataras Nedorim cannot be made with a Shaliach. Hataras Nedorim must be made personally with the exception of a wife (Ishto K'gufo), a man can be a Shaliach for his wife. But besides that, Hataras Nedorim must be done personally.

The Chasam Sofer was asked a Shaila. An entire city made a Kabbala, they made a Shevua. There came a time when there was a desire to back off from that Shevua, to change the Shevua. They asked the Chasam Sofer how to do it. Does the whole city have to travel to an Adam Gadol or a Bais Din to be Mattir Neder. The Chasam Sofer Paskened and he said no, a Tzibbur is an entity. Even when a representative of the Tzibbur is Mattir Neder it is Hataras Nedorim for everyone.

We find the same thing with a Mincha Shel Tzibbur or a Korban Shel Tzibbur. The Halacha is if Shutfim make a Korban and one member of the Shutfus dies then it is a Chatas Shemaiso Baila, it is a Korban whose Bailim has died. Yet when the Tzibbur gives money at the beginning of the year and a Korban Chatas Shel Tzibbur is brought later in the year. The money is collected in Adar and it comes Yom Kippur and they bring a Korban Chatas Shel Tzibbur, someone died between Nissan and Tishrei so why isn't it a Korban Shemaiso Bailav?

The Teretz is that there is a concept of Tzibbur. A Tzibbur is an entity. Tzibbur Lo Meis, the faces may change, but the Tzibbur continues. So (-אֶת-

וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר אֵינָנוּ פֹה) and (אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁנֶנּוּ פֹה) it is a Bris with the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael. Whoever will come on later will just fill the role of that Ish Hatzibbur.

With this we have a Raya to what Rav Elchanan brings in Kovetz Mamarim. Rav Elchanan brings that we find in the Chumash a punishment for people who do things that are bad and rewards for people who do things that are good and we see that it is not always what is happening in the world. We see good people who suffer and bad people who are successful. Rav Elchanan brings from the Mekoros Harishonim that the Torah is talking to the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael. When Klal Yisrael as a Tzibbur does Yashar B'ainei Hashem (בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, בְּבִאָה; וּבְרוּךְ אַתָּה, בְּצִדְקָתְךָ, תְּלַכּוּ) then 28:6 (בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה, בְּבִאָה; וּבְרוּךְ אַתָּה, בְּצִדְקָתְךָ). When the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael misbehaves, Chalila things go differently. It is the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael. Therefore, it fits well that here in Parshas Nitzavim where it is talking about the ideas of the Tochacha of the previous Parsha and the Pesukim in the Hemshech of the Tochacha which we have in this week's Parsha in 29:21 - 23 (וְאֶת אֲשֶׁר יִשְׁנֶנּוּ פֹה, עִמָּנוּ עֹמֵד). It is talking about the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael. So we have this important idea of a Koach of a Tzibbur, a concept in Halacha of a Tzibbur.

Turning to Tachanun. We say in Tachanun (אֶפְלֵא אֶנְחֵנוּ וְאֶבֹרְחֵנוּ הַטָּאנוּ) A Pele!

We say we are not Tzaddikim, we and our earlier generations sinned. Or in (אֶבִּינוּ מְלַכְנוּ. הַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ) we say (אֶבִּינוּ מְלַכְנוּ) we say we sinned for you, but the Bais Yosef says that on Rosh Hashono we don't say Viduy so how do we say (הַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ)? He brings from the Kol Bo to take it out. The Mishna Brura says that we can say it (הַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ) but we don't bang our chest as we normally do. We say (הַטָּאנוּ לְפָנֶיךָ) the generations of Klal Yisrael before us sinned. What is going on? You are saying Viduy for your Zeidy or Elter Zeide? What business do you have saying Viduy for their Aveiros?

The answer is that we are talking for the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael. (הַטָּאנוּ) K'neses Yisrael sinned. It is a day, a Yom Hadin for every individual, but a Yom Hadin for Klal Yisrael and that is who we are talking about.

In the first Beracha of Shemoneh Esrei during the Aseres Yemai Teshuvah we say (וְזָכְרָנוּ לְהַיִּים. מְלֶךְ הַפֶּזַח בְּהַיִּים). The question is why are we saying a Bakasha a request in the first Beracha? Tosafos asks the Kasha in Masseches Berachos. Tosafos answers that when you say (וְזָכְרָנוּ לְהַיִּים. מְלֶךְ הַפֶּזַח בְּהַיִּים) you are saying it for the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael, for K'neses Yisrael. It is only individual requests which are prohibited from being added in the Berachos, however, a Tzibbur type request is Muttar.

I once heard from Rav Mattiyahu Solomon who said someone who Davens and says (וְזָכְרָנוּ לְהַיִּים. מְלֶךְ הַפֶּזַח בְּהַיִּים) thinking about himself and his family, he is Over on a Hefsek in Shemoneh Esrei. You are not allowed to be Mafsik for personal requests in the first Beracha. It must be (וְזָכְרָנוּ לְהַיִּים. מְלֶךְ הַפֶּזַח בְּהַיִּים) for the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael. The Ikkur Davening is for K'neses Yisrael on Rosh Hashono and all the days of the Aseres Yimai Teshuva. Mimaila (אֶנְחֵנוּ וְאֶבֹרְחֵנוּ הַטָּאנוּ) is this discussion about the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael.

3. We start the Aseres Yemai Teshuva and we end the Aseres Yemai Teshuva on a note of great hope. And that is if you look in the Shulchan Aruch both in the beginning of the Aseres Yemai Teshuva and at the end it says things that offer great hope to us. That is, we start the Aseres Yemai Teshuva in Siman Taf Kuf Pai Aleph with Hilchos Erev Rosh Hashono that Mechabsin Umistaprim B'erev Rosh Hashono. We take a haircut and bathe ourselves in preparation for Rosh Hashono. We go to the Mikva. The Mishna Brura says to show that we are confident in Hashem's Chesed. That our Mishpat will go out in a good way. That is Erev Rosh Hashono the beginning of the Aseres Yemai Teshuva.

We end the Aseres Yemai Teshuvah in Siman Taf Reish Chaf Daled in the Rama. Ochlin V'shosin B'motzoei Yom Kippurim. We make a Ketzas Yom Tov out of Motzoei Yom Kippur. The Lashon of the Tur is Aval Yisrael Eino Kein. Yisrael goes out of Din and they are joyful. Lovshin, they get dressed, Levanim, in joyous clothing... We go with a great joy L'fi She'yodin SheHKB"YH Naaseh Lanu Neis. On Motzoei Yom Kippur we

rejoice. On Yom Tov we rejoice. We talk about Nissim. We have a Haftacha, a Bitachon in the Din.

