

ROSH HASHANA 5787

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Entering Rosh Hashana "Poor"

R' Brian Frankel

The Gemara in Rosh Hashanah (16b) teaches:
כל שנה שרשה בתחלתה מתעשרת בסופה -
"Any year that begins poor at its beginning
becomes rich at its end."

The Gemara derives this from the word
מראשית, which is written without an alef and
can therefore be read as מרשית, from the
word rash, meaning poor.

Rashi explains that "poor" refers to humility. A
person should enter Rosh Hashanah feeling
as though he has no merits to rely upon,
pleading for Hashem's mercy like a poor
person asking for charity.

But how can a Jew honestly feel poor in
mitzvos? Regarding shiluach haken, the
Torah promises long life. Rashi explains that
if such an enormous reward is given for a
seemingly simple mitzvah, certainly every
mitzvah carries tremendous reward. Chazal
even teach, שכר מצוה בהאי עלמא ליכא—this
world cannot contain the true reward of a
mitzvah.

If so, aren't we spiritually wealthy? Every word
of Torah, every time we put on tefillin, and
every act of chesed makes us incredibly rich.
Why should we enter Rosh Hashanah feeling
poor?

Dovid HaMelech says, ולך ה' חסד כי אתה, "To You, Hashem,
belongs kindness, for You repay each person
according to his deeds." Why is repayment
called kindness? If we earned the reward,
shouldn't it simply be payment?

The Ohr HaChaim explains that Olam Haba
is something we earn, yet at the same time
it is a gift. Our finite actions could never truly
earn infinite, eternal reward. What Hashem
gives us is far greater than anything we
could earn.

Furthermore, everything we use to perform
mitzvos comes from Hashem. The Midrash
asks: Who puts up a mezuzah before
Hashem gives him a house? Who gives
tzedakah before Hashem gives him money?
Who performs a bris before Hashem gives
him a child?

Even our ability to overcome the yetzer
hara comes from Hashem. Chazal teach
that without Hashem's help, we could never
overcome it.

This is how we enter Rosh Hashanah "poor."
Not because our mitzvos are insignificant—
each one has infinite value—but because
we recognize that even our greatest
accomplishments are possible only because
of Hashem's gifts and kindness.

Instead of standing before Hashem saying,
"Look what I deserve," we say, "How can I
ever repay You for everything You have given
me?"

That is the meaning of "a year that begins
poor ends rich." When we enter Rosh
Hashanah with humility and gratitude,
recognizing that everything comes from
Hashem, we can be zoche to a year filled with
His rachamim, bracha, and abundant chesed.

Rabbi Akiva at Arches National Park

R' Judah Gross

Walking through Arches National Park, I
came across a sign explaining how one of
its massive rock formations was formed.
According to geologists, swirling water
carrying sand and small pebbles slowly wore
away at the rock, eventually leaving behind
the enormous arch we see today.

The sign begins with a fascinating
observation: "Magnificent results sometimes
come from very humble beginnings."

Reading those words, I couldn't help thinking
that these geologists were mechaven to a
yesod that Rabbi Akiva taught us almost two
thousand years ago.

The Avos D'Rabbi Nosson tells us that when
Rabbi Akiva was forty years old and had not
yet learned Torah, he saw a stone that had
been hollowed out by constantly dripping
water. He wondered how water, so soft
and seemingly powerless, could make an
impression on hard stone.

Rabbi Akiva realized that it wasn't one drop
that made the hole. It was drop after drop,
again and again. If something as soft as
water could eventually penetrate stone, then
surely Torah could penetrate his heart. At
forty, Rabbi Akiva began learning Torah and
ultimately became the great Tanna we know
as Rabbi Akiva.

The National Park Service sign is essentially
teaching the same lesson on a much larger
scale. Water and tiny grains of sand seem
insignificant compared to a massive wall of
sandstone. Yet, repeated over and over, they
can leave an enormous impression.

Where I would part company with the sign is
not with the process it describes, but with the
assumption of how long the formation must
have taken and how it originally came into
existence.

