

ROSH HASHANA 5787 - THE EINHORN FAMILY EDITION



VOLUME 16, ISSUE 35

1ST OF TISHREI, 5787/ SEPTEMBER 12TH, 2026

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FOR

**טובה גיטל בת
אסתר**

GEDULD

**BY MR. STEVEN NEUMAN,
DEDICATING AS A ZECHUS FOR**

**רפואה שלימה במהרה לכל חולי
ישראל**

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- Plus: Stories, Quotes, Insights into Tzom Gedalia, the Weekly Mitzvah, and much more!

ROSH HASHANA – MAKING SENSE OF THE CONFUSED SATAN

A man smelling strongly of hard liquor wakes up in a police station, dazed and confused.

He asks the first police officer he sees, “Why am I here?”

“For drinking,” replies the officer.

“That’s great!” exclaims the man, “when do we start?”

We live in a generation where clarity is hard to come by, and confusion abounds. There are many reasons why we can get foggy. For one, there is simply an information overload and too many voices competing for our attention. Also, many people have a lot of stress due to numerous obligations and overall anxiety, leading to a lack of focus or sleep (which affects memory/cognition). Finally, lifestyle choices can contribute to confusion, like alcohol use, medication side effects, or other health issues.

While many of us face these challenges and must navigate confusion, there is one being that has no such issues: the Satan. His job is relatively straight-forward: get people to sin and then prosecute them in front of Hashem. Yet, we find that, somehow, on Rosh Hashana/Judgment Day, when we blow the Shofar so many times, the Satan gets confused when he hears the sounds (Rosh Hashana 16a). This lack of clarity causes him to lose track of the proceedings and renders him unable to prosecute effectively. The obvious question: how does one so full of fire and fury, fearing no one, suddenly feel discombobulated on Rosh Hashana - just on account of the shofar?

The **Sefer Ginas Ha’egoz** offers a fascinating answer. What does the Satan do the rest of the year? He puts us to sleep and makes us not think, as the Mesilas Yesharim writes, “being busy and harried stops us from thinking about Avodas Hashem.” We end up not doing the Mitzvos we should and doing some Aveiros, and then on Rosh Hashana, he reports to Hashem how much we have fallen short and is near certain victory. The Shofar then is blown multiple times, and as the Rambam writes, people get woken up and start thinking, “Oh no, what have I done?” Then, people will do Teshuvah, and all his year’s work will go down the drain. So, the Satan is disappointed and demoralized, but why is he confused on Rosh Hashana? **Rabbi Akiva Eiger**, ZT”L, discusses a brilliant understanding of the Satan’s confusion.

The Gemara (Yoma 86b) states that one who does Teshuvah out of fear turns intentional sins into accidental ones; one who does Teshuvah out of love for Hashem makes their intentional sins transformed into Mitzvos/actual merits. Satan’s game plan was to bring all our sins to Hashem on Rosh Hashana, but when many people woke up after the Shofar blast and did Teshuvah, and many did so out of love, now the Satan’s sack of sins will be turning into Mitzvos. The Satan is therefore confused and must be thinking to himself: “Should I bring all these charges against the people, or will these sins boomerang against me when they are turned into Mitzvos?” It’s not that he worked on something that didn’t work out in the end; rather, he worked on something counterproductive, and that blew up in his face.

Rabbi Shraga Feivel Zimmerman teaches that our task is to wake up as soon as possible, and stop and think, as Yirmiyahu Hanavi states (Eichah 3:40): “*Let us search and examine our ways and let us return to Hashem.*” When we do that, Hashem draws close to us, and we revert to our previous state and throw off the Satan’s plot. Recognizing Hashem’s kingship is the first step in the process, as we must realize before Whom we erred: our King and Father who loves us so much. This, in turn, will rekindle the love for our Creator, the feeling of letting Him down, and the return process that will, B’eH, merit us being written and sealed for a good year.

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In merit of seeing Yiddishe Nachas and Yiras Shamayim for all future generations. May we continue to be zoche to see our family grow in Avodas Hashem and Shmiras HaMitzvos. Dedicated in honor of Nechama Shulamit, Zacharia Isaac, Chava Ettel, David Moshe. Also, wishing a happy birthday to Shimon – until 120 years in good health!



SHALOM BAYIS AND ROSH HASHANA BY R'YITZ GREENFIELD **CROWNING HASHEM KING THROUGH OUR MARRIAGES**

What is the mission of Rosh Hashana? According to **Rav Yitzchak Hutner**, ZT”L, (in Pachad Yitzchok) the *Kedushas Hayom* - holiness of the day - is Malchus, Kingship, when we crown Hashem our king. Until Adam was created, Hashem was a moshel (ruler) with no one to accept His rule. Once Adam was created, with his power of free choice, he chose to accept Hashem as his King. We crown Hashem our King every Rosh Hashana. When we say the *Shir Shel Yom* each Friday, we commemorate that Adam was the first one to crown Hashem King on the first Friday. How did Hashem give Adam the power of free choice, which he used to crown Hashem King?

We are taught (Bereishis 2:7) that Hashem formed Man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; then, Man became a living personality. Hashem gave Adam life through his head (nostrils). How exactly do we crown Hashem our king? We take a Shofar, and we use the breath that brought us to life, and we give our breath back to Hashem as we blow into it. This is the theme of Rosh Hashana: bring Hashem into this world and crown Him as our personal King. How can we apply this message to our marriages?