The truth is these things are very difficult. The Chazon Ish in his Emunah Ubitachon already established that we don't have any Bitachon that things will go well, that we will get a proper Din, a proper Mishpat. Where does that come from? The Chazon Ish says that if a Navi didn't promise it there is no Bitachon that things will go good. We have Bitachon that HKB"H's Rachamim are such that he judges us with Rachamim. But we are not certain that the Din will come out in the way that we want it.

It is really a Ketzas Pele on the Shulchan Aruch and also on the Tur that I read you that we are Bituchin that Hashem will do a miracle for us. It is a Davar Pele and a Kasha that I have had for a long time.

Maybe according to what we are saying now it is good. We are talking about the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael. The continued existence of the Klal Yisrael.

Bituchin Anachnu She'HKB"H Yaaseh Lanu Neis. We know that Elisha was told by the woman by whom he stayed, the Isha Hashunamis as is found in Melachim II 4:13 (בְּתוֹךְ עַמִּי אֲנֹכִי יֹשֶׁבֶת). Chazal say that she said I don't want a Din for myself. It was Rosh Hashono and Elisha asked what do you need?

She responded (בְּתוֹךְ עַמִּי אֲנֹכִי יֹשֶׁבֶת). Chazal Teitch that she said I don't want to stand in Din myself. I want to be part of the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael. We stand in Din as part of the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael. We are not sure as individuals the Din will come out exactly the way we want. We are not sure if HKB"H Yaaseh Lanu Neis as individuals. But the goal on Rosh Hashono is to be part of the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael. To feel part of the Rabbim of Klal Yisrael. In that, Bituchin Anachnu She'HKB"H Yaaseh Lanu Neis. In that we have no problem. Geshmak, how beautiful. The secret is that the biggest Zechus is to be part of Klal Yisrael. The biggest Zechus is to be part of the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael as a Zechus, the continuation of Yiddishkeit throughout all these generations of a bitter Galus. What a Zechus.

As individuals we may be lacking, but as part of the Tzibbur of Klal Yisrael it is a Zechus. That is an Eitza. It is an Eitza for a positive outcome of a Yom Hadin is to make yourself part of Klal Yisrael. Daven for Klal Yisrael. (וְזָכְרֵם לְפָנַי בְּחַיִּים לְמַעַן תִּשְׁמְרוּ אֶתְּמִנְתִּי וְאֶתְּהִלַּתִּי וְאֶתְּהִלַּתִּי וְאֶתְּהִלַּתִּי וְאֶתְּהִלַּתִּי) We are one Klal Yisrael.

Klal Yisrael could use a Gut Gebentched Yar in the coming year. I certainly hope that the year will be a year of Beracha, a year of Hatzlacha. It seems the Iranian deal is going through. I guess we are stuck. We can't rely on the President; we can't rely on the Congress, what should we do? We have only the Ribbono Shel Olam to rely on. 29:22 (וְלֹא תִרְעוּ--לֹא תִרְעוּ) (לֹא תִרְעוּ). The Posuk is talking about a nuclear debacle Chalila V'chas. We have to turn to the Ribbono Shel Olam. 29:9 (אֲתֵם נֹצְרִים הַיּוֹם בְּלִבְכֶם) We should be Zoche to have the wisdom, our Tefillos should not be for just ourselves, our Tefillos should be ourselves (בְּתוֹךְ שְׂאֵר חַיֵּי יִשְׂרָאֵל). With that we should be Zoche to a Kesiva V'chasima Tovah a Gut Gebentched Yar. Looking forward to speaking to you next Thursday Taf Shin Ayin Vav. Tacheil Shana Ubirchoseha!

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Pas Yisroel and the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah Rabbi Yirmiyohu Kaganoff

Question #1: Aseres Yemei Teshuvah "Must I use pas Yisroel during the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah?"

Question #2: Friendly Baker "A group of neighbors, both Jewish and non-Jewish, are getting together to make a surprise birthday party for one of the non-Jewish people on the block who has been incredibly helpful to us all. Since there are some frum people on the block, the party will be strictly kosher. One of the non-Jewish neighbors is a baker by trade and will be baking everything in one of the kosher houses. Is there any problem with his doing this, when the frum people are supplying all the ingredients?"

Question #3: Why Now? Why are we discussing this topic before Rosh Hashanah?

Background Pas Yisroel means bread baked by a Jew or with Jewish participation. The Mishnah teaches: The following items of a non-Jew are forbidden to be eaten, but are permitted for benefit: milk milked by a non-Jew without a Jew supervising; their bread and their oil, although Rebbe and his beis din permitted the oil; and cooked items (Avodah Zarah 35b). Thus, we see that Chazal prohibited consumption of bread made by gentiles. This bread, commonly called pas akum, means bread made by a non-Jew, without Jewish involvement. Yet, we will soon see that there are many unusual and confusing rules governing when this bread is prohibited and when not. Aside from our need to know how to apply these laws, understanding the reasons will allow us to appreciate several other areas of both halachah and hashkafah, including how a takanas Chazal is made. Furthermore, we need to know how to apply these laws during the aseres yemei teshuvah, when they have special significance. So, let us roll up our sleeves to get deep into this doughy topic!

Takanas Chachamim When Chazal implement a takanah prohibiting an item or activity, it is binding on all Jews and remains so, permanently. This means that, as a general rule, a takanah cannot later be annulled. However, there are some limited instances in which something prohibited because of a takanah can later be permitted.

There are two ways that a takanas chachamim may be rescinded, both of which require the decision of a major beis din of klal Yisroel with the power of the Sanhedrin. One instance is when the rescinding beis din consists of greater Torah scholars who have a larger following of disciples than did the original beis din that created the takanah. However, even this method of rescinding an earlier takanah does not apply to a list of takanos created by the disciples of Hillel and Shammai. To quote the Gemara, no later beis din could rescind these takanos, which are called The Eighteen Matters. (The details of this topic we will leave for a different time.)

The second situation in which a takanas chachamim may be rescinded is when the original takanah had not been accepted – meaning that it was not kept properly by the Jewish people. In the latter situation, since the takanah was not observed, the major beis din of klal Yisroel has the ability to withdraw the original takanah.

Basic background With this initial background, we can now examine the history and the halachah of the takanah of pas akum. In the days of the disciples of Hillel and Shammai, when the Second Beis Hamikdash still stood, Chazal forbade eating pas akum – even when there are no kashrus concerns about the ingredients or the equipment used to prepare the bread (Avodah Zarah 36a). The reason for this enactment was to discourage social interaction that can lead to intermarriage.

We find a dispute among the rishonim whether the prohibition was limited to bread that gentiles baked or whether it included even dough prepared by a gentile that was then baked by a Jew. According to the Ran and the Tur, the prohibition of pas akum includes even when a non-Jew mixed or otherwise prepared dough that was then baked by a Jew. The logic is that the reason for the takanah could apply equally to bread in which the dough was prepared by a gentile, and furthermore, the Mishnah does not limit the prohibition to bread baked by a gentile, but states simply their bread.

