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# To Be Inspired

*Rabbi Yonah Burr*

As the month of Elul is again upon us, and the Days of Awe are quickly approaching, we often find ourselves wondering what, if anything, we can do to improve and maximize this special time.

We realize that this is a time for introspection and internalization, and to accept upon ourselves resolutions to change our ways; but very often, we find ourselves in the same place; wondering, did I accomplish anything with this time if I don't see any recognizable change?

In Parshas Re'eh, the Torah discusses the mitzva of Ma'aser Sheni. The owner is commanded to separate a tenth of his produce, and to either bring the actual fruit, or their value, to Yerushalayim and eat the produce in a state of purity. The Torah itself gives us the reason for this mitzvah: למען תלמד ליראה את ד' אלקיך כל הימים. "So that you will learn to fear Hashem, your G-d, all the days".

How does this mitzva of enjoying our fruits in Yerushalayim teach us to fear Hashem? Tosfos in Bava Basra 21a explains: "After seeing the great holiness and the Kohanim engaged in their service, one would aspire to fear heaven more, and learn more Torah".

Tosfos goes on to explain that by bringing his produce up to Yerushalayim and spending time there, he would see all the people involved in the intense service of Hashem, and this would have a tremendous impact on him. He would go home inspired, invigorated, and ready to serve Hashem better.

Now, the Torah isn't asking all of us to pick up and move to Yerushalayim, but the periodic inspiration that we received there was enough to last us the entire year, until the next.

Hashem gives us opportunities of inspiration, that transform and elevate us, that keep us going even beyond. The very fact that we go through this period every year, with the extra davening, and the focus on our Avodas Hashem, has tremendous value in and of itself. We can and should certainly use this time for resolutions and self-improvement, but there is no room for despair; know that the process itself has value, and the inspiration of this time itself leaves an everlasting impression!

In Parshas Shoftim, the Torah says "When you enter the land that Hashem has given you, and you will say, 'I will set a king

over myself, like all the nations around me; You shall surely set upon yourselves a king that Hashem will choose"

Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l asks, why is the mitzvah of establishing a king conditional on the ask? Why isn't there an absolute mitzvah to ensure a king upon the Jewish People?

Rav Miller explains that originally, the Jewish People were on such an exalted level that we didn't need a physical king. It was so clear to us that Hashem was our King, Who leads and guides us, that no king of flesh and blood was necessary. However, if we fall from this level, and need to live a more 'natural' existence, that certainly triggers the need to appoint a human king that we can see.

But again, Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur are those special days that we can aspire to truly feel our King- and this special inspiration, this 'glimpse of the higher levels' can have a tremendous impact upon us, making a difference for the entire year!

May we merit to use this gift period to elevate ourselves, and get one step closer on our journey closer to Hashem!  
May we all be inscribed for a happy and healthy new year!

# Rosh Hashana: The Power to Recreate

*Rabbi Doniel Schon*

Rav Nosson Wachtfogel zt"l, the mashgiach in the Lakewood Yeshiva, was once asked what one should do if he feels a sense of despair in the days leading up to Rosh Hashana. Presumably, the questioner felt that he had not been living a proper Jewish life, and was therefore concerned about the upcoming day of judgment. Rav Wachtfogel responded, "how can one have a sense of despair when we know that one is judged only as he is at the present time of Rosh Hashana?"

The concept of being judged based on one's present state is first demonstrated in the Chumash when HaShem saves Yishmael from dying from thirst. Rashi, comments on Bereishis 21:17, paraphrasing a Gemara in Rosh Hashana (16b) which records a discussion between the angels and Hashem. The angels complained to HaShem, arguing how can You save Yishmael from thirst when You know that in the future his descendants will kill Your children through thirst? Hashem responded, "Right now, is he righteous or evil"? Since in fact, Yishmael was righteous at that moment, HaShem judged him favorably and caused a miracle to occur and water appeared out of nowhere. This story is the source that HaShem judges a person only on his present state, and this is one of the reasons why it is read as the Torah portion for Rosh Hashana.

Rav Wachtfogel explained that with every sin there are two components – the sin itself and the person who has sinned. On Rosh Hashana the judgment is not about the sin itself, rather it is about the person. While prior sins do influence the spiritual nature of a person, on Rosh Hashana a person can break free from the shackles of those sins and rededicate himself or herself to Hashem.

The gemara in Sanhedrin states "hakol holeich achar harosh" – everything goes after its beginning. The way we live the first few days of the year will have a profound influence on the rest of the year. Rabbi Akiva Tatz explains that we see this as well in the physical world: the beginning period of any entity has a lasting effect on it. For example, if an adult would suffer a small injury it may not cause significant damage, yet if a fetus in its developmental state would sustain that same

injury the consequences would be dire. Similarly, a hairline crack in a building's foundation will cause much more damage than a hairline crack on its thirtieth floor.

The constant refrain throughout the Rosh Hashana davening is on coronating Hashem as king over the universe, as well as over each of us individually. The avodah, the specific spiritual task, of Rosh Hashana is not focused on an individual's sin. In fact, there is hardly any mention of sin on Rosh Hashana – that is reserved for Yom Kippur. Rather the avodah of Rosh Hoshana is to bring HaShem back into our life in a more real way. We accomplish this by spending the day davening and reinforcing within ourselves the concepts of malchiyos- HaShem's rule over the world, zichronos- HaShem's remembering all of our deeds, and shofros- which remind us of HaShem's direct involvement in the world as seen at the giving of the Torah, and will hopefully be witnessed soon again with the coming of Moshiach. Hopefully, if we can rededicate ourselves to HaShem, then in the upcoming year HaShem will provide us with everything we need to serve Him properly.