The Kuzari gives us an important perspective.
Adam HaRishon was created as a fully
developed adult. He never experienced the
years of childhood and growth that normally
produce an adult. HaKadosh Baruch Hu
created him in a mature state.

Had a scientist examined Adam on the day he
was created, everything he observed would
have indicated an adult who had undergone
years of growth. His observations would
have been correct, but his conclusion about
Adam's history would have been wrong.

Perhaps we can apply the same idea here.
HaKadosh Baruch Hu created a mature world.
The erosion process described on the sign
certainly occurs and might naturally require
an enormous amount of time. But that does
not prove that this particular formation came
into existence that way. HaKadosh Baruch
Hu could have created it in its mature form
during the six days of Bereishis.

Whatever disagreement one may have about the age of these rocks, the lesson written into them is unmistakable: Small actions, repeated consistently, can accomplish what appears impossible.

This message is especially relevant during Elul. We may wonder, How am I really going to change? Rabbi Akiva teaches us that change does not have to happen overnight. One small kabbalah, one improvement in our avodas Hashem, repeated consistently, can make a lasting impression. Just as drop after drop can penetrate the hardest stone, small, steady changes can penetrate our hearts and ultimately transform who we are.

WEEKLYTIDBITS

Seeing the Full Picture

Rav Yitzchak Berkovits explains that at times we see a child eating a lollipop, and when it falls on the floor, he picks it up and puts it right back into his mouth. The child does this because he doesn't see the full picture.

When we, as adults, fall into doing an aveira, true regret means seeing the full picture. We can think afterward: Yes, what I did may have been enjoyable, but was it truly worth it? How did I feel afterward? Did it pull me into other things that left me feeling disappointed in myself?

Instead of focusing only on the moment of enjoyment, we look at the entire experience and recognize where it led us. We can then use those feelings to help us overcome the challenge when it comes up again in the future.

Consider Yourself a Son

The Nesivos Sholom quotes tzaddikim who explain that when we say, "היום יעמיד" *today, He will establish*, "אם כבנים אם כעבדים" *either as sons or as slaves*, this itself is part of our judgment.

When a person commits himself to being a son to Hashem and truly feels that closeness, then Hashem treats him with the compassion and love of a father toward his child, regardless of whether the child is always matzliach in doing his Father's will.

But if a person does not consider himself a son, but rather an eved, then he is judged like an eved. According to how we view our relationship with Hashem and what we set in our hearts, that is how we are judged.

Let's take the opportunity to choose to see ourselves as Hashem's children and be

zoche to be judged as a child who is deeply connected to and loved by his Father.

Shabbos: Our Kallah, Our Potent Advocate

When Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbos, Chazal instituted that we do not blow the shofar. Why would we give up such a powerful advocate on Yom HaDin?

The Aruch LaNer gives a mashal of a man standing trial before the king. His wife is close to the king and can plead on his behalf. If he has honored her, she will advocate for him; if he has mistreated her, her presence can work against him.

So too, Shabbos is our kallah and can become our greatest advocate. The Ben Ish Chai explains that on Shabbos, "התיקון...נעשה מאיליו מכח קדושת השבת" *the rectification...was done by its own power through the holiness of Shabbos* itself accomplishes what the shofar accomplishes.

Perhaps our avodah this Rosh Hashanah is to commit to appreciating our Shabbos Kallah more deeply—anticipating and cherishing this Matana Tova throughout the week. Chazal teach that even such inward turning carries extraordinary weight, as stated in Kiddushin 49b: "על מנת שאני צדיק, אפילו רשע גמור – מקודשת, שמה הרהר תשובה בדעתו." *May this zechus advocate for us on Yom HaDin.*

WEEKLYSCENARIO

Chazal teach the concept of "נהמא דכיסופא" – "bread of shame": we don't want everything handed to us; we want to earn it through our own effort. But you wonder: Do I really want to work so hard? Why can't doing the right thing be easier? Why does growth always have to be a struggle?

Something to think about:

The word yakar usually means valuable, but it can also mean difficult, as we find in the pasuk, "יקר בעיני ה' המותה לחסידי". There is a connection between the two: the things that are most valuable in life usually take hard work and effort.