When our spouse makes a mistake and crashes our car; when a bill is not paid on time and we have a penalty; when our spouse doesn’t show up on time; when our child is involved with things that get us annoyed, and we feel our spouse is at fault, we have a choice. We can choose to only see the situation in front of us and point fingers, or we can take a deep breath and recognize Hashem is the one in charge. The past happened EXACTLY the way Hashem wanted it. We can find a time to sit down with our spouse and figure out solutions, so we are doing our *Hishtadlus* (effort).

To blame people is the opposite of crowning Hashem King. Instead of seeing our challenges as unfortunate events, let’s strive to look beneath the surface and see the opportunity for growth. A crashed car can lead us to appreciate our health. An overdue bill can lead us to appreciate all the paid bills. A late spouse can lead us to appreciate being married. A misbehaving child can lead us to spend more time with him or her and answer the silent call for closeness and connection.

This Rosh Hashana, when we hear the Shofar, we have the opportunity to crown Hashem and accept that every situation we went through this past year and every situation we will find ourselves in this coming year is from Him and that He knows best. He is the Creator of the universe, and everything that happened to us and will happen to us is from our loving King. When we are ready to let go of our own judgment and trust Hashem, we take to heart the message of how we crown Hashem our King in our life. May Hashem bless our efforts with success and bless our homes with Shalom Bayis. May we be written in the Book of Life for a *Gut Yar* (good year)!



By now most of us have heard a version of the story, "The Husband and the Nuts on Rosh Hashana night". The husband returns home from shul, and the house is aglow with the kedushah/aura which is appropriate for the Yomim Noraim. After a wonderful meal, the wife serves her beautiful pastry dish covered in honey and walnuts for dessert. The activity comes to a screeching halt. In the heat of the moment, the husband rebukes his wife and reminds her that walnuts are אגוזים, which is the gematria of חטא (sin). Therefore, it's one of the many foods scrupulously avoided on Rosh Hashana. The dejected wife leaves the table visibly upset, embarrassed, and ashamed. Some versions of the story have a guest at the table rebuking the husband. Other versions have the Rav putting the husband in his place the next day, but the punchline is always the same. Not only is egoz gematria חטא, but חטא is also gematria חטא!

We know the story, but some don't realize that the minhag (custom) of not eating nuts actually starts with a Gemara (Kerisus 6a): "Abaye said, 'Now that simonim milsa (that simonim have significance), a person should accustom himself to eat gourds, fenugreeks, dates.'" From this Gemara, the Rishonim based most of our customs of what foods to eat or not to eat on Rosh Hashana. This includes the foods we eat in the beginning of the meal, on which we say "the yehi ratzons". The **Tur** codified the Halachah (see Siman 583), but he only mentions food to eat and does not discuss which ones to avoid. Food prohibitions, starting with sour and sharp foods like vinegar, lemons, etc. are credited by the **Kaf Hachaim** to a Teshuvah HaGeonim (period before the Rishonim). It seems from that Teshuvah that the practice of avoiding foods had been established even before the Geonim themselves. Nuts are mentioned by the **Darchei Moshe** (see the Rema) amongst the discussion by the **Beis Yosef** regarding other Rosh Hashana minhagim.

The Darchei Moshe brings two reasons for not eating nuts. The first reason is the famous gematria that nuts/egoz is חטא. (Note that the gematria is not exact, as אגוז is gematria 17 and חטא is gematria 18. The answer to this is that חטא is sometimes spelled without an Alef, which would make the gematria 17). According to most opinions, אגוז is a walnut. Therefore, it would be case specific to walnuts, not other nuts.

The other reason to avoid nuts, mentioned by the Darchei Moshe, is that nuts are known to cause phlegm or saliva, which would interrupt a person's davening. This reason has nothing to do with the siman or the gematria and would include other nuts besides walnuts. Based on this opinion, if the nuts were cooked, ground up or blended into other foods, there are some authorities that say there is no reason to avoid them. Additionally, the **Maharil** says this reason only applies to the Ba'al Tokeah before he begins blowing the Shofar. In the **Shulchan Aruch**, the mentioning of nuts is brought down only in the **Rema** and not by the Mechaber.

Based on this, it seems that Sefardim would not have the same prohibition against nuts. However, the **Kaf Hachaim**, a Sefardic Posek, does discuss the minhag of not eating nuts. Therefore, Sefardim should consult with their own Rav regarding what their personal practice should be. Because there are many reasons and opinions for avoiding nuts, Ashkenazim should also consult their Rav regarding their specific minhag.

Returning to the story of the husband and the nuts, it seems that the rebuke itself, besides being spot on, has a source in Halachah. The **Mishna Berura** quotes a **Chayei Adam** who reminds us to place all the minhagim of Rosh Hashana in context: "All of these matters are done for a siman tov (favorable sign). Therefore, it is a basic understanding that one should be very careful not to express anger during these days. Besides the severity of the sin of getting angry, for there to be a siman tov, one should have a happy heart, trusting in Hashem because he is doing teshuvah and good deeds".