Resolving this dispute directly impacts the second of our opening questions: "A group of neighbors, both Jewish and non-Jewish, are getting together to make a surprise birthday party for one of the non-Jewish people on the block who has been incredibly helpful to us all. Since there are some frum people on the block, the party will be strictly kosher. One of the non-Jewish neighbors is a baker by trade and will be baking everything in one of the kosher houses. Is there any problem with his doing this when the frum people are supplying all the ingredients?"

According to the Ran and the Tur, this bread would be prohibited, because it was prepared by a gentile, regardless of who baked it. However, notwithstanding their opinion, most authorities rule that pas akum is limited

to bread baked by a gentile. Thus, as long as this bread is baked by a Jew, it will be kosher, regardless as to who mixed the dough and the ingredients. However, if the gentile neighbor baked the bread in a Jewish house without any Jewish participation, it is prohibited according to most authorities, even when all the ingredients are kosher.

Sometimes permitted? We have seen that the Mishnah lists the prohibition of pas akum, and does not imply that this ban has any exceptions. Yet, we find passages in both the Talmud Bavli and in the Talmud Yerushalmi implying that the prohibition was not observed universally. Apparently, this was because bread is such a staple and, Jews often found themselves living in a place where there were no Jewish commercial bakeries; baking all one's bread at home was impractical.

In the Bavli (Avodah Zarah 35b), we find the following:

Rav Kahana, quoting Rav Yochanan, said: "The prohibition of pas akum was not rescinded by beis din." This statement implies that someone held that it was, and that Rabbi Yochanan, one of the greatest amora'im, is rejecting that approach. The Gemara then explains that, indeed, some people had, in error, understood that the prohibition of pas akum no longer applies.

To explain what happened, the Gemara shares with us some history: One time, while Rebbe (Rabbi Yehudah Hanasi, the author of the Mishnah) was traveling, a non-Jewish person brought him a large, nice loaf of bread. Subsequently, Rebbe was heard to exclaim: "What a nice loaf of bread this is! What did Chazal see to prohibit it?" Based on this comment, some people understood Rebbe's comment to mean that the takanah of pas akum indeed no longer applied. Although more than a hundred years before Rebbe the disciples of Hillel and Shammai had prohibited it, they understood that Rebbe had rescinded the takanah, and, therefore, he mused why Chazal had once declared this bread to be prohibited. The Gemara concludes that the understanding of these people was erroneous. Rebbe's comment was whimsical; he never intended to permit pas akum (Avodah Zarah 35b).

Yerushalmi versus Bavli The just-quoted passage of Gemara Bavli implies that there is no heter to use pas akum. On the other hand, a passage in the Yerushalmi (Avodah Zarah 2:8) disputes this. There, it quotes an early statement to the effect that the laws concerning the prohibition of pas akum appear to be inconsistent. The Yerushalmi then suggests several possibilities to explain what inconsistency exists regarding the laws of pas akum. The Yerushalmi concludes that this is the inconsistency: In a place where pas Yisroel is available, one would assume that one is not permitted to use pas akum, yet one may.

It thus appears that we have discovered a dispute between the Talmud Bavli and the Talmud Yerushalmi, in which the Bavli ruled that pas akum is prohibited and the Yerushalmi ruled that it is permitted. If this is true, then we should rule according to the Bavli and prohibit all forms of pas akum.

Yet, the Rif, the major early halachic authority, cites both the passage of the Bavli and that of the Yerushalmi, implying that there is no disagreement between them.

Resolving the Rif To explain how one early authority, the Rashba, resolves this difficulty, I will follow Jewish tradition by answering a question with a question. Although the Gemara (Avodah Zarah 35b) ultimately rejects this conclusion, it had entertained the possibility that Rebbe rescinded the takanah of pas akum. Upon what halachic basis could Rebbe have been able to rescind a takanah? Since this takanah was created by the disciples of Hillel and Shammai, it cannot be abrogated by a later beis din. The only other possibility is that the takanah of pas akum had not been properly observed. Therefore, a later beis din could rescind the takanah. Thus, the conclusion of the Bavli implies that, although Rebbe didn't rescind the takanah of pas akum, he could have, since it was not properly established.

At this point, we can explain what the Rif meant. There is no contradiction between the Bavli and the Yerushalmi. The Bavli teaches two things:

1. That the takanah of pas akum could have been rescinded.
2. That Rebbe was not the one who did so, and that it was still valid in his time. The Yerushalmi teaches that at some point after Rebbe, someone did,

indeed, rescind the takanah to a certain degree (Rashba, quoted by Ran). The Ran himself explains that even the Bavli can be read in a way that it implies that the prohibition was rescinded.

To what extent? Based on the Rif, we know that there was some rescinding of the takanah. Our next question is: To what extent was the prohibition rescinded?

Among the rishonim, we find various approaches defining to what extent the prohibition of pas akum was relaxed. Some contend that this depends on location – in some places the takanah was not initially accepted, and in these places Chazal relaxed the takanah to a greater extent than they did elsewhere.

However, even in places where the custom was to be lenient, not all pas akum was permitted. In all places, bread baked by a gentile for personal use and not for sale is prohibited. This bread is called pas baalei batim.

The dispute whether and to what extent one may be lenient concerns only bread baked for sale. This bread is called pas paltur, literally, bread baked for a merchant, and is sometimes permitted. To what extent it is permitted is the subject of a controversy that we will discuss shortly.

Invitation to the White House The next case might be an application of this law: Someone receives an invitation to a meal at the White House that will be supervised, so that all the ingredients are kosher and the equipment is all brand new, special for the event. If the mashgiach did not participate in the baking of the breads, they might be prohibited because of pas baalei batim. (See a dispute about this matter in Birkei Yosef, Yoreh Deah 112:2, 3, 6). This is because the bread was not baked for sale, but for the "personal use" of the residents of the White House and their guests.

When is pas paltur permitted? Returning to our discussion, what conditions need to be met for pas paltur to be permitted? There is a wide range of opinion among halachic authorities. According to the Shulchan Aruch, one may use pas paltur whenever no Jewish bakery is available, even in a city with a sizable Jewish community. If pas Yisroel becomes available, then the pas paltur should not be used until the pas Yisroel is no longer available, even if the pas paltur has already been baked (Yoreh Deah 112:4).

Less tasty The authorities disagree whether one may eat pas paltur even when there is a Jewish bakery, but the pas Yisroel is less tasty than the bread of the gentile (Tur). The Shulchan Aruch rules leniently that if the pas paltur is of better quality or is of a variety that is not available from a Yisroel, one may use it (Yoreh Deah 112:5).

A more lenient approach The Rema is more lenient than either the Rambam or the Shulchan Aruch, concluding that, where the custom is to permit pas paltur, one may consume it, even when pas Yisroel is available (Yoreh Deah 112:2). The Bach and the Gra follow the opinion of the Rema, whereas other opinions agree with the Shulchan Aruch and permit pas paltur only when pas Yisroel is not available and in a place where the custom is to be lenient (Shach). All of the above opinions agree that it is prohibited to use pas baalei batim, bread baked by a gentile for personal use (Yoreh Deah 112:7).