Along these lines, Rabbi Chaim Friedlander comments that the judgment on Rosh Hashana is not similar to the way an earthly court looks at a person's actions to hold him accountable and determine his reward or punishment. Instead, it is a judgment of the person, assessing the person's level specifically on Rosh Hashana. The judgment of Rosh Hashana is similar to a CEO of a company allocating resources for a budget for the upcoming year. While the CEO will look at an employee's past performance, the CEO will also look at where the employee currently stands with his growth potential. Even if a certain employee has not had the most favorable results in the past year, if he is on an upward trajectory, he may be awarded more resources than an employee with a better track record who is on a downward trajectory. On Rosh Hashana, the focus is to ensure that we are on an upward spiritual trajectory.

Accordingly, Hashem determines what the person standing before Him today needs to receive in the coming year to faithfully fulfill his or her mission.

May we all have a powerful Rosh Hashana and be inscribed for a happy, healthy, sweet new year filled with all of life's blessings.

# One Thing I Ask

*Rabbi Yosef Bauman*

The widespread minhag of klal Yisrael is to recite the twenty-seventh perek of Tehilim, L'Dovid Hashem Ori, from Rosh Chodesh Elul through Shemini Atzeres. Contained in this perek is the well-known verse, "Achas sha'alti meieis Hashem osah avakeish, shivti b'veis Hashem kol yemei chayai," etc. "One thing I ask from Hashem, that is what I seek. Let me dwell in the House of Hashem all the days of my life, etc." The Midrash Shocher Tov brings that Hashem said to Dovid Hamelech, "First you say, 'only one thing I ask, that I shall dwell in the House of Hashem.' But then you go on to say a whole list of requests, 'Lachzos b'noam Hashem ul'vaker b'heichalo, ki yitzpineini b'suco, to see the delight of Hashem and to contemplate in His Sanctuary, indeed He will hide me in His shelter,' etc. How can you say you're asking for one thing only?" Dovid responded, "Master of the universe, shouldn't the servant emulate his Master? You, too, said through Moshe Rabeinu (in Parshas Eikev), 'And now, Yisrael, what does Hashem ask from you? Only to fear Hashem,' and then you also continued with many mitzvos- 'to walk in all His ways and to love Him, and to serve Hashem with all your heart and soul, to guard His mitzvos, etc.' I learned from You to add on to my 'one request'."

What is the explanation for the midrash? What indeed did Dovid mean by his 'one request' which ended up being many, and what did He learn from Hashem's statement? Rav Shimon Schwab, zt"l explains that when Moshe Rabeinu said what does Hashem ask from you, he, in fact, was referring to only one request, that we fear Him; the ensuing list does not contain additional requests, rather it contains explanation. What is included in Hashem's request that we fear Him? Not simply that we should have an abstract fear of Him, but that in everything we do the fear of Hashem should always be upon us and guide us- we should walk in His ways, with fear of Hashem; we should love Him, together with the fear of Him; we should serve Him, with fear, etc.

Dovid Hamelech had a similar intent in his request- it is only one thing I ask from Hashem, that I should dwell in His house all the days of my life. But not only that when I am free from other things I should be in Hashem's house; even when I have other responsibilities I



should merit to always be in the mode of dwelling in Hashem's House. When I am 'seeing the delight of Hashem' in the Beis Medresh, when I am being sheltered by Hashem from my enemies, when my head is raised in triumph over my enemies, and when I am engaged in anything else, all these things should be with the focus and goal of dwelling in Hashem's house. This is what Dovid learned from Hashem- I am requesting the one thing that matters most to me, to be able to always be in the House of Hashem, in a way that it should encompass all aspects of life. A very appropriate and timely message for this time of year, when we try to become closer to Hashem; in everything we do our focus should always be on living with Hashem.

The Malbim in his commentary on Tehilim says another explanation on this posuk. "One thing I ask"- I am not asking for a whole list of various necessities as they are needed, like health, sustenance protection, etc. I am making only one request- to dwell always in Hashem's house and to behold the delight of Hashem, and always serve Him; and as a result, all of my needs will be taken care of as well, in order that I can always be at Hashem's service. I have no need to further request that all of my individual needs be fulfilled. But this is not my goal- to have my needs taken care of; rather, this that I am asking, that I should dwell in Hashem's house- "osah avakeish", that is what I truly seek and desire, and the fulfillment of my needs is merely a necessary outgrowth.

A similar idea is said in the name of R' Yisrael Salanter, zt"l, in explanation of the passage "Zachreinu l'chaim" that we insert in Shemoneh Esrei during these days. We ask, "v'chasveinu l'chaim," and inscribe us for life, "l'ma'ancha Elokim chaim," for Your sake. Explains R' Yisrael, we are not asking Hashem to give us life for our personal benefit. Rather, since our purpose in life is to serve Hashem, it is necessary for us to have our needs taken care of so that we can fulfill this purpose, similar to soldiers in the king's army who are supplied with their needs so that they can properly fulfill their duties. This is what we mean, we're not asking selfishly for life, but rather for Your sake so that we can serve You. It is for this reason also, that on Rosh Hashana, the Day of Judgement, when we would expect our prayers to contain a multitude of personal requests as we beseech Hashem for a good year, interestingly, our davening in fact contains few such supplications. Rather, the vast majority of the davening seems to be

focused on the Kingship of Hashem. The reason for this is, because this is really the special avodah of the day of Rosh Hashana, as the Gemara says, "Recite in front of Me verses of Kingship, so that you will accept Me as King over you." Once we make this our focus to sincerely proclaim Hashem as our King and subjugate ourselves to His will, there is no longer a need for us to make individual requests for our personal needs. As servants of the King who are dedicated to His service, of course our needs will be taken care of so that we will be capable of serving Him to the fullest of our abilities! As is said also in the name of R' Yisrael, this world is an expensive hotel- one is not necessarily deserving of good things in this world. But someone who is dedicated to serving the Master of the world does not need to worry about the bill- all his expenses will be covered.

