

# Torah Wellsprings

Collected thoughts  
from  
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Rosh Hashanah





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# Torah Wellsprings

## Rosh Hashanah

### Preparing for Rosh Hashanah

*Shulchan Aruch* (581:1) teaches, "It is proper to search for the most fitting *chazan*, the greatest scholars and doers of good deeds that you can find. They should daven *selichos* and the *tefillos* of the *yamim nora'im*."

The Be'er Heitev writes, "The *chazanim* and those who blow *shofar* should be perfect *baalei teshuvah*..."

Halachah also recommends that they should prepare themselves with *teshuvah* during the three days prior to Rosh Hashanah (and the three days prior to Yom Kippur).

This year, Rosh Hashanah is on Tuesday, which means they should prepare themselves from Shabbos, *Parashas Nitzavim*.

The *tzibbur* is dependent on the *chazanim* and on the *baal tokei'a* for a good year, therefore it is essential that they be very righteous.

The Chasam Sofer taught that in our generation, the *chazanim* and the *baalei tokei'a* aren't as holy and righteous as they were in the past, and we don't rely on them anymore to daven for us and to help us attain a good year.

Therefore, the Chasam Sofer says, the entire congregation should prepare themselves during the three days before Rosh Hashanah (and three days before Yom Kippur) so that their *tefillos* will be accepted.

The Beis Yisrael of Gur *zy'a*, taught these ideas with a *meshal*:

The lion, king of the jungle, got angry with the

animals of his kingdom and wanted to punish them. All the animals of the jungle gathered and sought a way to appease the king, but they couldn't come up with a solution.

The fox said "I have three hundred *mashalim* I can tell the king to explain our situation and our point of view, and he will understand that we aren't guilty. He will certainly be appeased. Come with me."

The animals were relieved that the clever fox had a solution, and they all hiked together to the king of the forest.

After walking some time, the fox said to the animals, "I just forgot one hundred parables. But there's nothing to worry about, because I still have another two hundred parables," and they walked further.

A mile later the fox said, "I just forgot another hundred parables, but

don't worry. I still have one hundred parables left to tell the king, and that is certainly sufficient."

When they came before the lion, the fox told them, "I just forgot the last one hundred parables, too. It is now up to you to say what you can to appease the king."

They all pleaded before the king, and the king accepted their pleas and forgave them.

From the start, the clever fox didn't have anything to tell the king. But he realized that their only hope was to go to the lion and to plead however they could to arouse his compassion. So the fox told the animals that he has three hundred parables so they would follow him to the lion. But at the last minute he told them that it was up to them to say whatever they could to save themselves.

The Beis Yisrael *zt'l* explained, that chassidim

go to their Rebbe for Rosh Hashanah, and rely on their Rebbe's *tefillos* to help them in their judgment. But then the Rebbe may tell them, "I'm at a loss, just as you are. I don't know what to say to Hashem to forgive our sins and how to earn a good year. Now it is up to you to pray and do whatever you can to appease the King."

And since it is everyone's obligation to plead before the King, we should prepare ourselves during these three days.

We prepare ourselves with *teshuvah*, and *teshuvah* begins with thoughts. Everyone should think about the year that passed, and ask himself, "What did I do wrong this past year? Which mitzvos am I failing in?"<sup>1</sup>

Also, one should think about what he did correctly, so that he will continue doing so in the upcoming year.

If we make this introspection during these three days, it will be a good preparation for Rosh Hashanah.<sup>2</sup>

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1. In *Shemonah Esrei* of Rosh Hashanah, we say the *pasuk*, "כי מדי דברי בו זכור אזכרנו עוד על כן המו מעי לו רחם ארחמנו נאם ה'" (*Yirmiyahu* 31:19). Rebbe Mordechai of Lechovitz *zt'l* explained, "כי מדי דברי בו, when I speak to myself in introspection about my sins, I tell myself, זכור, "Is that called remembering Hashem? Is the amount and the intensity of how I think about Hashem sufficient?" אזכרנו עוד, "I will improve and begin to remember Hashem more." המו מעי לו, this arouses Hashem's compassion and Hashem says, רחם, "Is how I act with this person called compassionate?" ארחמנו עוד, "I will increase my compassion onto him. I will bestow even more goodness on him..."

2. The Chovas HaLevavos (*Shaar Avodas Hashem* 9) teaches the following *meshal*:

A republic on an island near India had an unusual custom. Every year they appointed a foreigner to be king of their country, and at the end of the year they sent him away.

When the foreigner was crowned king, he wasn't told that his kingship won't last longer than a year. This was a well-kept secret by everyone who lived in this country.

The king would ask people about the kings before him, who they were, and why they aren't king now, but he wouldn't receive straight answers.

The king would amass a lot of wealth during his year in rule, but then he would unceremoniously be sent away, and he was left without anything at all.