The prevalent approach among most hechsherim in North America is to follow the opinion of the Rema and permit pas paltur. As a rule of thumb, most Mehadrin hechsherim in Eretz Yisroel are strict and do not permit pas paltur.

When was it baked? What is the defining factor determining whether bread is pas paltur or pas baalei batim? Is this determined by what was intended when the bread was baked, or what ultimately happens with the bread? For example, if a gentile baked bread to sell, but found no customer for it, and therefore kept it for himself, may a Jew eat this bread? Indeed, this is the subject of an early dispute, most halachic authorities contending that the defining factor is what was intended when the bread is baked. According to this approach, bread baked by a gentile for his own use who then decided to sell it is prohibited. On the other hand, if he baked the bread intending to sell it and then brought it home for his own use, it may be consumed (Toras Habayis 3:7). However, most authorities seem to conclude that when a gentile invited someone over to eat, it is forbidden to break bread with him,

regardless as to whether it was originally baked for sale or not (Shach; Pri Toar).

Friendly baker Here is an interesting ramification of our current discussion, slightly modified from one of our opening questions: "A group of neighbors, both Jewish and non-Jewish, are making a strictly kosher party. One of the non-Jewish neighbors owns and operates a bakery that has a hechsher, but it is not pas Yisroel. Can he bring bread that was baked at his bakery for the party?"

According to most opinions, this bread is forbidden, since it was not baked for sale.

Jewish participation The entire issue of whether and under what circumstances a Jew can eat bread baked by a non-Jew is problematic only when the entire baking procedure is done without any participation of a Jew. However, if a Jew increases the heat of the oven in any way, even by merely symbolically adding a splinter to the fire, the bread baked is considered pas Yisroel. The Rema furthermore states that if a Jew increased the fire once, and the oven was not turned off for twenty-four consecutive hours, then all the bread is considered pas Yisroel.

In a large, modern, industrial bakery, it is usually very easy to arrange that everything baked there should be pas Yisroel. Since these bakeries operate seven days a week, whenever the mashgiach visits, he needs simply to adjust upward the thermostat or dial until he sees that he has added fuel to the fire, and then return the dial to its setting. This will make the bread pas Yisroel for the foreseeable future. I have done this personally numerous times and so have many others.

The reason why this is not usually done is very simple: The consumer is not clamoring for it to be done, and the hechsherim follow the approach that pas paltur is permitted. If consumers would demand that the bread under hechsher be pas Yisroel, it all would be.

Aseres Yemei Teshuvah We can now answer Questions #1 and #3 which we posed earlier. Notwithstanding the conclusion that, at least under certain circumstances, pas akum is permitted, several rishonim record that one should be stringent during the Ten Days of Repentance to use only pas Yisroel, even in a place where the custom is to be lenient and use pas paltur (for example, Rosh, Rosh Hashanah 4:14, at very end; Tur, Orach Chayim 603). This approach is quoted by the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chayim 603) and all the later authorities. Those who rule leniently in allowing the use of pas paltur during the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah rely on the opinions that in a large, commercial bakery, where the consumer does not know any of the workers, there is no halachic concern of pas akum. One should be aware that this heter is not mentioned by most authorities, and it is disputed by many who quote it (see Birkei Yosef, Yoreh Deah 112:9). Shu"t Minchas Yitzchok 3:26:6 rules that one may combine this heter with another heter that would be insufficient on its own.

In conclusion, according to predominant opinion, if a Jew participated in the heating of the oven, the bread is considered pas Yisroel. If no Jew participated in heating the oven, the pas paltur bread baked by a non-Jew may be used, according to the Shulchan Aruch, when there is no pas Yisroel of equal quality available. According to the Rema, in a place where the custom is to be lenient, one may use pas paltur, even if pas Yisroel is available, except during the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah.

Conclusion The Gemara teaches that the rabbinic laws are dearer to Hashem than the Torah laws. In this context, we can explain the vast halachic literature devoted to understanding this particular prohibition, created by Chazal to protect the Jewish people from major sins.

Rav Kook Torah

What is the significance of the various blasts of the shofar? The shofar is a wake-up call, stirring us to mend our ways and do teshuvah. As Maimonides wrote in the Mishneh Torah, the shofar calls out to us: "Sleepers, wake up from your slumber! Examine your ways and repent and remember your Creator" (Laws of Repentance 3:4). Thus when looking for an explanation of the shofar blasts, we should examine ideas that are connected to this theme of spiritual awakening.

Three Levels The initial blast of the shofar is a long, constant sound called a tekiyah. This simple call relates to the soul's inner source of holiness, its innate connection to God. The soul's inner essence is rooted in an elevated realm that is "infinitely good and infinitely long," musically represented by the long, clear tekiyah blast. However, this inner holiness should not remain concealed within the soul. Spiritual awakening means that this holiness is expressed in character traits and actions. Therefore the long tekiyah blast is followed by a series of shorter blasts, called shevarim. The fragmented sounds of the shevarim correspond to the process of the inner soul expressing itself in particular character traits. Unlike the broad strokes of abstract concepts, the soul's enlightened glimpses of Divine ideals, our traits are more defined and specific - kindness and generosity, integrity and resolve, and so on. Thus the shevarim consist of a series of broken blasts, shorter than the tekiyah. Yet we are not content with only refining character traits. Our spiritual awakening should also elevate our actions and deeds. Therefore the shevarim are followed by even shorter blasts, the staccato beat sounds called teruah. Since actions are even more detailed than traits - specific behaviors that express the qualities of kindness, integrity, and so on - they are audially represented by the rapid trill of the teruah. In summary: we focus on the soul's inner essence (the tekiyah) in order to influence and refine the character traits (the shevarim), which in turn guide and elevate the actions (the teruah). The Final Tekiyah