Rav Yitzchak Berkovits gives a practical way to appreciate this. Think about how you feel after giving in to temptation compared to how you feel after struggling to overcome it. Which gives you a deeper feeling of satisfaction?

We see this in every area of life. Lehavdil, athletes train for years, putting in tremendous

effort to reach their goals. When they finally succeed, the hard work makes the accomplishment that much more meaningful. They would never trade away all those years of effort for an effortless victory.

The same is true in our avodas Hashem. When our goal is to become the best version of ourselves and grow closer to Hashem, the struggle is part of what makes the accomplishment so valuable.

HALACHOS OF ROSH HASHANA

by R' Ephraim Weller

1. Erev Rosh Hashanah

1.1) On Erev Rosh Hashanah the minhag is to increase the amount of Selichos that we say. Tachanun is said at the end of Selichos (even if one finishes Selichos after alos hashachar, and even though it is not said at Shacharis).

1.1) The shofar is not blown after Shacharis on Erev Rosh Hashanah.

1.2) The minhag was to fast on Erev Rosh Hashanah. Nowadays many have the minhag to fast until chatzos.

1.3) Many have the minhag to daven at kivrei tzadikim on Erev Rosh Hashanah. Care should be taken to daven to Hashem in the zechus of the tzadikim (and not to daven to the tzadik himself).

1.4) The minhag is to go to the mikvah on Erev Rosh Hashanah. This should preferably be done from one hour before midday and on.

1.5) It is appropriate to shave and get a haircut in honor of Yom Tov in order to show that we are confident that we will receive a positive judgment.

2. Hataras Nedarim

2.1) The minhag is to do התרת נדרים before Rosh Hashanah. It is imperative that one understands what he is saying during the actual התרת נדרים process.

2.2) The current minhag is to do התרת נדרים on Erev Rosh Hashanah. However, it may be done the night before, if needed.

2.3) Relatives may be part of the same Beis Din for התרת נדרים.

2.4) The minhag is for the Beis Din to sit and the one saying התרת נדרים to stand. This is not מעכב.

2.5) Most women do not recite התרת נדרים. Some men include their wives in their התרת נדרים.

2.6) One who remembers a specific neder

that he made during the past year and would like to be matir that neder should not rely on the התרת נדרים said on Erev Rosh Hashanah. Rather, he should make a specific hatarah on that neder (or at least specify that he is including this neder in the hatarah of Erev Rosh Hashanah; consult a Rav for details).

3. Minhagim of Rosh Hashanah

3.1) When lighting the Yom Tov candles, the brachah of shehechyanu is recited (on both nights).

3.2) After davening on the first night of Rosh Hashanah, people should greet each other with a brachah for a good year–**לשנה טובה**–תכתב ותחתם (refer to a machzor for the exact text of the brachah for a male, female, or for many people).

3.3) One is obligated to have two seudos on each day of Rosh Hashanah.

3.4) The minhag is to dip every person's piece of bread that they will be receiving from the lechem mishneh into honey. Most dip the challah into honey instead of salt. (Some dip the challah into both honey and salt, while others at least have salt on the table.)

3.5) The minhag is not to eat any bitter or sour foods on Rosh Hashanah.

3.6) Foods that have bitter or sour ingredients may be eaten on Rosh Hashanah as long as the overall taste of the dish is not bitter.

3.7) One should refrain from eating **אגוזים** on Rosh Hashanah. Even though **אגוז** only refers to walnuts/filberts, many have the minhag to refrain from eating all nuts on Rosh Hashanah. Some do not even eat peanuts (which are legumes).

3.8) Many permit using nuts as an ingredient if the dish does not have a strong nutty taste.

3.9) Ya'aleh V'yavo is added in bentching. There is a discussion in the Poskim whether one who forgot Ya'aleh V'yavo needs to repeat bentching.

3.10) It is proper to learn a perek of mishnayos from Meseches Rosh Hashanah at each of the four seudos.

3.11) One should try not to sleep on the first day of Rosh Hashanah. One who is tired may rest after chatzos. On the second day of Rosh Hashanah one may rest if necessary.