One year, the country appointed a foreigner as king, as they did every year, but this king was wiser than all the others. The king immediately sensed that a secret was being held from him, and he wanted to know what it was.

"There is no secret at all," the people in the government told him. "Why should there be a secret? You are king, and that's that."

"But who were the kings before me?" he'd ask. "What happened to them?"

But he didn't get any clear answers.

He spoke with the common people of his rule. He thought that maybe they would tell him the secret, but they too remained silent.

The king wanted to get to the bottom of the matter, so he befriended a high-ranking government official, and one day, the king asked him, "What is the secret of this country?"

The official replied, "At the end of the year, you will be sent back to your country, and you will leave behind all the wealth you have amassed."

Now that he knew the secret, he knew how to outsmart the system. As king, he amassed a lot of wealth, but he didn't store it in the

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 16) states, הוא שטן הוא יצר הרע הוא מלאך המות, the Satan, the *yetzer hara*, and the angel of death are all the same being, the same *malach*.<sup>3</sup>

On Rosh Hashanah, he works as a Satan, a prosecutor. He stands before the heavenly court

and slanders the Jewish nation.

However, the Nesivos HaMishpat points out that the Satan is our enemy, and an enemy (אויב) is at times *pasul* and disqualified for testimony (see *Choshen Mishpat*, 34:20). Whatever he says is disregarded in the

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kingdom, as all the kings before him did. He didn't build himself expensive palaces within the kingdom, because he knew that it will be soon taken away from him. Instead, when he amassed wealth, he sent it to his homeland.

When the year was over, he was sent away, but he didn't leave empty-handed. He returned to the wealth he had amassed and prepared for himself during the year of his rulership.

This parable is a reminder that we won't be in this world forever. It appears to people that we will be here forever, and therefore, they seek to earn wealth and to excel in this passing world. But it won't be very long and we will all unceremoniously be banished from this world, and we will return to the world of the souls, the world from where we came. Those who remember that, will prepare for that time. The Torah and all the mitzvos we perform is our "wealth" waiting for us in the world to come.

Think about this *meshal* when you reflect on what deeds we should focus on performing in this world.

**3.** He begins as a *yetzer hara*, and he convinces people to do *aveiros*. Then he acts as a Satan, a divine prosecutor. He tells the heavenly court all the sins that the person committed. Afterwards, he serves as the angel of death, to take the person's life because of his *aveiros*.

court, because he is an enemy.

But is the Satan our enemy? The Satan is the *yetzer hara*, and many people seem to like what the *yetzer hara* tells them to do. They spend time with the *yetzer hara*. They listen to his counsel. He doesn't seem to be your enemy at all.

Chazal say that a שונא, an enemy, is someone with whom you didn't speak for three days because you are angry with him (see *Choshen Mishpat* 7:7).

Therefore, the Nesivos HaMishpat recommends that we don't speak with the *yetzer hara* for three days prior to Rosh Hashanah. We should ignore all of his enticements. This will determine that the *yetzer hara* is our שונא, our enemy, and then, his testimony against us on Rosh Hashanah is invalid.

Another primary preparation for Rosh

Hashanah is tefillah. We say *selichos*, and it is recommended to say *Tehillim*, and other tefillos too.

We can also prepare for Rosh Hashanah by studying about it and by yearning for it.

Chazal say, "שכר מצוה בהאי עולמא ליכא", "There isn't reward for the mitzvos in this world." The mitzvos are so holy and special, it is impossible to grant people the great reward in this finite world. Therefore, the entire reward is stored and reserved for *Olam Haba*.

Nevertheless, the *sefarim* say that we can receive reward in this world for preparing for the mitzvos. The preparations aren't the mitzvah itself, and therefore, the reward can be given in this world.

The Vilna Gaon *zt'l* discusses this in reference to *akeidas Yitzchak* (which is read on the second day of Rosh Hashanah).

*Akeidas Yitzchak* took three days (as it states, יהי ביום השלישי). The first two days, Avraham prepared for the *akeidah*. He saddled his donkey, chopped wood, traveled to Har HaMoriah, etc. The third day was the *akeidah* itself. Chazal tell us that Klal Yisrael earned many *brachos* in the merit of *akeidas Yitzchak*. *Parnassah* comes to the world in its merit. The Vilna Gaon *zt'l* explains that this refers to the first two days of the *akeidah*, the days of preparation. Because reward is given in this world for the preparations for the mitzvos.

The *Navi* states (*Hoshei'a* 6:2), יחינו מימים ביום השלישי יקמנו ונחיה לפניו. The Vilna Gaon *zy'a* explains, יחינו מימים, we earn *parnassah*, life, and other kindnesses from the first two days of the *akeidah*, because they were days of preparation. ביום השלישי יקמנו ונחיה לפניו, the primary reward for the *akeidah* will be given in Olam HaBa, when the

souls stand before Hashem in heaven.