These two ideas are both very timely for these days, and they seem to complement each other. We want to declare Hashem as our King and ourselves as His servants, as those whose primary desire is to "dwell in the house of Hashem all our days." Even though we have other, seemingly mundane obligations and distractions, we want to go about them always with the goal and focus of being in Hashem's house. And as a result, our needs should be taken care of so that we can fulfill our duties properly to the fullest. Let's keep this in mind as we coronate the King, and with Hashem's help, we should all merit a Kesivah V'chasima Tova.

# Outside In

*Nosson Nota Burr*

When Rosh Chodesh Elul arrives, we begin to prepare ourselves for the upcoming Yom Hadin. The two things we start out with are blowing Shofar and saying L'Dovid Hashem at the end of davening. Sefardim also begin reciting Selichos, but the Ashkenazic minhag is to wait until closer to Rosh Hashana. (We recite Selichos for a minimum of four days. This year we will actually only have four days as Rosh Hashana starts on Thursday and we always start Motzaei Shabbos)

I've had a question about our Elul minhagim for a long time. We start with two additions and we would expect to add more and more as we get closer to Yom Kippur. Indeed, in davening, we do follow that trajectory. We start with L'Dovid, then we add Selichos which gradually increases in intensity and then, once we hit the Aseres Yimei Teshuva, we add Avinu Malkeinu. However, once Rosh Hashana passes, we stop blowing the Shofar completely. Why is that suddenly turned off after Rosh Hashana and not sounded daily? Shouldn't we be blowing it more frequently to continue to arouse us to Teshuva?

The Bach, a commentary on the side of the page of the Tur, offers a very technical explanation. Until Rosh Hashana, we blow the shofar to confuse the Satan. Once the day of judgment passes, it is no longer necessary to confuse the Satan. However, there must be more. That is not the only reason for blowing the Shofar. The Shofar is also sounded as a call for teshuva. As Maimonides famously states, "There is a hint in the shofar to awaken from your slumber and remember your creator." So why does the Shofar blowing end so abruptly?

I would like to suggest the following answer. After Rosh Hashana, we need to switch something. The extra davening we do, the L'Dovid, Selichos, and Avinu Malkeinu, come straight from the person reciting them. Shofar, however, is an external rouser. After Rosh Hashana, the push and drive for Teshuva must be internalized. No longer will there be external calls to repentance and betterment of one's ways. Shofar is just that- an outside call to teshuva. But it is far more important to internally fix oneself. That is the message.

One can have all the right outside influences, listen to all the right speeches, and read all the right books, but when the new year after Rosh Hashana rolls around, now is the time to make the right choices

for ourselves. It is time to take ownership of ourselves, as we can't rely on others to do the real work for us. As the Mishna says in Avos, Im ein ani li mi li? If I am not for myself who will be for me? The roar of the bugle is but a reminder and worth nothing if we do not internalize the improvements and make them our own. Our selichos, our Avinu Malkeinu, our practices of special chumros of the Aseres Yemei Teshuva. We have to be strong in our own conviction. The gemara says Brachos 7a that one feeling of Anivus in oneself is more potent than many beating by someone else to improve. One small internal step is far greater than multiple impassioned speakers and messages. We must strengthen ourselves with real internal improvement which is more powerful and effective. Hashem wants real Yidden with the heart, with real feeling, from ourselves to do the right things, Torah and Mitzvos. Through improving ourselves during elul the right way we should have a good year and be zoche to all the brachos.

# A Mother's Prayer

*Rabbi Sholom Dovid Hoffman*

The Gemara in Megillah (31A) dictates that on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, we read about Hashem remembering Sarah and granting her a child. The Haftarah is about Chana praying and being answered by having a child. The Haftarah on the second day ends with Rochel crying for her children. It is striking that 3 out of the 4 readings on Rosh Hashanah are about women and their prayers being answered. What message is Chazal conveying?

In Midrash Eichah (Pesichasa 24) it says that at the time that the Bnei Yisroel were led to Galus each of the Avos came before Hashem and pleaded with him to redeem His children but to no avail. Only after Rochel cried for her children does Hashem promise that Bnei Yisroel will eventually be redeemed. Why were her prayers answered while the Avos were not?

There is hardly anything as honest and sincere as the tears shed by a mother on behalf of her children. These are the truest expressions of the empathy and feelings that one human heart can feel for another. It was specifically the tears of Rochel, our mother, on behalf of her children that caused Hashem to listen.

On Rosh Hashanah, we stand before our Creator and declare that He and only He is our true King. Our intentions are good but how truthful and pure are our prayers? When we profess to improve our actions, are we ready to back up our words with actions in our daily lives? Often our words express more than we are convinced of. By reading about these righteous women we are moved to strive to emulate them and assure that our tefillos are as pure and honest as theirs.

It can be said that the reason we emit a wordless tefillah, i.e. tekias shofar, before musaf is that although our tefillos may be tainted and not sufficiently truthful, we show that our innermost feelings, untouched and untainted by human language, are composed of a yearning to achieve closeness to Hashem.

Among other things we learn from Tefillas Chanah, there are 2 important lessons we can learn and emulate. The Gemara (Brachos 31b) states that Chanah was the first person who referred to Hashem as צבקות ה', Master of Legions. The Gemara explains that Chana said to

Hashem "From everything You created, is it difficult for You to grant me a son?"