As an end note, we refer to the sage advice of the Chayei Adam and the sharp rebuke given to the husband in our story. We acknowledge that all of us are looking for zechusim on this special day of Rosh Hashana. We are all being careful with our tefilos and paying attention to small details in our Avodas Hashem, but as we stand in judgment, we should realize that we are not standing in judgment alone. We are part of a Klal (bigger community). We each pass in front of Hashem individually, but only will find merit because of our connection to the Klal. Our merit in judgment will happen when we are careful with the kavod (honor) of our spouses, children, family members, and fellow Jews. Therefore, the minhag of refraining from nuts should not only remind us to distance ourselves from sin, but also enhance our *simchas hayom* by reminding us that we are Hashem's chosen people. We are His nation, and He is our king, like we stood together at Har Sinai as one nation and one heart.

We should all be zoche to a Kesivah V'chasima Tovah!

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SUGARY SAYING BY RAV MENACHEM LOMNER

"Wasting time is unacceptable!"

The **Shulchan Aruch** (583:3) brings down an interesting Halachah. The minhag is that we don't go to sleep on Rosh Hashana during the day. The **Mishna Berura** brings from the Yerushalmi that this is because when one sleeps on Rosh Hashana, his *mazel* (fortune) becomes "sleepy". Yet, the Mishna Berura says that wasting time is like sleeping! Instead, a strategy may be for one to take a small nap in the afternoon, and then one will be able to concentrate on learning the rest of their "free time".



**INSIGHTS INTO THE RAMCHAL'S CLASSIC
WORK, MESILAS YESHARIM
CH. 22, PART 11: ON SELF-EFFACEMENT**

*Summary: Last week, we started discussing the idea that humble people can tolerate insult and not respond in kind (or at all). This is quite challenging but comes with tremendous benefits and blessings from Hashem. Now, the **Ramchal** gives us an example from the Torah of a sage so unassuming that he was willing to suffer shame and pain in order not to cause a marital disturbance.*

The Ramchal writes: “Our sages told us about the great humility of Bava ben Buta: ‘A certain Babylonian went up to Israel and took a wife. ‘Cook for me two hooves’, he requested; she boiled him two lentils, which made him angry. The next day he said, ‘Boil me a lot’, so she boiled him a huge amount. ‘Bring me two small pumpkins’ he said. So, she went and brought him two candles. ‘Go and break them on Rosh of Bava (which meant “threshold”). So, she went and broke them on Bava’s head. He said to her, ‘What is the meaning of what you have done?’ She replied, ‘My husband commanded me.’ He said to her: ‘You have fulfilled your husband’s will, may the Al-mighty grant you two sons like Bava ben Buta’ (Nedarim 66b).” (Mesilas Yesarim, Ch 22)

This is such an incredible - if not humorous - story. While everyone spoke Aramaic in those days, the dialects in Bavel and Eretz Yisrael were different. When the man asked his wife to cook a certain dish, she misunderstood what he was asking for because their dialects were different. When he said, “Go and break the candlesticks over the Bava,” she went outside looking for somebody named Bava. People told her that there was a Bava sitting and teaching Torah to the people. She was an obedient and loyal wife, so she nervously approached Bava but didn’t want to hit him over the head, so she put the clay candlesticks on his head, pressed down, and broke them to fulfill her husband’s command. Bava asked what the meaning of this was, and she told him that she was just following orders of her husband. “Oh,” Bava said, “you’re a woman who obeys her husband. Then Hashem should give you two sons, for the two candlesticks that you broke on my head, who will illuminate the world like Bava.” Eventually, she indeed had two sons who were great Torah scholars.

Rav Avigdor Miller, ZT”L, teaches how Bava was a model to follow. Bava wasn’t paid a salary; it was an ordeal to teach Torah to people, and he spent a long part of the day with them. Along comes a woman, and in the presence of the entire people she breaks two clay candlesticks over his head. She could have been suspected of belonging to the Nazarites or to the Tzedukim, and what could be more fitting than to give her a curse that she should be resigned to the earth from which she came? If you insult anybody in public, especially a Torah Sage, it’s a great sin. He easily could have said to her, “That’s how you behave?” Yet, Bava was a man with presence of mind who had already climbed the mountain of wisdom and Yiras Hashem.

He also reached the second pinnacle of humility. Therefore, he gave her the benefit of the doubt and realized, “She’s young and simpleminded, and must be afraid of her husband.” Therefore, he gently inquired, “Why did you do this?” When he heard the reason, he didn’t say, “You must be dumb.” Rather, he said, “bless you for doing the will of your husband,” and he blessed her with good children. When we take ourselves too seriously – even if we are people of stature – we hurt other people, but when we make room for others, we can create Shalom in our relationships. What better way to merit a favorable judgment than to humble ourselves before Hashem and others? *More to come after Sukkos, B’eH.*

DEDICATED BY YOSSIE AND DEBBIE NEUMAN L’ZECHER
NISHMAS YEHUDAH BEN ASHER AND RIVKA BAS
EPHRAIM FISCHEL HACHOEN KLEIN

**PARENTING PERSPECTIVES BY RABBI AKIVA SUTOFSKY
ROSH HASHANA: HEARING THE UNSPOKEN CRY**

לעלו נשמת יצחק אלימלך ז”ל בן עקיבא זאב הלוי

Dovid was the proud father of five children. Like every year before Rosh Hashana, he found himself looking back at the year that had passed, and if he was being completely honest with himself, it wasn’t the world’s greatest year. Spiritually, there were things he felt good about. He had joined the Daf Yomi. Maybe he couldn’t recall every piece of information on every Daf, but he went every day, and he was proud of that consistency. His shalom bayis had improved, as well. He had read two or three good books over the year and felt that he had taken some steps forward. Perhaps the greatest simcha of the year was that he had married off his oldest daughter. Yet, when Dovid thought about how he had been as a father to his other children, who ranged in age from eleven to fifteen, he didn’t have the same good feeling inside.