We can't imagine the vastness of the reward that we will receive for keeping Rosh Hashanah with all its mitzvos. The reward is too great for this world, and it is reserved, in its entirety, for *Olam HaBa*. Before Rosh Hashanah is the time for preparations, and for that we will be rewarded in this world too.

### ***Erev Rosh Hashanah***

We've reached the end of the year. We've come to *Erev Rosh Hashanah*. If one didn't do *teshuvah* until now, he might wonder, "Isn't it too late to do *teshuvah*?"

But it isn't too late. Not at all.

Chazal tell us (*Rosh Hashanah* 2:), יום אחד בשנה חשוב, שנה, "One day a year is counted like a year." The *Chidushei HaRim zt'l* says that this hints to us that everything can be amended

on Erev Rosh Hashanah. This one day can be counted like a year. If we do *teshuvah* on this day, it will be considered as if we were righteous the entire year.

It is known that *teshuvah* can be done in a moment.

As the Rambam (*Hilchos Teshuvah* 2:2) states, "What is *teshuvah*? It's to leave the sin, to remove it from his thoughts, and to be determined never to commit this sin again."

A primary source for this concept is the Gemara (*Kiddushin* 49:) that discusses a *rasha* (רשע גמור) who gives a ring to a woman for marriage, and he stipulates that the marriage is valid on the condition that he is a perfect tzaddik (על מנת שאני צדיק גמור). We consider them married (מספק), because it is possible that he had a thought of *teshuvah* when he gave her the ring.

That one thought of *teshuvah* turned him around from being a total *rasha*

(*rasha gamur*) to being a perfect tzaddik (*tzaddik gamur*).

As the Gemara explains, שמא הרהור תשובה בדעתו, "Perhaps he was thinking thoughts of *teshuvah*."

Furthermore, the Gemara (*Kiddushin* 40:) states, "Even if one was a *rasha* his entire life and he does *teshuvah* in the end, his past bad deeds won't be mentioned anymore."

The Gemara (*Avodah Zarah* 17:) tells the story of Eliezer ben Durdaya, a grave sinner, who did *teshuvah* when he finally recognized the corruption of his ways. He put his head between his knees and cried copiously until he died. A *bas kol* came forth and said, "Reb Elazar ben Durdaya is a *ben Olam HaBa*."

The Gemara concludes, "Rebbe cried and said, 'Some acquire Olam HaBa after several years [of serving Hashem] and some

acquire Olam HaBa in one moment."<sup>4</sup>

A moment of *teshuvah* is significant. Therefore, those who take advantage of the

final day of the year are fortunate, as they can correct and amend their past, and merit a good year. On this day, they can turn around their status.<sup>5</sup>

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4. Rebbe added, "It isn't solely that Hashem accepts *baalei teshuvah*, rather he calls them 'Rebbe' too." Because the *bas kol* called him "Reb Elazar ben Durdaya."

5. The Kol Bo teaches: On Rosh Hashanah, when the Satan recounts our sins, Hakadosh Baruch Hu replies, "We can't believe you without proof. Bring two *eidim*, two witnesses, who will testify." The Satan calls for the sun to testify against the Jewish nation, and the sun comes. The Satan asks the moon to be the second witness, but the moon doesn't want to speak negatively about the Jewish nation, so it hides. As it states (*Tehillim* 81:4), *בכסה ליום הגיוני* (the moon is concealed on Rosh Hashanah). There aren't two witnesses to testify against us, and we are acquitted.

The Noda b'Yehudah (*Tzlach, drush* 1:6-8) asks that the Gemara (*Kiddushin* 66) states that one witness is sufficient to say testimony on someone that he has a *מום*, a blemish. Therefore, it seems the sun can testify alone that the Jewish nation sinned with their eyes and ears, etc., and that they have become *בעלי מומים*, blemished people.

Because when one sins with his eyes, it's as though he is blind. When one sins with his ears, it is as though he is deaf, and so on.

The Noda b'Yehudah concludes: The solution is *teshuvah*. This is the meaning of the *pasuk* (*Devarim* 23:12), *והיה לפניך ערב*, on erev Rosh Hashanah, *וירחץ במים*, wash yourself with tears, *וכבוא השמש*, and then, when the sun comes to testify, his testimony won't be accepted. And then, *יבוא אל תוך המחנה*, the Yid will be permitted to return to the camp [of holiness] for he will be acquitted in the court.

In Minchah of *erev Rosh Hashanah* we say, בָּרַךְ עָלֵינוּ אֵת, "Bless this year..." There are only a few moments left to the year before it is over. What type of blessing could possibly come in this short time?