Every force that was created by Hashem was created in order to contribute its inherent qualities to further the glory of Hashem. Chana perceived herself as being a part of the great army of creation that serves to bring glory to Hashem. She refers to herself as אמתך, Your maidservant, and it was in this role that she requested a son. She did not seek a son to satisfy her own natural maternal instincts. She asked for a son who would serve Hashem all the days of his life. Thus she would fulfill her task in bringing glory to the Ribono Shel Olam. Chana's attitude towards her tefillah serves as the paradigm of the proper way that a person should request something from Hashem. On Rosh Hashanah, we ask Hashem for life, health, livelihood, peace, and all our needs not for our own personal benefit, but למעןך אלקים חיים, so that we may utilize these gifts to serve Hashem and further glorify the Name of Hashem..

There is another lesson we can learn from Chana's prayer. The Gemara in Brachos continues that Chana's prayer can be compared to a king who made a feast for all his servants. A poor man came and stood by the door. He begged the attendants for some food but no one listened to him. The poor man forced his way into the presence of the king and pleaded "Your Majesty, from the entire banquet you made, is it so hard to give me one bite?" Similarly, Chana said to Hashem, "From all of the legions and legions that You created, is it difficult in Your eyes to grant me one son?" Chana teaches us the very meaning of prayer. The essence of Tefillah is the internalization that our salvation can only come from Hashem. We pray not to inform Hashem of our needs, but rather in order to remind ourselves of our total dependence on Him (see Chovos Halevavos 8:3:18). Through this internalization, we become worthy of Hashem's salvation (see Chinuch 433; Maharal, Nesivos Olam, Avodah 3). When we daven to Hashem, we are standing in front of Him, begging and pleading that He hear our pleas. At that moment, we recognize that only through Him can our requests be actualized.

On the Yom Hadin, we realize that our lives hang in the balance and therefore our feelings of Emunah awaken. When we daven, we are grasped with an acute sense of awareness that we are standing in front of the King's presence and He is listening to our prayers. The more

we internalize the meaning of the words that we recite, the greater our perception of Hashem's unlimited powers.

May we be zocheh to a kesiva v'chasima tovah.

*Adapted from a derasha given by my grandfather, Rav Toviya Lasdun  
ZT"l.*

# Kavanos for Tekiyas Shofar

*Rabbi Avrohom Aharon haKohen Weiman*

When I was learning in Eretz Yisroel I had the zechus to attend vaadim given by Rabbi Mordechai Dolinsky zt"l. He was a talmid of Rabbi Avigdor Miller zt"l and helped organize vaadim for Reb Avidor Miller. Rabbi Dolinsky based his vaadim on those of Rabbi Avigdor Miller. He also was the former mashgiach of Yeshivas Torah Ohr and the ba'al tokeah for Rav Dovid HaLevi Soloveitchik's Yeshiva. In the last year of Rabbi Dolinsky's life he was in the hospital on the first day of Rosh Hashana and walked to the yeshiva to blow Shofar on the second day.

In his vaad, he explained that we are mamlich Hashem (make Him king) with our Tekeyos, and therefore it's possibly the most important mitzvah of the day.

The first and most important kavana (intention) that one should have during the blowing of the Shofar is that one is fulfilling the Torah obligation to hear the Shofar. The Gemara derives from different Pesukim that one must hear a "Teruah" three times on Rosh Hashana. The Gemara then adds that every Teruah requires a Tekiah before and after it. Therefore, one is obligated to hear "Tekiah Teruah Tekiah" three times, totaling nine sounds.

However, Chazal were in doubt regarding the sound of what the Torah calls "Teruah". Is it what we call a Shevarim, a Teruah, or both together (Shevarim-Teruah)? Therefore, to ensure that we fulfill our Torah obligation, we blow each type of Teruah three times with a Tekiah before and after it. This is why we blow Tekiah Shevarim-Teruah Tekiah three times, Tekiah Shevarim Tekiah three times, and Tekiah Teruah Tekiah three times. This totals 30 blasts. (Tekiah Shevarim-Teruah Tekiah is considered 4 blasts counting Shevarim-Teruah as two,  $4 \times 3 = 12$ ; Tekiah Shevarim Tekiah and Tekiah Teruah Tekiah are 3 blasts each,  $3 \times 3 = 9$ ;  $3 \times 3 = 9$ . Then, add them together  $12 + 9 + 9 = 30$ )

There is a dispute regarding whether the Chiyuv De'oraysa (Torah obligation) is fulfilled in the Tekeyos D'miyushav (the first 30 before Mussaf) or the Tekeyos D'mi'umad (the 30 blown during Mussaf). Therefore, it is best to have in mind to fulfill the Torah obligation of Shofar by both.



The last 40 blasts blown after Mussaf were enacted to total 100 Shofar sounds. The number 100 is based on the 100 cries that Sisra's mother cried when she heard that Sisra was killed. The Pasuk discussing her crying is used to determine how many and how long the fragmented sounds of the Teruah are. Based on this connection between her cries and the Shofar, Chazal enacted this Minhag to match the number of Shofar blasts to her cries.

Therefore, the most important kavana one should have during the first 60 sounds is "I am fulfilling my Torah obligation to hear the Shofar as it says 'Yom Teruah Yihyeh Lachem.'" During the last 40 one should have in mind to fulfill the Rabbinical mitzvah.

In his vaad, Rabbi Dolinsky explained other kavonos we can have during Tekiyas Shofar. A Tekiah is a long and straight sound, it resembles shilaymus (completion). Shilaymus is true happiness. On the contrary, Shevarim and Teruah are broken sounds, they represent incompleteness and sadness, similar to how the Targum translates Teruah as yabava, a cry or moan.