There was a nagging feeling, almost like noise in his head, that he didn’t really want to confront. It had been a tough and confusing year. He had been much more critical of his daughter than he wanted to be. When he was in a bad mood, he could be passive-aggressive toward some of his older children. He found himself getting frustrated with his sons when they weren’t keeping up in their learning or academics. There had just been an overall negative vibe, and the confusing part was that Dovid knew he wasn’t enjoying the way he was acting. Yet he also had a fatherly intuition that if he wasn’t enjoying being this father, his children certainly couldn’t be enjoying having this father. They couldn’t be enjoying a father who was critical, negative, and intense. Yet, they really weren’t saying anything. Maybe they were a little colder toward him or a little more distant. Nobody was coming over and saying, “Tatty, you’re hurting me.” Nobody was telling him how they felt. Still, somehow, their silence gave Dovid just enough room to wonder whether perhaps things really weren’t that bad. Even though, deep down, he knew they were.

One evening during Elul, Dovid went to hear the Rav of his shul speak. The Rav shared a classic Rosh Hashana idea about the words “באֲשֶׁר הוּא” - that a person is judged according to where he is at that moment. Almost as an aside, the Rav shared a beautiful insight from **Rav Yitzchak of Vorka**. When Hagar and Yishmael were sent away, the Torah tells us regarding Hagar (Bereishis 21:16): “*She sat at a distance, lifted her voice, and cried.*” Then, immediately afterwards, the Pasuk (ibid. 21:17) says: “Hashem heard the voice of the boy.” The Rav pointed out something fascinating. Regarding Hagar, the Torah explicitly says, “she lifted her voice and cried,” but regarding Yishmael, the Torah never said that he cried, and yet Hashem heard “the voice of the boy.”

The Rav explained that sometimes there is a cry that isn’t expressed out loud. Our children - especially our adolescents - may not always tell us what they’re feeling. They may not shout, “You’re hurting me” nor inform us that our criticism is getting to them, that our disappointment is weighing on them, or that the atmosphere we are creating is pushing them away, but that doesn’t mean there isn’t a cry. Hashem heard the cry inside Yishmael even when it wasn’t being expressed out loud. As parents, we need to learn to hear it, too. For everyone else in the room, that idea may have been a side point in the Rav’s Rosh Hashana speech. For Dovid, it was the speech. He went home and allowed the idea to sit with him. Maybe his children’s silence wasn’t evidence that everything was okay and that he needed to listen more carefully.

Over the next few days, Dovid did something that wasn’t easy. He went to his children individually. He acknowledged what the year must have felt like for them. He apologized for being overly critical, for the negativity, and for the times that his own frustration had spilled over onto them. Then, he made another vulnerable move. He went back to the Rav and told him how deeply that side point of the drasha had impacted him. Dovid also opened up about his struggles as a father and asked for guidance on how to do better. As Rosh Hashana approached, Dovid realized that there were many things he hoped to bring with him as zechusim. He was grateful for his consistency in Daf Yomi and for the growth in his marriage, but there was another zechus he desperately wanted. He wanted to stand before Hashem knowing that he had taken an honest look at the way he was parenting the children that Hashem had entrusted him with. He had begun listening for the cries that weren’t necessarily being spoken, and he was committed to becoming a warmer, more understanding, and supportive father. For Dovid, that became one of the most important parts of his preparation for Rosh Hashana.

R’Sutofsky recently published “Parenting with a Plan” and will share his Chinuch insights with us starting on Parshas Bereishis, B’eZras Hashem.

MILK'N'HONEY FROM JERUSALEM BY RAV JONATHAN TAUB

ROSH HASHANA – WHY A JAR OF HONEY?

There's a famous story told about one of the great chassidic masters - some tell it about the **Apter Rav**, ZT"l, the author of the Bnei Yisaschar, while others tell it about the **Karliner Rebbe**, ZT"l. During the Rosh Hashana davening, the chazzan reached the words "HaMelech - The King" - and the Rebbe fainted on the spot. When he came to, he explained what had happened. In that moment, hearing himself called before "the King," he was suddenly reminded of the following story in the Gemara, which terrified him.