Each set of shofar blasts concludes with a final tekiyah. Like the first tekiyah, this tekiyah represents the soul's core holiness. But while the first tekiyah signifies this inner essence as a potential force, the final tekiyah indicates the actualization of its impact on our traits and deeds. Partial Teshuvah This explanation describes the complete set of shofar blasts - tekiyah-shevarim-teruah-tekiyah. However, we also blow two partial sets of shofar blasts, with only shevarim or teruah in the middle. What do these series of blasts represent? Ideally, both our traits and our actions should be guided by the soul's inner holiness. But there are also situations of incomplete spiritual awakening. Some individuals may behave properly, but fail to refine their character traits. This situation is represented by the set of tekiyah-teruah-tekiyah, since only the teruah blasts (i.e., the actions) are influenced by the inner holiness of the tekiyah. In other cases, there may be internal or external obstacles that prevent the inner soul from expressing itself in action. Nonetheless, there may still be a refinement of character traits. This situation is represented by the set of tekiyah-shevarim-tekiyah, as only the shevarim (the traits) are influenced by the tekiyah. Clearly, the optimal situation is when the inner holiness is able to penetrate all levels, encompassing shevarim as well as teruah, both character traits and deeds. This ideal state is expressed in the psalmist's praise of those who recognize the importance of the teruah and know how to realize their inner holiness in their "walk," i.e., their practical path in life: "Fortunate is the nation that knows the teruah-blast; O God, they will walk in the light of Your countenance." (Psalms 89:16) (Silver from the Land of Israel (now available in paperback). Adapted from Olat Re'iyah vol. II, pp. 326-327.) See also: Nitzavim: Dances of Teshuvah in Poriah

from: Chanan Morrison <ravkooklist@gmail.com>
to: Rav Kook List <Rav-Kook-List@googlegroups.com>
date: Sep 5, 2018, 2:35 AM
subject: [Rav Kook Torah] Rosh Hashanah: The Music of Teshuvah
Rosh Hashanah: The Music of Teshuvah

from: **Rabbi Ben Tzion Shafier** <rebbe@theshmuz.com>
date: Sep 6, 2018, 11:47 AM
subject: Last minute inspiration for Rosh Hashanah
"The Molochim asked HASHEM, "Why is it that the Jewish nation doesn't sing Hallel on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur?" HASHEM answered

them, “Is it possible that a king sits on the throne of judgment, with the books of life and death open in front of Him, and the Jewish Nation should sing?” – Rosh Hashanah 32b

The Molochim’s position

Molochim (angels) see with a brilliant, piercing clarity. Having no physical limitations or impediments, they perceive reality to an extent that we mortals can only dream about. So then, why did the Molochim contend that the Jewish People should say Hallel on Rosh Hashanah? Isn’t obvious that the solemnity of the day makes it inappropriate to sing? What was the Molochim’s perspective, and what did HASHEM made clear to them?

Issues of the day

The answer to this is based on a deeper understanding of Rosh Ha’Shanah. The Mishnah tells us that on Rosh Ha’Shanah, “Every occupant of the planet stands in front of HASHEM and is judged.” Small or great, young or old, from the most prestigious to the most simple, every human being is examined, and his fate for the coming year is decided.

But it isn’t just individual lives that are examined. Global issues are also weighed, measured, and determined. Which nation will go to war? Which will enjoy peace? Which lands will experience prosperity and success? Which will suffer? Which new technologies will be brought to the marketplace? Which cures will be discovered? Which diseases will suddenly appear? Which epidemics will spread? Which dictator will refuse arm inspections, even though he doesn’t have weapons of mass destruction? And which will play the game, speaking words of hatred from the United Nations floor? All of the issues of the coming year are reviewed, assessed, and arbitrated.

The headlines of the New York Times are written on Rosh Hashanah. But it isn’t only the headlines of the coming year that are written; every article, feature, and news scoop from the global down to the local is considered, appraised, and deliberated.

There are many, many issues that affect the over six and half billion occupants of this planet. And every one of those issues is judged by HASHEM on this day. Hurricanes, typhoons, earthquakes, and famine, economic expanse and collapse. The issues of the day encompass the breadth of the human experience. The entire globe is one multi-dimensional chess game, and Hashem, the Ultimate Grand Master maps out the moves of the year to come.

Where we fit it

We, the Jews, are servants of HASHEM. We are his Chosen Nation, and He is our Master. And, as such, we are also fans of HASHEM. He is our King, are we are his people. During the course of the year, we suffer through the insolence, audacity and arrogance of a world that denies HASHEM’s sovereignty. This causes us pain and angst. During this time of year, however, we revel in the fact that HASHEM sits as Judge – He alone meeting out the fate of mankind. And so, we should feel a tremendous sense of joy, an outpouring of emotion, as we contemplate the magnificence of our Creator in His glory.

That is the Molochim’s position. From their lucid perspective, they see something missing. We wear Yom Tov clothing, we eat festive meals, and we bathe and shave in honor of the day. But, where is the singing out in joy? Hallel should be a part of the davening. Yet it is noticeably absent. Why? If we understand the magnitude of this day, if we envision HASHEM sitting on the throne of judgment, we should be overcome with a sense of jubilation and wish to sing Hallel.

HASHEM’s answer

Never the less, HASHEM answers the Molochim, “On a global level it is magnificent, but the judgment is on a personal level as well. Each person must recognize that, ‘My fate for the coming year is being decided. Will I live or die? Will I be healthy or sick? Will I enjoy great prosperity or not? The fate of family, and my community, is being decided. The human race is judged, and I too am a human. And so, it is inappropriate to sing on such a day.’”

However, both emotions should be present during this day. Great simcha as we experience HASHEM’s closeness, tempered with the awe that comes from understanding that our future and the future of all that is dear to us is being decided.

This is an excerpt from the Shmuz on the Parsha book.

<https://www.koltorah.org/halachah//the-keriat-hatorah-of-rosh-hashana-by-rabbi-chaim-jachter?rq=Keriat%20Hatorah>

The Keriat Hatorah of Rosh Hashana by Rabbi Chaim Jachter

Volume 14, Halachah (2004/5764)

In this essay, we shall note numerous unusual features of the Keriat Hatorah for Rosh Hashana. We then shall postulate that the function of the Torah reading for Rosh Hashana differs fundamentally from the function of the Torah readings for other Yamim Tovim. This, in turn, will enrich our comprehension and appreciation of what we seek to accomplish with both our Tefillot and Keriat Hatorah on Rosh Hashana. This essay is an expansion and variation of a Shiur on this topic written by Rav Yitzchak Et-Shalom of Los Angeles that appears on <http://www.torah.org/advanced/mikra>. My thanks to my Talmidim at Torah Academy of Bergen County and the congregants at the Sephardic Congregation of Teaneck for their contributions to the thoughts presented in this essay.

The Unusual Features of the Keriat Hatorah for Rosh Hashana

The Gemara (Megillah 31a) states:

On Shavuot we read the Parsha that includes “Shiva Shavuot” (Devarim 15:8-12) and we read the Haftara from Chabakuk. Others say that we read “Bachodesh Hashlishi” (Shemot Chapters 19-20) and recite the Haftara from the Merkava (Yechezkel Chapter One). Today, when we observe two days of Yom Tov, we accommodate both opinions (and follow the first opinion on the second day and the second opinion on the first day). The opposite occurs with the Torah reading of Rosh Hashana. One opinion asserts that we read from the Parsha of the Musaf of Rosh Hashana (Bemidbar 29:1-6) and the Haftara is “Haben Yakir Li Efraim” (Yirmiyahu Chapter 31). The second opinion believes that we read “VaHashem Pakad Et Sarah” (Sarah Imeinu’s conception and giving birth to Yitzchak Avinu, Bereshit Perek 21) and the Haftara is from the story of Chana’s conception and giving birth to Shemuel Hanavi. Today when we observe two days of Rosh Hashana, on the first day we read the story of Sarah Imeinu’s conception and giving birth to Yitzchak Avinu, and on the second day we read the story of Akeidat Yitzchak (Bereshit Perek 22).