Then, Rabbi Dolinsky matched up Reb Sadya Goan's 10 themes of the mitzvah of Shofar (which are usually brought in most machzorim by Tekiyas Shofar), with the ten different sounds we blow. 1. Tekiah 2. Shevarim-3. Teruah 4. Tekiah, 5. Tekiah 6. Shevarim 7. Tekiah, and 8. Tekiah 9. Teruah 10. Tekiah.

### **1. Tekiah 2. Shevarim-3. Teruah 4. Tekiah**

1. The first Tekiah can be matched to the 1st theme of Reb Sadya Goan. When inaugurating a king, trumpets are blown in honor of the king. Since on Rosh Hashana Hashem created the world and made Himself a king over it, we inaugurate him as king over ourselves and blow the Shofar in his honor. He bases this on the Pasuk בחצוצרות ה' וקול שופר הריעו לפני המלך ה' "With trumpets and the sound of the Shofar, they will blow Teruah in front of THE KING, Hashem."

2. Shevarim can be matched to the 4th theme. The sound of the Shofar is a reminder of the mussar and tochacha (rebuke) of the Nevi'im when they warned us to do teshuva. Sadly, we didn't listen and continued to sin (leading towards the Churban Habayis and loss of the Nevi'im). The Pasuk "ושמע השומע את קול השופר ולא נזהר" "And they heard the sound of the Shofar and were not careful (to refrain from sin)" compares their mussar to the sound of the Shofar.

3. Teruah – Theme # 5. This sound can remind us of the Shofar blasts that were blown during the war which brought about the Churban Habayim, as the Pasuk says "קול שופר שמעה נפשי תרועת מלחמה" "My soul heard the Shofar sound of a war Teruah". Both the war and the Churban are results of not listening to Hashem and not doing His mitzvos properly.

4. Tekiah – Theme # 8. This can remind us of the Shofar that will be blown on the Yom HaDin HaGadol at the end of days which is referred to as "יום שופר ותרועה" "The day of the Shofar and Teruah". A joyous day when all evil will cease.

### **5. Tekiah 6. Shevarim 7. Tekiah**

5. Tekiah – Theme # 2. We blow the Shofar on Rosh Hashana announcing the beginning of the Aseres Yimay Teshuva (ten days of repentance). "Now is a special time to do teshuva and come close to Hashem. He's multiplying all your efforts and helping you reach supernatural highs, Chap Arian! (take advantage of it!)"

6. Shevarim – Theme # 6. By the Akeyda, which happened on Rosh Hashana, Avrohom sacrificed a ram. The Shofar, which comes from a ram, can remind us that Avrohom attempted to sacrifice Yitzchok and how painful and frightening it was for both of them.

7. Tekiah – Theme # 9. This blast can remind us of the Shofar that will beH"Y be blown by the Kibutz Galiyus, when we will be chozer b'teshuva (repent properly) and all of Klal Yisroel will be gathered and brought to Eretz Yisroel. As the Pasuk says  
והיה ביום ההוא יתקע בשופר גדול ובאו האבדים בארץ אשור והנדחים בארץ מצרים  
"And it will be on that day, He will blow the great Shofar, and those who were lost in Ashure and those that went Mitzrayim will come and bow to Hashem by the Bais Hamikdash."

### **8. Tekiah 9. Teruah 10. Tekiah**

8. Tekiah – Theme # 3. This sound can remind us of the sound of the Shofar by Har Sinai, as the Pasuk says "וקול שופר חזק מאד" "The sound of the Shofar was very powerful." What a wonderful day it was when we got our most precious gift, the Torah, and created our strong and beloved relationship with Hashem.

9. Teruah – Theme # 7. The sound of the Shofar is frightening and scary, as the Pasuk says

"אם יתקע שופר בעיר ועם לא יחרדו" "If you blow a Shofar in the city, is it possible that the nation will not tremble?!" The Shofar should help build our Yiras Shamayim (fear of Hashem).

10. Tekiah – Theme # 10. When Ticheyas Hamaisim (the revival of the dead) happens, the dead will awaken and hear the sound of the Shofar, as the Pasuk says

"כל יושבי תבל ושוכני ארץ... כתקוע שופר תשמעו." "Those who were dwelling in the ground (the dead) will hear the Shofar when it's blown."

First 60 - I am fulfilling my Torah obligation to hear the Shofar as it says "Yom Teruah Yihyeh Lachem."

Last 40 - I am fulfilling the Minhag to hear a total of 100 Shofar sounds.

**1. Tekiah 2. Shevarim-3. Teruah 4. Tekiah**

1. Tekiah- In Honor of the Inaugurating of Hashem as king

2. Shevarim – Mussar of Nevi'im that we ignored

3. Teruah- Battle sounds in the war that lead to the Churban Habayis

4. Tekiah- Yom HaDin HaGadol the end of all evil

**5. Tekiah 6. Shevarim 7. Tekiah**

5. Tekiah – The Aseres Yimay Teshuva are starting!

6. Shevarim – Avrohom and Yitzchok's pain experienced by the Akeyda

7. Tekiah- The Shofar blast by Kibutz Galiyus

**8. Tekiah 9. Teruah 10. Tekiah**

8. Tekiah – Shofar by Har Sinai

9. Teruah – Yiras Hashem

10. Tekiah – Ticheyas Hamaisim

May we all merit to fulfill the mitzvah of the Shofar properly, connect to Hashem, and merit a good year.