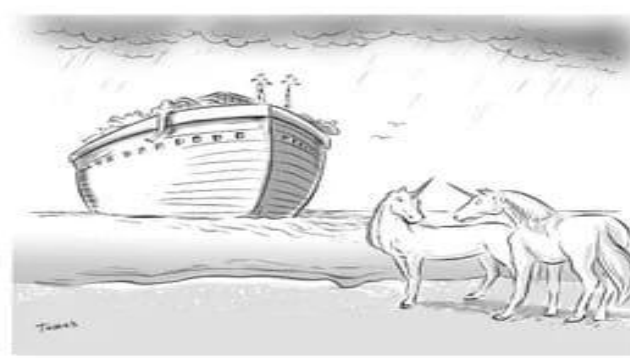
The Gemara (Gittin 56a) tells us about Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai's famous encounter with the Roman general, Vespasian, during the siege of Yerushalayim. Rabbi Yochanan had greeted him with the words, "Peace be upon you, O King," and Vespasian turned on him sharply: "You are liable for death twice over," he said. "Once, because I am not a king, yet you called me king. Moreover, if I really am a king, why have you not come to me until now?" This is the question that so shook the Rebbe. If a mortal king could ask, "Why have you not come to me until now?" - how much more so will the King of Kings ask each of us that very question, on this day when we crown Him as King over all creation. Where were you and why did it take you so long to come? That is where the famous story ends.

However, the Gemara doesn't end there - and neither should we. Because the Gemara gives us Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai's answer, and perhaps that answer is the real message of the day. Here is how the Gemara continues: Rabbi Yochanan responded: "As for what you said - that 'if you are truly a king, why did I not come to you until now' - the truth is, the zealots among us would not let us come." Vespasian replied: "If there were a barrel of honey with a snake coiled around it, wouldn't people break the barrel open just to get rid of the snake?" - in other words, wasn't the destruction of Jerusalem justified, if that's what it took to root out the dangerous elements within it? Rabbi Yochanan was silent. He had no answer, and the Gemara tells us that Rav Yosef (some say it was Rabbi Akiva) applied to him the Pasuk (Isaiah 44:25): "Who turns wise men backward and makes their knowledge foolish". Because the Gemara says, he should have answered: "We would take tongs, remove the snake, kill it - and leave the barrel intact." That is the answer that Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai should have given, and it is the response we must give - to Vespasian's question, and to the question the King of Kings asks each of us on Rosh Hashana.

Now, why a snake, specifically? The Gemara isn't choosing that image at random. Our tradition teaches us that the snake, the nachash, is identified with the satan - with the yetzer hara, the evil inclination itself. Rabbeinu Bachye notes that this is hinted at in the very letters of the word: the numerical value of nachash (snake) equals the numerical value of satan (when adding one for the word itself). So here is the picture the Gemara is painting for us. We are the barrel. The honey inside is who we really are - sweet, precious, and essentially good. Coiled around the outside of that barrel is the snake - the yetzer hara, sin, the accumulated bad habits and choices of the year now ending. Vespasian's mistake - and one we make about ourselves all the time - is to look at the snake wrapped around the barrel and conclude that the only way to deal with it is to smash the whole barrel; to think I have sinned, I have failed, and therefore I am fundamentally flawed, not sweet, and not worth saving.

Yet, that is not the Torah's answer. The Torah's solution is to take the tongs. Remove the snake, kill it, and leave the barrel - the honey - completely intact. We are not the snake. The snake is only coiled around us. Underneath, we are still the honey. This, friends, is why so many of us have the custom of placing a jar of honey on the table on Rosh Hashana. It is not only for the dipping of the apple - it is a declaration. It is our response to Vespasian's question, and our answer to the King of Kings. We place the honey on the table and say: "Hashem, remove the snake - remove the yetzer hara, remove the sin - but leave the vessel - Leave us intact. Because underneath it all, we are sweet." That is the Teshuvah of Rosh Hashana. Not self-destruction or despair. Just the tongs, the snake removed, and the honey - our essential sweetness - left whole, ready for a new year. Kesiva V'chasimah Tovah!

DEDICATED BY THE ZHERNOVSKY FAMILY L'ELUI NISHMAS EPHRAIM BEN SHIA AND HANA BAT SHIA



I didn't know they observed daylight savings time.

INSIGHTS BY RABBI DOVID ORLOFSKY

TZOM GEDALIA – DON'T MISS YOUR CHANCE

Many people don't appreciate the fast known as Tzom Gedalia, which occurs the day after Rosh Hashana. Let's begin with a historical context. There are four fasts on the calendar that are connected to the Churban (Destruction of the Temple). The first is Asara B'Teves, when Yerushalayim was besieged; the second is the Seventeenth of Tammuz, when the walls were breached; the third is Tisha B'Av, when the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, and the fourth is Tzom Gedalia. What is Tzom Gedalia about?

After Nebuchadnezzar took the Jews into Galus, there were many Jews that he didn't even bother taking - all those who weren't that bright, who didn't have land, and anyone who was considered below average in his eyes. All those people who felt that they didn't succeed because society did them wrong were left behind with the country to themselves. So, Nebuchadnezzar took a righteous man, Gedalia, and put him in charge to lead the remnant left in Israel so there was still a community left in the Holy Land. This group would finally have the opportunity to succeed

Gedalia told the people "who never made it" and told them that this was their chance to make something of themselves. What happened is that two people said, "Eh, Gedalia is just a lackey for the Babylonians," and plotted to kill him. When Gedalia was informed of the planned assassination, he quickly closed his ears and exclaimed, "Ah - Lashon Harah!" He wouldn't believe the reports, and sure enough, he was killed by two Jews who thought they were doing the right thing. Gedalia's murder signaled the end of the settlement in the land of Israel; the remainder of those Jews went into exile in Egypt, and we don't know what became of them in the end.