3.12) When the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls out on Shabbos (like this year), one must make sure to eat Seudah Shlishis, the third meal. However, since it is also Erev Yom Tov of the second day, one should not start a meal after the tenth halachic hour of the day. On Rosh Hashanah when davening finishes

late, it becomes difficult to eat two meals before this time.

3.13) Practically speaking, there are two ways one can eat the Seudah Shlishis in this instance. One can break up the morning meal into two. Meaning, at a certain point in the meal, one should bentch, then have a short break and take a stroll. Then one can wash again and continue the meal. Alternatively, later in the day (even after the tenth halachic hour), one can wash and eat a small amount of bread (one slice of bread or so).

4. Simanim

4.1) The minhag is to eat different simanim (foods whose names connote brachah) on the first night of Rosh Hashanah. The purpose of this minhag is to help us daven for a **שנה טובה**. Many eat simanim on the second night as well.

4.2) There are different minhagim regarding which siman should be eaten first. Some hold that the brachah of העץ should be made on the date since it is one of the **שבעת המינים**. Others hold that the brachah should be made on the apple since it is chaviv. Everyone should follow their own minhag. (The more common minhag is to eat the apple first.)

4.3) Take a fruit first (either apple or date), recite the brachah of העץ and take a bite. Afterwards say the יהי רצון and then eat some more. For all subsequent simanim, say the יהי רצון first and then eat the siman (the rest of the simanim may be eaten in any order).

4.4) A brachah is not said on the simanim that are vegetables.

4.5) There is a difference in minhagim regarding saying the Name of Hashem in the יהי רצון. The common minhag is to say the שם ה'.

4.6) One who needs to make a shehechyanu on any of the simanim on the first night (for example on a pomegranate), should make the actual brachah and not rely on the shehechyanu of Kiddush.

4.7) The actual eating of the siman does not cause good mazel nor does it have any positive effect. Therefore, יהי רצון may be said even without actually eating the food, as long as the siman is visible.

5. Tefillah

5.1) From Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur, **המלך הקדוש** is said instead of **הקל** at the end of the third brachah of shemoneh esrei.

5.2) One who said **הקל** instead of

המלך הקדוש must repeat shemoneh esrei. However, if immediately after he said **הקל** he realized and said **המלך הקדוש**, he does not need to repeat shemoneh esrei.

5.3) There are those who hold that if at maariv on Rosh Hashanah one said **הקל**, he does not need to repeat shemoneh esrei. Consult a Rav if applicable.

5.4) One who is unsure if he said **המלך הקדוש** on Rosh Hashanah, as long as he knows that he said the whole tefillah of **וּבְכַן וְכוּ**, he does not need to repeat shemoneh esrei.

5.5) One who left out the additions of **וּבְכַן תַּן** (rather, he just said the third brachah of **פַּחַד** as normal) does not need to repeat shemoneh esrei.

5.6) In all the tefillos (and in the night-time kiddush) we say **וּתְתֵן לָנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ בִּאֲהָבָה אֶת יוֹם הַזְכָּרוֹן הַזֶּה יוֹם תְּרוּעָה מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ וְכוּ**. When Rosh Hashanah coincides with Shabbos, we say **וּתְתֵן לָנוּ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ בִּאֲהָבָה אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת הַזֶּה יוֹם זְכוּרֹן תְּרוּעָה בִּאֲהָבָה וְכוּ**. One who accidentally said **יוֹם זְכוּרֹן תְּרוּעָה** during the week, or **יוֹם תְּרוּעָה** on Shabbos, does not need to repeat shemoneh esrei (or kiddush).

5.7) The ending of the fourth brachah of shemoneh esrei on Rosh Hashanah (in all tefillos) is **מִלְךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ מְקֻדָּשׁ**. The poskim discuss what the halacha is if one accidentally said **יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַזְכָּרוֹן מְקֻדָּשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל** (meaning he just said **יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַזְכָּרוֹן**). **וְהַזְמִינִים**.