# The Method of Judgment

*Rabbi Yonah Burr*

Throughout the days of Selichos, and Yomim Nora'im a consistent theme is the thirteen attributes of mercy. Reciting these verses, describing Hashem's various methods of mercy, is a form of tefillah, beseeching Hashem to have mercy on us as well.

The Gemara in Meseches Rosh Hashana creates for us amazing imagery; the Torah states that "Hashem 'passed' before Moshe, and taught him the prayer of the thirteen attributes.

אמר רב יוחנן, אלמלא מקרא כתוב אי אפשר לאומר מלמד שנתעטף הקב"ה כשליח צבור והראה לו למשה סדר תפלה אמר לו כל זמן שישראל חוטאין יעשו לפני כסדר הזה ואני מוחל להם

Says Rav Yochanan, if not for the fact that the Torah writes it this way, it would be impossible to state: Hashem wrapped Himself in a tallis, as if He was leading the congregation, and showed Moshe the order of prayer; Hashem said to him, whenever the Jewish People sin, perform before Me this order, and I will forgive them".

The commentaries ask, what does the expression 'performing before Me' mean? We are not doing anything, but rather reciting something. Furthermore, indeed, why was it necessary for Hashem Himself to 'perform' the order of the thirteen attributes before Moshe, and not simply teach him the recital?

The commentaries explain that the thirteen attributes are not merely meant to be recited. Rather, Hashem judges us, and treats us, as the way we act ourselves, and act towards others. The thirteen attributes of mercy are each middos, and characteristics that we can develop within ourselves. To the degree that we attempt to emulate Hashem's attribute of mercy, to that extent Hashem will have mercy on us. It is not merely a passive recital, but an active, transformative experience.

The Gemara tells us, that the midah of חסד, an abundance of chessed, refers to a specific act of Hashem. When someone stands before Hashem, and his merit and sin seem equal, and there is no decisive factor to judge whether he should be considered righteous or not, Hashem is מטה כלפי חסד meaning He causes the 'scale' to tilt toward merit.

How does He do this? Rav Eliezer says he pushes down the side of merit. While Rav Yossi says he lifts up the side of sin. These are seemingly two different ways of causing the side of merit to prevail- by either pushing that side down or lifting the other side up- what is the difference?

Pushing the side of merit down means that Hashem treats the good that the person does as the more dominant side. These accomplishments are the weightier of the two. The person is primarily good, the good that he does is the real person, while the bad that we do is not our true selves. While Rav Yossi says that Hashem lifts the side of sin, and lightens the load. Even if our mitzvos cannot outweigh our aveiros, Hashem assists us by lightening up our baggage and helping us overcome them.

The Gemara tells us *כל המעביר על מדותיו מעבירין לו על כל פשעיו* anyone who is forgiving to others, Hashem will forgive him. We too, in our interpersonal interactions, can employ these two methods. We can see the true good in everyone, judging them favorably and seeing the person in light of the good that they do, as well as overlooking and tolerating whatever 'bad' we perceive in others. And instead of judging others critically, we can feel for them and try to help. May we all merit to use these special days to come closer to Hashem, emulate His ways, and grow together in our Avodas Hashem.

May we all be inscribed for a year of health, happiness and everything good!

# The Great Wedding- A Glimpse Into Yom Kippur

*Rabbi Yossi Rabinowitz*

The Mishnah in Yoma (85B) that discusses the atonement which we receive on Yom Kippur, adds the following statement: "R' Akiva said: Fortunate are you [Klal] Yisroel! Before whom do you cleanse yourself? Who Cleanses you? Your Father in heaven! As it is stated: I will sprinkle pure water upon you, and you will be cleansed ( Yecheskal 36:25). And it also says: the mikva of Yisroel is Hashem (Yirmiya 17:13). Just as the mikva purifies the contaminated, so does Hakadosh Baruch Hu purify Yisroel. R' Akiva uses the term 'your Father in heaven' to teach us that the purification emanates from the love that Hashem has towards us, His children.

Regarding this tremendous love we are taught in Tana D'vei Eliyahu ( Eliyahu Raba, Parsha 29): [Hashem says] " heaven and earth can testify: I sit and yearn for [Klal] Yisroel more than a father [yearns] for his son, and a woman for her daughter- that they do teshuvah.

This purification which Hashem yearns for, is what we can receive on Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur is the day the Torah describes "before Hashem shall you be purified" ( Vayikrah 16:30).

Let us learn what Chazal tell us regarding this beloved day. The Mishnah in Taanis (26B) expounds on a pasuk in Shir Hashirim (3:11): " go forth and gaze, daughters of Tzion, upon king Shlomo, adorned with a crown his mother made him on the day of his wedding and the day of his hearts joy". The day of his wedding- is a reference to the day of the giving of the Torah. The phrase 'on the day of his heart's joy' is a reference to the building of the Beis Hamikdash, may it be rebuilt speedily in our days. Rashi explains, that King Shlomo is a reference to Hashem- to whom peace belongs. His mother refers to Knesses Yisroel. The giving of the Torah is refers to the day of Yom Kippur upon which we received the Second Luchos.

Yom Kippur is the day of this special wedding between Hashem and Klal Yisroel to whom the pasuk refers to as his mother. The Medrash (chazis 3:2) explains the term 'mother' with a parable: there was a king who had an only daughter which he exceedingly cherished. Originally, he called her my daughter. As the love grew, he called her my sister,

until finally he called her my mother. So too does Hashem refer to Klal Yisroel as his daughter and sister and finally mother as is written in different pesukim (refer to medrash ibid}. Chazal are teaching us that due to the fact that we are so beloved to Hashem, we [so to speak] adorn Hashem and Hashem takes pride in us. This is the great day of Yom Kippur. Yom Kippur is the day we return to Hashem and His Torah, which gives us the opportunity to be the adornment of our Father in heaven.