Tzom Gedalia fittingly follows Rosh Hashana. Hashem gives us opportunities like those people in the time of Gedalia. Let's not throw them back in His Face. Everyone gets a knock on the door in life; most people simply choose not to answer it. Gedalia was that knock on the door. Hashem reached out to the people and gave them a lifeline, and they killed him. Now, in the days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, we are given a chance to reconnect with Hashem during a time that He is close ("seek out Hashem when He's coming to you"). Let's not allow the opportunity to slip away again!

THIS MAGAZINE SHOULD SERVE AS A ZECHUS
FOR A REFUAH SHELEIMA FOR LEEBA MIRIAM
GEULAH BAS LEAH

Rosh Hashana! A day that encapsulates so many moments and so many feelings. Awesome and humbling, intense but serene, connecting and pure, with judgment and mercy, dreams and resolutions, the unknown but the certainty, the royalty and majesty. It is serious but sweet. However, there is one moment that seems to be purely magical. As the last amen of Maariv on Rosh Hashana night is said, everyone looks around and turns to one another, and the blessings for the new year begin. *"L'shanah tova tikasev v'sechasem l'alter l'chaim tovim ul'shalom* - For a good year you should be written and sealed right away for good life and peace. This bracha (blessing) is not just your regular "good Shabbos" or "Gut Yom Tov", and these interactions are not just mere pleasantries. There is something magical in the air, a glow on all the faces and a special sparkle in everyone's eyes. Perhaps we can try to explain this phenomenon.

Beginning at least four days before Rosh Hashana we begin to recite Selichos. The **Mishna Berura** explains why at least four days are needed. In Parshas Pinchas, the Torah discusses all the korbanos (offerings) that are brought on the Yomim Tovim. The terminology that is used is "v'hikravtem olah - you should bring a korban olah". However, regarding Rosh Hashana it says *"va'asisem olah* - you should make a korban olah". From here we learn that on Rosh Hashana we are making ourselves into a korban for Hashem. Therefore, just as a korban requires four days to be inspected regarding any blemishes, so too we inspect ourselves with the four days of Selichos to find any blemishes in our soul, so we can be a complete and pure korban on Rosh Hashana. Similarly, the **Ba'al Haturim** explains from Chazal that *"va'asisem olah"* teaches us that on Rosh Hashana when we do Teshuvah and daven to Hashem, we become a briah chadashah, a new being. These are nice ideas, but what does it truly mean that we become like a korban and a new being?

Starting Rosh Chodesh Elul through Shemini Atzeres, we recite from Tehilim (Chapter 27:1), *"L'Dovid Hashem Ohri V'yishi - Hashem is my light and my salvation"*. Chazal explain that "ohri" is referring to Rosh Hashana and "yishi" is referring to Yom Kippur. Seemingly, we can understand how Yom Kippur is a salvation since Hashem saves us from our sins. However, why is Rosh Hashana called a light? Klal Yisrael's mission is to bring Hashem's light into the world. It is known that "Yisrael V'oraisa V'Kudsha Breech Hu chad hu - the Jews, the Torah, and Hashem are one. The term oraisa comes from the word ohr, light. The Torah is Hashem's light, and through the Torah Hashem's light shines through Klal Yisrael. Chazal compare the Jewish people to the moon. The moon is a luminary; however, it does not contain its own light; rather, it reflects the light of the sun. Similarly, Klal Yisrael reflects the light of Hashem. The moon is a vessel to receive light and shine it forth; so too, Klal Yisrael are a vessel for Hashem's light in the world. Interestingly, Rosh Hashana is connected with the moon. Dovid Hamelech says (Tehillim 81:4), *"Tiku bachodesh Shofar bakeseh l'yom chageinu* - Blow in the month, the Shofar, when it is concealed on the day of our festival." The Gemara (Beitzah 16b) says that Rosh Hashana is a Yom Tov that takes place when the new moon is concealed, because at the beginning of the month the moon is not visible. Seemingly, the pasuk is telling us that the message of the Shofar relates to the idea of the new moon.

At the start of every month, the moon is concealed because the moon is being reborn to shine a new light. One of the ideas of the Shofar is to announce Hashem's kingship. With the new year, a new light of Hashem's kingdom is being revealed. The sound of the Shofar is to invigorate Klal Yisrael with this mission to spread this new light. On this day, we receive our new mission for the new year. We recognize and proclaim "Hashem ohri"; Hashem and His Malchus are a light for us to see the purpose of this coming year. Also, we realize Hashem's light is for us so we can reflect it and allow it to shine in the world. The moon is a vessel to shine light, the Shofar is a vessel announcing Hashem's kingship, and we are vessels to receive and contain Hashem's light and allow it to reflect throughout the coming year.