The Gemara highlights the difference in resolving the dispute regarding the appropriate Keriah for Shavuot and Rosh Hashana. On Shavuot, we accommodate both opinions, whereas on Rosh Hashana we do not. The reason for this might be that the function of Torah reading on Rosh Hashana differs fundamentally from the purpose of the reading of Shavuot, and indeed, of every other Yom Tov.

A careful examination of Rashi’s comments on this Sugya (section of the Gemara) seems to point to the same conclusion. Rashi (s.v. Umaftirin) offers explanations for why we read the stories of Chana and Akeidat Yitzchak on Rosh Hashana. We read about Chana, Rashi explains, because Chana conceived on Rosh Hashana, and we read about Akeidat Yitzchak so that this story be brought to Hashem’s attention on the day that He judges us. Two questions emerge from this comment of Rashi. First, why does Rashi not offer an explanation for why we read of Sarah’s conception? The Ran (commentary to the Rif, 10b s.v. Berosh Hashana Biyom) explains that Sarah also conceived on Rosh Hashana (see Rosh Hashana 11a), and thus that section should be read on this day. Why does Rashi not mention this? The fact that Rashi mentions Chana’s conceiving on Rosh Hashana but does not mention Sarah’s leads us to conclude that Rashi did not concur with the Ran.

Rather, Rashi seems to believe that there is a different reason for the reading of Sarah's conception on Rosh Hashana.

Another question can be raised on Rashi's explanation for why we read the Akeida episode. The Rambam (Hilchot Tefillah 13:8) states the function of the Torah reading on Yom Tov: "On Yom Tov we interrupt the regular cycle of the weekly Torah readings and we read about the holidays." This fits with the enactment of Moshe Rabbeinu (recorded in Megillah 32a) that we should study relevant matters of the holiday on each holiday: the laws of Pesach on Pesach, the laws of Sukkot on Sukkot, etc. Accordingly, why do we read the Akeidat Yitzchak drama on Rosh Hashana if it does not describe and characterize the holiday of Rosh Hashana? Where else do we find that the Keriat Hatorah constitutes either an expression of Tefillah or supplement to Tefillah?

Incidentally, we should note that the Ran in his commentary to the Rif seems to be aware of this difficulty, and explains that the reading of the Akeida is intended to explain our practice of blowing specifically a ram's horn on Rosh Hashana (see Rosh Hashana 16a). Rashi, though, does not state what the Ran writes, and we must contemplate the reason for this.

Finally, we should question the relevance of the Avraham-Avimelech well story (recorded in the second half of chapter twenty one of Bereshit) to Rosh Hashana? Indeed, the narration of the conception and birth of Yitzchak occupies twenty-one Pesukim, which suffices for even seven Aliyot when the first day of Rosh Hashana occurs on Shabbat. There does not appear to be any procedural need to read more in the Torah than of the conception and birth of Yitzchak on the first day of Rosh Hashana. How does this Avimelech story fit into the themes of Rosh Hashana?

The Unique Function of the Torah Reading of Rosh Hashana

All of these questions point to the conclusion that the purpose of the Torah reading for Rosh Hashana fundamentally differs from the purpose of the Torah readings for the other Yamim Tovim. On every other Yom Tov, the purpose of the Torah reading is to read about a relevant theme of that Yom Tov. However, it seems that the purpose of the Torah reading of Rosh Hashana is to supplement our Tefillot to Hashem on this awesome day. According to this approach, we read the story of Sarah Imeinu conceiving not because this event occurred on Rosh Hashana. Rather, we read it because it is part of the story of the Akeidat Yitzchak.

The Rambam in Moreh Hanevuchim (3:24) describes the lessons of Akeidat Yitzchak. The first lesson, he writes, is to demonstrate the profundity of Avraham's commitment to Hashem. Hashem demanded the most difficult sacrifice that He could demand from any human being.

"A childless man who profoundly desired to have children to create a new nation who finally has a child after having given up hope of having a child has unbounded love and attachment to his child. Despite all this, Avraham's love and fear of Hashem outweighed his attachment to his child."

The Radak (Bereshit 22:1) articulates an approach similar to that of the Rambam. This is not surprising, as the Radak was heavily influenced by the Rambam's philosophy.

It is necessary to read the story of the conception and birth of Yitzchak to fully grasp the depth of the feelings that Avraham Avinu had for his son. For example, Avraham Avinu consented to Hashem's order to free Yishmael and Hagar in order to insure Yitzchak's status as his sole spiritual successor (see Rav Elchanan Samet's *Iyunim Beparshiot Hashavua* pp. 41-51), underscoring the level of commitment that Avraham Avinu had for Yitzchak. Avraham Avinu clearly loved Yishmael dearly (as is evident from the Torah and highlighted by Rashi to Bereshit 22:2 s.v. Et Bincha), and yet he "sacrificed" (i.e. freed) Yishmael for Yitzchak's benefit.

The Avraham-Avimelech well story places the hopes and dreams that Avraham Avinu had for Yitzchak Avinu in perspective. Rav Yitzchak Et-Shalom notes that Avraham makes a treaty with Avimelech that applies to their respective children, grandchildren and great grandchildren. Avraham seems to assume at this point that his future is assured. This emotion is expressed in Tehillim 30:7: "I thought in good times, that I should never

fall." For other connections between the Avimelech story and Akeidat Yitzchak, see Rashbam (Bereshit 22:1) and Rav Yoel Bin Nun's essay on this topic (Megadim 25:44-61). Thus, we see that the second half of chapter twenty-one is also highly relevant to the Akeidat Yitzchak episode (especially to the aspect of the story that we seek to highlight on Rosh Hashana).

The importance of highlighting the depth of the challenge of Akeidat Yitzchak to Avraham Avinu lies in the message we seek to communicate to Hashem on Rosh Hashana. Many recite the story of the Akeidat Yitzchak in Tefillah every day in Shacharit, prefacing the recitation with a plea to Hashem that just as Avraham Avinu overcame his profound love for Yitzchak Avinu at the Akeida, so too should Hashem overcome His anger towards us and treat us with mercy. It is possible that this is what we seek to communicate to Hashem on Rosh Hashana with our Keriat Hatorah. We seek to magnify the depth of the commitment of Avraham Avinu during the Akeida incident in the hope that Hashem will, in turn, increase the depth of the mercy that He will extend to us, in His judgment of us on this awesome day.

Another objective of the reading of the Akeida might be to awaken us to perform Teshuva on this Day of Judgment (similar to the role of the Shofar as explained by the Rambam in Hilchot Teshuva 3:4). The Sefer Hachinuch (Mitzva 331) writes that the story of Akeidat Yitzchak should stir us to emulate the level of commitment that Avraham Avinu expressed to Hashem during that episode. Such positive thoughts might influence Hashem to judge us on the basis of the Mitzvot that He anticipates that we will do based on the inspiration we draw from Avraham Avinu.