5.8) When Rosh Hashanah falls out on Shabbos, one should end the fourth brachah **מִמֶּלֶךְ הַשַּׁבָּת וְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַזְכָּרוֹן**. One who mentioned Shabbos in middle of the brachah but left it out in the ending of the brachah (meaning he just said **יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַזְכָּרוֹן**) should not repeat shemoneh esrei.

5.9) One should stand when the aron is open throughout davening. However, one who is weak or is having a hard time standing may sit.

5.10) When one finishes shemoneh esrei, he takes three steps back. During the rest of the year, one should remain in that place until kedushah, and then he should walk three steps back to his place. However, on Rosh Hashanah, when it will take a long time until the chazzan reaches kedushah, this halachah does not apply.

5.11) Even one who normally stands for chazaras hashatz may sit while piyutim are being recited.

6. Tekias Shofar

6.1) Men are obligated to hear the shofar on

Rosh Hashanah. **מִדְּאוֹרֵייתָא** one must hear nine blasts of the shofar. **מִדְּאוֹרֵייתָא** one must hear thirty shofar blasts. The minhag from the time of the Rishonim is to hear 100 קולות.

6.2) From the time the brachos are said until the end of all the tekios, one should not speak any words of batalah.

6.3) One who talked between the brachos and the tekios must make the brachos again. One who talked throughout the tekios does not need to make the brachos again.

6.4) The brachah of shehechyanu is said on tekias shofar on both days of **ראש השנה**.

6.5) One should listen carefully to the brachos and have kavanah to be yotzei the mitzvah of tekias shofar (**ברוך הוא וברוך שמו** is not said by the brachos). The proper kavanah to have is to think – I am about to fulfill the will of Hashem and this is what He wants me to do.

6.6) One should stand during the brachos and for all the tekios.

6.7) One must make sure to hear the entire tekiah from beginning to end (even if the tekiah is longer than the shiur).

6.8) The poskim discuss whether one who finished shemoneh esrei may learn or say Tehillim. Many are lenient. Many are lenient to say asher yatzar at this time as well.

6.9) Tekias Shofar is a מצות עשה שהזמן גרמא (a mitzvah bound by time); therefore, women are not obligated in it. However, women have taken upon themselves to hear thirty תקיעות.

6.10) There is a discussion whether eating before the tekios is permitted. One who feels that he needs to eat in order to have proper kavanah during tekias shofar and musaf may make Kiddush and eat. Women are allowed to eat before hearing shofar if needed.

6.11) When davening nusach sefard, the shofar is blown in middle of the silent shemoneh esrei, at the end of **מלכיות זכרונות** and **ושופרות**. One who reaches this point should wait for tekias shofar before continuing. One who is behind the pace of the chazzan when the shofar is being blown should pause his shemoneh esrei and listen to the shofar. He should then continue immediately from where he is up to.

7. Tashlich

7.1) After Minchah on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, the minhag is to walk to a river (or any body of water) and say Tashlich. It is best to say Tashlich by a river that has fish.

7.2) Women should also say Tashlich.

7.3) Tashlich may be said before Minchah as well (it may even be said after shkiah).

7.4) One should not throw bread or any food to the fish on Rosh Hashanah.

7.5) One is allowed to bring his machzor back from Tashlich even if he knows that he will not use it for the rest of the day.

7.6) Tashlich may even be said throughout the entire **עשרת ימי תשובה** (even until **הושענא רבה**).

7.7) The poskim discuss if Tashlich should be said on Shabbos. The current common minhag is not to say Tashlich on Shabbos. Therefore, when the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls out on Shabbos, many say Tashlich on the second day of Rosh Hashanah.

8. The Second Night of Rosh Hashanah

8.1) One cannot prepare for the second night of Rosh Hashanah until after tzeis hakoachavim. Additionally, since the second night of Rosh Hashanah is Motzaei Shabbos this year, one must recite havdalah before beginning to prepare. One who is not davening Maariv must say **ברוך המבדיל בין קודש לקודש** before beginning any preparations for the second night. Women must say this as well.

8.2) When the second night of Rosh Hashanah falls out on Motzaei Shabbos, **ותודיענו** is inserted into shemoneh esrei (towards the beginning of the fourth brachah). One who did not say it should not repeat shemoneh esrei (but he must say **ברוך המבדיל בין קודש לקודש** before beginning any preparations for the second night).