On Rosh Hashana the main theme of our tefilos is not asking for personal needs, but for Hashem's light to be revealed. We recognize that our true success for this year will be for us to reflect this light, because we know Hashem ohri - He is our true light. With the new year, a new light of Hashem's kingdom is being revealed. The sound of the Shofar is to invigorate Klal Yisrael with this mission to spread this new light. On this day, we receive our new mission for the new year. We recognize and proclaim "Hashem ohri", Hashem and His Malchus are a light for us to see the purpose of this coming year. →



At the same time, we realize that Hashem's light is for us, so we can reflect it and allow it to shine in the world. The moon is a vessel to shine light, the Shofar is a vessel announcing Hashem's kingship, and we are vessels to receive and contain Hashem's light and allow it to reflect throughout the coming year. Perhaps now we can understand what it means that we sacrifice ourselves and become a new being. On Rosh Hashana, we recognize our mission to be new vessels for the new light. We sacrifice ourselves and dedicate our lives for the new year to reflect the light and honor of Hashem's malchus. At this crucial time of judgment, we sacrifice ourselves and our tefilos by not concentrating on our personal needs of the year but for malchus shamayim. We become a vessel, we become a korban, we become a new being.

The story is told about the Ba'al Shem Tov's *ba'al tokeiah* (Shofar blower). This man would prepare for months for this sacred opportunity to blow the Shofar for the holy **Ba'al Shem Tov**. He would prepare in a notebook all the lofty kavanos (intentions) of the **Arizal** to have while blowing the Shofar. After much anticipation and preparation, it came Rosh Hashana morning; he came to shul holding his large, packed notebook. He carefully put it down in a side room until it was time for tekias Shofar. There was a little break for everyone to prepare themselves beforehand, and when he went to the room to retrieve the notebook, to his despair, it was gone. He was completely beside himself; how could he possibly do the Mitzvah for the Ba'al Shem Tov without his lists of kavanos?

Suddenly, the Ba'al Shem Tov himself walked in and asked him why he was so distraught. The man told him what happened, and the Ba'al Shem Tov said: "I have a confession to make. I took your notebook! I wanted to teach you a lesson that the most powerful kavanah to have while blowing the Shofar is just to cry out to Hashem with a broken heart. Although the kavanos have the power to bring down tremendous shefa and ohr, what is most powerful is a sincere and desperate plea from an open heart." When one cries out to Hashem with an open heart, he becomes a vessel, open to be filled with shefa and ohr. On Rosh Hashana we cry out with the Shofar, "Hashem ohri".

We are open and waiting to be filled with Your light. This is the secret of that magical moment on Rosh Hashana night. When we look around the shul, we see Hashem's beauty and majesty in His nation ("Berov am hadras Melech"). Everyone is aglow, for we are all transformed into new vessels containing a new light. We bless one another to merit that this new light should shine strong and bright for the whole year to come. May we all be zoche to a shana tova u'mesukah!

THIS ARTICLE IS DEDICATED BY **BRENDA AND JOEL GARBOOS** L'ILUI NISHMAS MIRIAM GARBOOS, WHOSE YARTZHEIT IS ON THE THIRD OF TISHREI

מִירָם גּוֹלְדָה בֵּת יְהוּדָה לִיב

From Rosh Hashana through Yom Hakippurim, there are several changes that we make to our davening. One such change can be found in Kaddish. The **Magen Avraham** (582:4) writes that we double the word Le'eila in all the Kaddisheichem thru the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah. The **Mishna Berura** (582:16) also writes that we double the word Le'eila throughout the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah. Interestingly, the **Kitzur Shulchan Aruch** mentions this Halachah as well, but he adds that it should be specifically Le'eila Le'eila, as in we double the word, but do not add a Vav, which would make it Le'eila U'le'eila. In many siddurim, the Vav is in parentheses to indicate that there are some that do double it up. The **Shulchan Aruch HaRav** is of the opinion that it should be with a Vav, as in Le'eila U'le'eila. The **Kaf HaChayim** says that one should not change the Nusach of Kaddish, and therefore the Kaddish remains exactly as it has been throughout the year with one Le'eila. This is, in fact, the common practice of many Sefardim to not deviate from the standard Kaddish.

To understand the logic behind changing to Le'eila Le'eila, we have to understand first what Kaddish is really about. The **Aruch HaShulchan** (beginning of Siman 55) tells us that Kaddish is a great praise of Hashem that was instituted by the Anshei Knesses HaGedolah after the destruction of the first Beis HaMikdash, and it is a Tefillah over the fact that Hashem's Name has, so to speak, been desecrated due to the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash/Eretz Yisrael and the scattering of the Jewish people throughout the world. Kaddish therefore is a supplication that Hashem's Name should once again be made great and holy, and that the whole world will recognize that Hashem is the King. In fact, the Gemara (Berachos 3a) tells us in the name of Eliyahu Hanavi that when a Jew enters a Shul or Beis Midrash and answers "Amen Yehei Shmei Rabbah", Hashem says, "praiseworthy is the king whose subjects praise him in his house."

Then, Hashem says, "Woe to the Father who has exiled His children and woe to the children that have been exiled from their Father's table", meaning that Hashem is saddened, so to speak, by the fact that he was forced to exile us due to our sins. Kaddish, in some way, is a rectification of this idea. It is our way of expressing our ultimate hope that Hashem's Name will once again be awe-inspiring and recognized by all. It is also a reminder for us to live our lives in such a way that will bring that outcome to fruition. In fact, due to the importance of this Tefillah, it was written in Aramaic, the spoken language of the time, so that it could be easily understood.