The kedusha prayer that we say on Yom Kippur differs from the kedusha prayer that we recite on Shabbos and Yom Tov. Throughout the year we say by shachris "Mimikomicha malkeinu sofia etc."- from Your place our King, You will appear etc. we speak in first person. On Yom Kippur however we say "Mimikomo hu yifen"- from His place may He turn to us in compassion etc. we speak in third person. We also speak about how the Melachim ask each other "ayeih mimkom kevodo"- where is the place of His glory? In explaining this change, the Mateh Moshe (872) writes, since on this day the Jewish people increase their prayers and praises, Hashem's heavenly throne is uplifted to such lofty levels that even the Melachim cannot recognize that 'exalted place' and ask ayei mikom kevodo. For this reason, we say mimikomo- from His place and not mimikomicha-from Your place, due to this great elevation that results from our prayers.

The question remains: how can this be? A simple Jew with his shortcomings suddenly has the opportunity to 'become the crown' that Hashem adorns? The answer lies in the words we say throughout this time period. We say in the chapter of ledavid Hashem Ori: "Shema Hashem koli ekra, vchanini vaaneini"- Hear Hashem my voice when I call, show me favor and answer me. The Gra (Avnei Eliyahu) comments that this refers to Yom Kippur. On Yom Kippur we are granted favor and compassion even if we are not worthy. When we stand in prayer and resemble the Melachim who stand in front of Hashem, we merit becoming this great adornment. (based on the Chashek Moshe).

When we recognize this great opportunity, and how beloved we are, this will instill in us a desire to reciprocate and express our desire to do teshuva and return to Hashem.

In conclusion, let us see what the Chovos Halevavos teaches us (shar hateshuva:10) regarding the amazing heavenly help we receive when trying to do teshuvah. The Chovos Halevavos discusses different

sins that are difficult to rectify, even so, when one fulfills the requirements of teshuva that are in his ability to fulfill ( see sharei teshuva: chapter 1), Hashem will help him rectify even those elements of teshuva which are not naturally in his capability. Chovos Halevavos gives us different examples: if one stole or cheated someone else but does not have the funds to pay him back, Hashem will give him the necessary funds and the ability to appease the victim. If one caused his friend damage to the body or his fame and the victim doesn't want to forgive him, Hashem will instill in the victim's heart feelings of appeasement and love for the fellow that hurt him [see Chovos Halevavos for more examples]. We see once again the great love and yearning Hashem has for his children, and we can merit this closeness, especially on Yom Kippur by recognizing this and trying to do our part.

May Hashem help us tap into the power of this awesome day, and give us the wisdom to reciprocate and thus merit fulfilling our duty on this great wedding day between Hashem and his children.  
Gamar Chasima Tovah.



# Teshuva and Yiras Hashem

*Rabbi Yehuda Silver*

A young man once visited the Lev Simcha, the Gerrer Rebbe. The Gerrer Rebbe asked him which Yeshiva he was learning. "Ohr Samech (the famed Baal Teshuva Yeshiva)," he replied. "But," he added quickly, "I am not a Baal Teshuva." Without missing a beat, the Lev Simcha asked, "And why not?!"

Teshuva is more than mere repentance. Rav Dessler quotes the Reishis Chochma, a mussar work written by R' Eliyahu de Vidas in the 16th century, that Teshuva and Yiras Hashem, fear of Hashem is synonymous. The question that begs to be asked is, in what way are they the same?

The root of the word 'Yirah', fear, is 'Ri'eyah', to see. Rav Dessler explains that Yiras Hashem comes from the ability to 'see' Hashem. Even though Hashem isn't physical, we can 'see' and feel Hashem when we cultivate a close relationship with Him and thereby Hashem rests within us and we could 'see' and feel Hashem's Presence. This revelation is called the Shechina, our perception of Hashem's Presence. When we experience Hashem's Presence, we are afraid to sin. Just as one would not sin if his friend is watching, we refrain from sinning when we realize Hashem's Presence.

A person who sinned forgot the Presence of Hashem and succumbed to temptation. Teshuva is strengthening the awareness of Hashem's Presence. His new awareness causes him to regret the past and will help him overcome his future temptations.

Usually, it takes a lot of work to build this realization of Hashem's Presence within us, but during the Rosh HaShanah, Aseres Yemei Teshuva, and Yom Kippur season it comes easy. We don't need to draw ourselves near to Hashem, Hashem comes close to us. We can feel and see Hashem's Presence if we allow ourselves to focus on Him. May we all feel Hashem's Presence, build our Yiras Hashem, and thereby do a Teshuva Sheleima. Ksiva V'chasima Tova!

# Warding off the Winds

*Rabbi Doniel Schon*

The Gemara in Maseches Sukkah 37b records the following dispute

"Rabbi Yochanan said – one waives (the lulav) in the four directions for the sake of Hashem, whom the four directions of the world are His, and he waives it up and down for the sake of Hashem whom the heavens and earth are His.

In the West (Eretz Yisroel) they taught Rabbi Chama Bar Ukva said in the name of R' Yossi the son of Chanina – one waives (the lulav) in the four directions to ward off harmful winds and one waives it up and down to ward off damaging dews."

Rabbi Yechezkel Abramsky asked – exactly how are we to understand that the waiving of the lulav in the six directions works to ward off bad winds and dews? Is this simple action of waiving the lulav sufficient to remove damaging winds and dews, or is there perhaps more behind this mitzvah?