Yet another lesson of the Torah readings for Rosh Hashana (which I also believe can be read into the words of Rashi) is that just as Avraham Avinu accepted the judgment of Hashem to expel Yishmael and sacrifice Yitzchak, we also should accept whatever judgment Hashem metes out for us on this Day of Judgment.

Conclusion

We see that the Torah readings for Rosh Hashana differ in a fundamental way from the Torah readings of every other Yom Tov. On Rosh Hashana, the readings are part of our Tefillot to Hashem. They also enhance the depth of our experience of Rosh Hashana.

Postscript

Mr. Richard Schulz of Teaneck, New Jersey has suggested another reason for our Torah reading on Rosh Hashana. He notes that the written Torah explicitly refers to Rosh Hashana only as the Yom Terua (the day of sounding the Shofar). The Torah Shebe'al Peh (the Oral Law) teaches that Rosh Hashana is also the Yom Hadin, the Day of Judgment. The Torah reading on Rosh Hashana thus emphasizes the judgment aspect of this holiday. Similarly, the Torah reading for Shavuot emphasizes Shavuot as the celebration of Matan Torah (the giving of the Torah), an idea that is not explicit in the Torah Shebichtav (Written Law).

One might add (I do not recall the source of this idea) that this is another reason why on Rosh Hashana we read of the banishment of Yishmael in addition to the pact between Avraham Avinu and Avimelech. Hashem judges (in accordance with Sarah Imeinu) that Yishmael must be banished (note that in Bereshit 16:5, in the context of Sarah Imeinu's struggle with Hagar, Sarah says that Hashem should judge between her and Avraham). In addition, both Avraham Avinu and Avimelech judge and rebuke each other for their respective inactions regarding Avraham's water wells. In the end, they make peace with each other, a theme that is certainly in keeping with the Torah Shebe'al Peh themes of Rosh Hashana and the Aseret Yemei Teshuva.

Our Torah readings on Rosh Hashana are an application of the principle that we find in the Gemara (for example, Rosh Hashana 19a) that "Divrei Soferim Tzerichim Chizuk," that one must strengthen and emphasize the Torah Shebe'al Peh.

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www.torah.org/learning/drasha Parsha Parables By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky

Drasha By Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky Parshas Netzavim Spaced Out!

The Torah, this week's portion tells us, is not in space. We do not have to travel to the heavens, nor cross the seas to learn it. It is close to our hearts and our lips to do and observe (Deuteronomy 30:12). Though the Torah is not in the heavens, that is not always the case with the Jews! We read this week that sometimes the Jewish people will be so dispersed that "if your exiles are scattered at the end of the skies, Hashem will gather them from there" (Deuteronomy 30:4). Those two verses are an amazing contrast. Though the People of the Book may be as far-flung as the heavens themselves, the Book is always within our reach. Ultimately however, both the far-flung Jew and the Book he or she is meant to observe will always land together. The meaning of the message is surely open to analysis. What does the Torah mean by telling us that Torah is not in heaven? We all know that. After all, aren't we reading those verses on Shabbos, in synagogue, here on earth? Rashi explains that the Torah means to tell us that if the Torah was actually in heaven we would have to find a way to retrieve it, bring it back to earth, and study it! Quite a prescient prediction of space-travel! But, I imagine, if a possible cure for cancer or the quest for other scientific discoveries prompted a multi-billion dollar space program with a goal to land on the moon, Mars and our other celestial neighbors, the quest for morality would have propelled us there thousands of years prior! Perhaps, however, we can use an old Jewish story to see how the Torah is entreating us in a different vein. The story is told of Reb Chaikle, a poor tailor from Lodz, who had recurring dreams. Each night his father would appear to him and tell him about a secret fortune. All he had to do was travel to Vienna and visit the royal palace. Exactly 50 yards from the palace, explained his father, was an old oak tree. Under that tree, his father told him, lies a great treasure. All Reb Chaikle had to do was dig under the tree, and all his financial problems would be solved. At first, Reb Chaikel ignored the dreams, but they kept repeating night after night, and he felt compelled to travel to Vienna and seek his fortune. He camped out near the palace and waited for an opportune moment to begin the dig to fortune. At midnight on a moonless night he stealthily crept up to the tree and began to dig. His shovel did not get a chance to strike dirt when he felt a rough hand squeeze the back of his neck. "Jew!" shouted the palace guard. "What on earth are you doing at twelve midnight, 50 yards from the palace gates, shoveling dirt?" Reb Chaikel had no choice but to tell the story of the dream and the great fortune that lay beneath the oak tree that he was about to dig up. He even offered to split the booty, if only the guard would let him go. "You idiot!" laughed the guard. "Everyone has dreams. In fact, I myself even dreamt that if I would go to the city of Lodz in Poland, and dig in the basement of some Jewish tailor named Chaikel, I, too, would find a fortune! Hah! Now get lost!" Legend has it that Reb Chaikel returned to Lodz, and after a little digging in his own home became a very wealthy man. Sometimes we look at the Torah's goals as way up in space! We look at the mitzvos as nearly impossible tasks that are as difficult to achieve and perform as landing on the moon. We view them as hurdles that are impossible to overcome and not feasible to attempt. We must travel to distant lands and perform incredulous feats. The Torah assures us twice that it is within our reach. A Jewish soul may be lost in space, but Hashem will find a way to bring him home. Whether through a chance meeting with an observant Jew stuck in Thailand, or seated next to him or her on an airplane circling Dallas airport, Hashem will find him. Next, the Torah assures us that its very manual is a lot closer to practical observance than people may imagine. One may think it takes extensive efforts to become something he imagines is way beyond his reach. This week the Torah teaches us the secret of the Jewish soul and the Book that was written to guide it. Both of them are within our reach. Neither of the two

is forever spaced out. Dedicated by the Pinsky Family in memory of Sondra Pinsky of blessed memory — 22 Elul L'Iloy Nishmas Shulamis bas Reb Avraham Moshe O'H Good Shabbos!