Furthermore, the Gemara (Shabbos 119a) tells us that anyone who recites Amen Yehei Shmei Rabba with all his koach (strength) will have the evil decrees that are against him be torn up. There is a machlokes in the Rishonim as to what it means to answer *Amen Yehei Shmei Rabba bechol kocho* (with all his energy). **Rashi** says that this means with all his kavannah - that he's fully concentrating on the meaning of those words. That is "Amen, it's indeed true, I agree with what was just said about the desire and prayer for Hashem's Name to be made great, and then to reaffirm that Yehei Shmei Rabba we are davening that that outcome should come about, that his Name will be sanctified and blessed forever and ever."

On the other hand, Tosafos says that bechol kocho means that one literally says it with all his energy, meaning that he should say this in a loud voice. Likewise, the **Ritva** explains that one should say this with all his body and with all his energy. It should be emanating from deep within and thereby stir up the right intent and thought process through utilizing his whole body to make this declaration of a hope for Hashem's Name to once again be considered great by everybody. The **Mishna Berura** (55:5) mentions this idea of having full kavannah and saying it in a loud voice, but he does add that one shouldn't do it in a way that causes others to ridicule - meaning that there's a limit. One should not necessarily shout it from the top of his lungs, but rather somewhere in between, where it is a loud voice, but not loud enough that it looks odd and peculiar to those around him because if he does that, he will then cause them to sin by perhaps making fun of him.

Getting back to doubling of the word Le'eila, the Levush (582:8) writes that the reason we double the word is that during these days, Hashem is exalted even more than throughout the rest of the year, since on these days He is sitting in judgment. We therefore need to praise and honor him in an even more significant way to be worthy of requesting mercy on that judgment. Parenthetically, we would add that it is not that Hashem needs any of these things - because He lacks nothing. Rather, it heightens our appreciation and understanding of what these days are all about, and that is why we double the word Le'eila.

However, the doubling of Le'eila creates a different problem. If you count that section of Kaddish, you will find that there are exactly 28 words, which is the gematria of koach, strength, which, as we said, is the way that Kaddish is supposed to be answered. With full kavannah and full strength. By doubling the word Le'eila, we now make it 29 words, and we lose that connection to the word strength. Seemingly, for this reason, the Kaf Hachaim was against changing the nusach because he didn't want to lose the 28 words of Kaddish. However, our nusach solves this problem. The minhag is that when we double the word Le'eila, we contract two other words. Instead of min kol, we say mikol. It's the same meaning, but we took it from two words and contracted it into one. In this way, we have now saved the idea of having 28 words.

Regardless of one's minhag, whether to double the word, to add a vav, or to not add a vav, we must strengthen our kavannah during this holy and important tefillah. Understanding what it's about, we can begin to appreciate why the Halachah is so strict about not talking during kaddish. May we all apply ourselves to accomplishing this goal of bringing about the day when Hakadosh Baruch Hu is crowned and recognized as the King of all kings.

Rav Yaakov Galinsky, ZT"l, had a son who was an incredible genius, **Rav Nachman Galinsky**. Unfortunately, he got sick and passed away all too soon. When his family was sitting shiva, a man whom they did not recognize walked in and sat down. When they asked him how he knew Rav Nachman, he replied with the following story:

"Now I am a Rosh Yeshiva myself and have hundreds of talmidim who learn under me. However, when I was young, in middle school, I struggled with learning. One hot day, I decided to make a state-of-the-art F-16 airplane from a piece of scrap paper. When my piece of art was finally complete, I threw it over to my friend who was sitting nearby, whom I knew was also not paying attention during shiur. I did not realize, however, that the fan was blowing strongly, and when I threw it, the jet rerouted its course and headed into a danger zone. It landed on the Rosh Yeshiva's desk, on his Gemara, while he was in the middle of giving a shiur.

Immediately, he stopped, banged on the table, and said, 'I'm not continuing until whoever threw that airplane gets up and leaves the classroom.' I was already on thin ice with the yeshiva, and that would have been the straw that broke the camel's back. I simply could not risk getting kicked out of yeshiva. Suddenly, Rav Nachman stood up and walked out. Everyone knew, including the Rosh Yeshiva, that he didn't throw that airplane. He was a star student. However, the Rebbe was forced to continue his shiur. After that scare, I decided to start taking things seriously in my learning and found tremendous success. Rav Nachman changed my life."

Comment: On Rosh Hashana we read the story of the binding of Yitzchak. In Parshas Lech Lecha (Bereishis 15:1-5) Avraham tells Hashem that all the reward in the world is worthless to him without a child. A child was what Avraham wanted more than anything else in the world. Now, Hashem is telling Avraham to sacrifice him, and he had to choose: his will or Hashem's. The central theme of Rosh Hashana is selflessness.

An act of selflessness changed the course of history for Avraham, and it changed a young yeshiva student's life. One selfless deed is all it takes to make a difference. This year, instead of asking Hashem for what we want from Him, let's ask ourselves, "What does Hashem need from us?"

DEDICATED BY MR. MOSHE BASCH

לע"נ רבקה בת אברהם צבי



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