Rabbi Abramsky answers that when one waives the lulav in the six directions, one should optimally have in mind that he is thanking Hashem for showering him with goodness from all six directions. This is particularly apropos to the holiday of Sukkos, which is referred to as zman simchaseinu, the time of our rejoicing when farmers channel the joy of their fall harvest towards love of Hashem. This sentiment of gratitude to Hashem is so powerful, that it has the ability to prevent evil winds and dews. So, in fact, it is not the mere action of shaking the lulav in the six directions that ward off bad winds and dew, rather it is the thoughts and feeling of gratitude to Hashem while shaking the lulav in the six directions that is the true merit.

With this understanding, perhaps we can suggest that in fact there is not a dispute at all in the abovementioned gemara. Rabbi Yochanan mentioned that while waiving the lulav in the six directions one should have in mind that he is waving for the sake of Hashem who rules over the six directions. When a person contemplates and meditates on this idea that Hashem controls everything in the world, one will be filled with a deep sense of gratitude to Hashem for all the good in his life. As a result of the proper performance of the mitzva, one will also merit to be spared from harmful winds and dews.

# Rejoicing When We Are At The Top

*Rabbi Dovid Yehuda Katz*

The Gemora in Maseches Sukkah (daf 48a) learns from the passuk "והיית אך שמח" ("and you will be only joyous") that there is an 8th day of Yom Tov, which we know as Shemini Atzeres. The commentaries ask how can it be that we learn an extra day of Yom Tov, from the passuk of "והיית אך שמח" if the word "אך" means "only", which would usually mean to exclude a day, and not to add a day?

Rashi answers this question by saying that we learn Shemini Atzeres from the words of "והיית" and "שמח" and not from the word "אך".

However, the Vilna Goan gives a different answer to this question. He explains that really Shemini Atzeres was already known to us as a Yom Tov, however, if not for the passuk of "והיית אך שמח" we would have thought that Shemini Atzeres would also have the mitzvah of Sukkah and Lulav just like Sukkos, but from the drasha of "והיית אך שמח" we exclude the mitzvah of sukkah and lulav from Shminei Atzeres.

It therefore comes out according to the Vilna Goan, that the drasha of "והיית אך שמח" comes to exclude and not include, because it excludes Shemini Atzeres from the mitzvos of Lulav and Sukkah.

The Medrash in Shuir Hashuirim, understands that the passuk in tehillim of

"זה היום עשה ה' נגילה ושמחה בו" ("this day Hashem made, let us rejoice and be happy on it"), refers to Shemini Atzeres. The Medrash quotes Rabbi Avin, that from this passuk of "זה היום עשה ה' נגילה ושמחה בו" we do not know in what the simcha is, is the simcha in ה or in the yom tov? However, Rabbi Avin says that after Shlomo Hamelech came along and explained "נגילה ושמחה בך" ("let us rejoice and be happy in you") we know that the simcha is in Hashem.

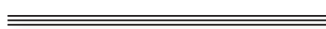
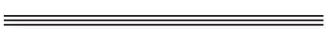
Rav Eliyahu Borach Finkel explains that the reason why there is a mitzvah of simcha on yom tov is not because this is what is left over from Sukkos, rather this mitzva is the focus and goal of the day.

Rav Eliyahu Borach Finkel explains further, that just like Sukkos has special mitzvos, which are lulav and sukkah, and pesach has a special mitzvah of matza, so too, Shemini Atzeres has a special mitzvah of simcha.

Rav Eliyahu Borach Finkel explains further, that the other Yomim Tovim (besides for Shavuos), need special mitzvos to create the simcha and connection with Hashem. However, the Yom Tov of Shemini Atzeres is so great, that we do not need a special mitzvah, to bring that simcha and connection with Hashem.

We can explain that the greatness of the day of Shemini Atzeres comes from the build up of the days before it. We start off with a month of Ellul, where we prepare ourselves for Rosh Hashanah, which is the day we are judged. After Rosh Hashanah we go through Aseres Yimei Teshuva and Yom Kippur, where we do teshuva and get forgiven for our aveiros. Once we are clean from our aveiros, we leave our homes, to be under the shelter of Hashem. We also wave our lulav and esrog, to demonstrate that we merited a favorable judgment . Then comes Hoshana Rabbah, and the decree that we got on Yom Kippur becomes permanent. Finally we reach Shemini Atzeres where we are at the peak, where there is no separation between us and Hashem. At this point, we can understand why Shemini Atzeres does not need a special mitzvah to connect us to Hashem, because we are already connected to Hashem, even without a special mitzvah.

May we all be Zoche, to climb all these levels of greatness, that these yomim tovim hold within them, and when we are at the top, may we rejoice and feel that connection with Hashem.









For additional information, to request a chavrusa and study the topic of your choice, or to set up a new shiur please contact Rabbi Schon at [dschon@northeastkollel.org](mailto:dschon@northeastkollel.org)

## Sunday

9:30 am Gemara Kidushin Shiur (R' Bauman)  
9:30 am Yorucha (R' Schon )

## Monday

9:45 am Shabbos Chabura (R' Schon)  
8:00 pm Semichas Chaver at B'nai Israel  
(R' Schon)

## Tuesday

9:45 am Shabbos Chabura (R' Schon)  
8:30 pm Choshen Mishpat Shiur  
Beit Harambam area(Rabbi Schon)  
8:45 pm Night Seder Chabura

## Wednesday

10:00 am Shabbos Chabura (R' Schon)  
8:30 pm Exploring Topics from DafYomi  
(Zoom - Rabbi Burr)  
8:45 pm Night Seder Chabura

## Thursday

9:45 am Shabbos Chabura (R' Schon)  
9:15 pm Parsha Chabura (R' Burr)