fw from hamelaket@gmail.com from: Rabbi Ephraim Z. Buchwald
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Rabbi Buchwald's Weekly Torah Message "Whatever Became of Sin?" Nitzavim-Rosh Hashana 5779-2018 According to Rabbi Hayyim Angel, this week's parasha, parashat Nitzavim, contains "one of the greatest expositions on repentance in the Torah." Rashi, in Deuteronomy 29:12, citing the Midrash Tanchuma, maintains that when the People of Israel heard the Tochacha (G-d's reproof of the people) and the terrifying litany of 98 curses it contained, they were frightened and depressed by the prediction of what seemed to be a hopeless future. Moses then comforted the people, telling them, Deuteronomy 29:9, אַתֶּם נֹצְבִים הַיּוֹם בְּלִפְנֵי ה', "You are standing today, all of you, before the L-rd your G-d." In effect, Moses told the people that just as G-d had not abandoned them before, so will He be certain to embrace them in the future. Although the Tochacha was intended to prevent the people from future sinning, if they did stray, the punishments would bring them atonement, not destruction. In parashat Nitzavim, Moses gathers all of the people together on the last day of his life, from the most exalted to the lowliest, and, for the last time, initiated them again into the Covenant of G-d. A new concept was introduced—עֲרַבְוּת, 'arayvut, the concept of mutual responsibility for one another. From now on, it was not enough for the people to just behave properly, they were expected to be responsible for all Jews and to help them to properly observe the Torah, and prevent them from violating its statutes. With the introduction of the revolutionary idea of arayvut, Moses declares, that no Jew may be indifferent to the shortcomings of their fellow Jews, and that public desecrations of the Torah must be the concern of every Jew. The introduction of the revolutionary concept of mutual responsibility, fully justifies referring to chapter 30 of Deuteronomy, as "One of the greatest expositions on repentance in the Torah." In 1973, Karl Menninger published his renowned analysis of contemporary society, *Whatever Became of Sin?* In this volume, Menninger boldly questions what was wrong in his time with society's ethics, values, and morality, and asserts that the answer lies within society itself. Menninger wrote this volume at a time when the "new morality," had emerged, when "Do your own thing" became the operating principle of many young people's lives. It was a time when multitudes of young people felt that they must throw away all restraints on their behavior and sexual activity, and focus either on caring for themselves, promoting racial equality and the elimination of poverty. Some young people at the time abandoned any sense of responsibility and simply "dropped out." They became "flower-children," began experimenting with hallucinogenic drugs, and joined ashrams and communes. It was in this environment in which Menninger wrote his very impactful volume, *Whatever Became of Sin?* Menninger and other sociologists specifically noted the contemporary practice of avoiding the word "sin" in conversation. A person who committed a crime did not "sin." He was usually crazy, out of his mind, or on drugs. The radio commentator, Dennis Prager, points to the dreadful error of calling mass-shooters "psychopaths," rather than "evil people." Attributing these nefarious actions to a malady, according to Prager, removes the responsibility from the perpetrator. Judaism has long declared (Deuteronomy 24:16) לֹא יִמָּוֶתוּ אָבוֹת עַל בְּנֵיהֶם, וּבָנִים לֹא יִמָּוֶתוּ עַל אָבוֹת, אִישׁ בְּתַקְוָו, "Parents may not be put to death because of children, and children may not be put to death because of parents. Every person shall be put to death for their own sin. " A third innocent person may not be punished for the sin of another. Genesis 9:6, clearly states, "Whosoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for in His image did G-d make man." Contemporary Western society, says Rabbi Angel, acknowledges only

“crimes,” not “sins.” Rabbi Angel explains that from the contemporary perspective, Human beings have rights, including the right to life, body, and property. In addition, obligations do not have an independent existence; they stem from human rights. The right to one’s life and body implies the obligation not to injure others. The right to property implies the obligation not to steal. When we speak of crime, mainly we mean of a person’s rights. In contrast, Judaism does not see every obligation as deriving from the rights of fellow human beings. Transgressions between individuals not only violate the rights of that individual, but also violate the Divine command. While both Western thought and the Torah attribute supreme value to human life, the Torah maintains that the prohibition of shedding human blood does not originate simply from a person’s right to life, but because that person was created in G-d’s image. Rabbi Angel writes, The Western world has no vocabulary for dealing with evil, and often refuses even to call it evil. One historian refers to Hitler and Stalin as having mental disorders. Many call terrorists madmen, rather than evil people. The idea that there is no sin also makes it easy to shift responsibility away from even the greatest of criminals.

The Torah, in parashat Nitzavim, calls upon each person to accept responsibility for their own transgressions, and not to simply wave them away by attributing them to evil inclinations, or environmental temptations. That is what Rosh Hashana, Yom Kippur, and the Ten Days of Repentance are meant to represent: The High Holiday season is the time for every person to take a stand and assume responsibility for their past actions and commit themselves to transformational change. When this is done, when every Jew assumes that responsibility, Jews the world over will join our Jewish ancestors in the more than three millennia of Jewish history, in which Jews, starting from Moses on the last day of his life standing in front of all the people of Israel, have boldly declared their responsibility for their own actions, thus committing themselves to improving their own personal behavior and profoundly influencing the world with their good and noble deeds. Rosh Hashana 5779 is observed this year on Sunday evening and all day Monday and Tuesday, September 9th, 10th and 11th, 2018. The Fast of Gedaliah will be observed next Wednesday, September 12th from dawn until nightfall. May you be blessed.

spent the best part of a day trying to extricate himself from a telephone company contract. Let’s say the name of the company was Barak. The company representative tried every inducement to keep him with the company. My son kept pointing out that other companies had offered him much better deals, that were cheaper and less restrictive, and he’d spent hours trying to extract himself from the clutches of this particular company. The lady on the other end of the line kept arguing and arguing. Finally she said, “And Barak doesn’t need to make a living?” I doubt that a sales representative in England would have used that as a last-ditch pitch. “You are standing today, all of you in front of G-d...” Soon it will be Rosh Hashana and we will all be standing in front of the Master of the World. Every Jew, every farmer, every soldier, every sailor. Even though what divides us is nearly as great as what unites us, in front of G-d we are one nation, indivisible, the sum greater than its parts. © 1995-2018 *Ohr Somayach International*

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Ohr Somayach :: Torah Weekly :: Parshat Netzavim For the week ending 8 September 2018 / 28 Elul 5778 Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair - www.seasonsofthemoon.com Insights The Dust of Exile “You are standing today, all of you...” (13:17) Lyndon Johnson once remarked to Golda Meir that she had no idea what it was like to be the President of a hundred-and-eighty million people. To which Mrs. Meir remarked that Johnson had no idea what it was like to be the president of three million presidents. There are no taxi drivers in Israel, just budding entrepreneurs biding their time. Get into a cab and the cabbie will need to know your net earnings last year and why you invested in what you invested (what, you didn’t invest?). Maybe you would like to meet his brother who has a sure-fire start-up in hi-tech? A cursory look through the mishna will show that the Jewish People were primarily a nation of farmers and livestock breeders. True, there were merchants among us — the Tribe of Zevulun’s emblem is a ship and their métier was international trade — but much of traditional Jewish life was centered on the yearly agricultural cycle. Two thousand years of exile and persecution, the inability to join craft guilds and the like have forced us to become businessmen. Why are Jews so prominent in the diamond trade? Because when there is a murderous crowd about to break down your door, you can pack your entire wealth into a small pouch and make a speedy exit. Two thousand years of exile has left its dust on us. I was born and brought up in England’s “green and pleasant land.” I became accustomed to politeness as a social norm, and, however superficial that might be, it sure makes day-to-day life a lot more pleasant. My son once