8.3) There are different minhagim whether people should greet each other with **לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם** on the second night of Rosh Hashanah. The more common minhag is not to.

8.4) The brachah of shehechyanu is said at hadlakas neiros on the second night. It is best if a woman can wear new clothing or have a new fruit near the candles so that the brachah of shehechyanu can go on it as well.

8.5) At Kiddush, the brachah of shehechyanu is said. The minhag is to wear a new piece of clothing or to have a new fruit on the table while one is saying the brachah of shehechyanu.

8.6) When making the brachah of shehechyanu, one should have in mind both the new fruit or clothing and the Yom Tov.

8.7) There is a difference in minhagim when to eat the shehechyanu fruit. Some eat it right after Kiddush (even before hamotzi), while others wait until after hamotzi. (The more common minhag is to wait until after

hamotzi.)
8.8) This year, the second night of Rosh Hashanah falls out on Motzaei Shabbos. Therefore, **יקנה"ז** is said. This stands for **יקנה"ז**, which is the order of the brachos that are said in kiddush. First the brachah of **הגפן** on the wine is made, then **קידוש היים**, followed by **בורא מאורי האש**, then the brachah of **קודש לקודש**, and finally shehechyanu.

8.9) The minhag is to use the candles that were lit in honor of Yom Tov as the havdalah candle.

8.10) Generally, the candle used for havdalah should be of at least two wicks. There is a discussion in the poskim if it is permissible to momentarily put together two candles while saying the brachah of **בורא מאורי האש**. In practice, many buy a candle that has two wicks in it and use it as one of the Yom Tov candles. If this was not done, one can bring two candles very close to each other without actually putting them together and make the brachah on them.

8.11) Many do not look at their fingernails at the brachah of **בורא מאורי האש** (even though they do so all other motzaei shabbasos).

8.12) One who ended the brachah **המבדיל בין קודש לקודש** instead of **קודש לחול** must repeat havdalah.

EREV ROSH HASHANA	6:54	Candle Lighting
FRIDAY	7:12	Shekiya
ROSH HASHANA	6:34	Neitz
SHABBOS	9:43	Kriyas Shema (Gra)
	12:52	Chatzos
	7:10	Shekiya
	8:01	Candle Lighting
ROSH HASHANA	6:35	Neitz
SUNDAY	9:43	Kriyas Shema (Gra)
	12:51	Chatzos
	7:08	Shekiya
	8:20	72 Minutes

RIDDLE ME THIS

Can you find the only three passukim in the Torah that refer to Hashem with the word **Melech**?

LAST ISSUE - Q: Can you find the 9 times the word "mikeitz" appears in the Torah? What is common about all of them? A: Each instance, it is followed by a specified amount of time: 1. "vayeichi mikeitz yamim rabbim" (Bereishis 4:3). // 2. "vayeichi mikeitz arba'im yom," 40 days after the ark settles on Mount Ararat, Noah sends the raven (Bereishis 8:6). // 3. "mikeitz eser shanim l'shevet" - "10 years after settling in Eretz Canaan, Sara gives Hagar to Avraham" (Bereishis 16:3). // 4. "vayeichi mikeitz shnatayim yamim" - "two years after the butler is released, Paroh has his two dreams" (Bereishis 41:1). // 5. "vayeichi mikeitz shloshim shana v'arba meot shana" - "and 430 years after the Bris Bein Habetarim, the Bai Yisrael leave Mitzrayim" (Shemos 12:41). // 6. "mikeitz arbaim yom" - "40 days after they are sent, the meraglim return" (Bamidbar 13:25). // 7. "mikeitz arbaim yom" - "after being on Har Sinai for 40 days, Moshe receives the first set of luchos" (Devarim 9:11). // 8. "mikeitz sheva shanim" - "after seven years, shemita is observed" (Devarim 15:1). // 9. "mikeitz sheva shanim" - "after seven years, the mitzvah of hakhel is performed" (Devarim 31:10).