But this isn't a question, because we need Hashem's blessing at every moment. Someone told Reb Shmuel Auerbach *Shlita* that at three o'clock in the afternoon, *erev Rosh Hashanah*, his stocks crashed and he lost a lot of money.

As the Ahavas Yisrael of Viznitz *zy'a* said, "We request Hashem's blessings on *Erev Rosh Hashanah*, because we can't be without Hashem's *brachos* for even a minute."

Also, Hashem can bring great salvations in a moment (as the Divrei Chaim of Tzanz *zt'l* explained). So the final moments of the year are very significant. It isn't too late for *teshuvah* and it isn't too late for *tefillah*.

The Tur (581) states, "The custom in Ashkenaz (Germany) is to fast on *Erev Rosh Hashanah*."

The Midrash Tanchuma states: "It can be compared to a country that owed taxes to a king. The king came with his army to the country to collect the debt (and if they wouldn't pay, he would punish them with his army). When the king was ten *parsahs* away, the country's leaders came out to greet the king and explained that they can't afford to pay the large tax. The king said that he agrees to deduct a one third of the debt. The king and his army continued marching towards the country. Then the middle class people came forward and expressed their plight to the king. The king acquiesced to relieve the country from another third of the debt. When the king came even closer to the city, everyone living in that city came out to greet the king. The king agreed to

waive the final third of the debt.”

"The *nimshal* is, on *erev Rosh Hashanah*, tzaddikim fast and Hashem pardons a third of their sins. During *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah* the middle-level *Yidden* fast, and Hashem pardons another third. On *Yom Kippur*, when everyone fasts, Hashem exonerates the Jewish people entirely."

### A New Creation

In the *musaf Shemonah Esrei* we say, היום הרת עולם, "Today is the creation of the world." It seems the world was created *today*, on this *Rosh Hashanah*.

Similarly, we say in *Shemonah Esrei*, זה היום תחילת, מועשך "This day is the beginning of Your

creation." It seems that the world is created anew on *Rosh Hashanah*.

Rebbe Yonoson Eibshitz *zt'l* (*Yaaras Dvash* vol.2 *drush* 5) uses these sources to prove that every *Rosh Hashanah*, Hashem creates the world anew.

The *Baal HaTanya zy'a* teaches that the human being also gets renewed on *Rosh Hashanah*. At Creation, Hashem blew life into Adam's nostrils, as it states (*Bereishis* 2:7), ויפח באפיו, נשמת חיים. This happens each year anew by *tekiyas shofar*.

When something is at its early stages of creation, every small imperfection causes effects.<sup>6</sup>

Therefore, Reb Pinchas *Koritzer zt'l* warns that we

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6. One won't buy a brand new piece of furniture if he sees a scratch on it. But if one already owns the furniture, he won't throw it out because of a scratch. The *nimshal* is the world is being created anew on this day, therefore there is a greater need and caution that everything should be perfect, without any *aveiros*. It's a new world, and we should do our part to make it a good world.

should have a happy disposition on Rosh Hashanah, thinking positive thoughts, with trust that it will be a good year. These thoughts and disposition at the beginning of the year set the blueprint for what will be this coming year.

The custom is that we don't eat sour foods on Rosh Hashanah as a good *siman* for the new year. Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer *zt'l* explains that when one eats something bitter, he makes a bitter face. We don't want to show a bitter face on Rosh Hashanah, for it will *chas veshalom* set a precedent for bitterness throughout the year, which

is being created on this day.<sup>7</sup>

As a new world is being created, we can pray and trust that it will be a better world than ever before: a world without suffering, poverty, and distress. A world of joy, and most importantly, a world with the coming of Moshiach.

In the *yotzros* of Rosh Hashanah, we say, זכר לה יושב מערבות עובר להמיר בבטן אחות. These words describe how Leah prayed that the boy in her womb should become a girl. (Dinah was born from this prayer.) How does this episode associate with Rosh Hashanah?

It's because Rosh Hashanah is also a time

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7. Reb Pinchas Koritzer *zt'l* compared Rosh Hashanah to an architect who draws up a blueprint for a beautiful building. Each mark of the pencil means something. Similarly, Rosh Hashanah is the blueprint for what will happen during the year.

Therefore, Rebbe Pinchas *zt'l* said, one should be cautious with every moment of Rosh Hashanah, because each moment creates the blueprint for the upcoming year.

when new things can happen, and changes can occur. What was in the past doesn't have to be how things will be in the future.

There were chassidim who lost a lot of money, and when they came to their Rebbe, the Imrei Emes of Ger *zt'l*, for Rosh Hashanah, he wanted to raise their spirits and to give them hope. He told them, "Yosef left prison on Rosh Hashanah. Similarly, everyone has his own imprisonment, and he can be freed on Rosh Hashanah." It is a time when the *tzaros* of the past end, and *be'ezras Hashem*, now life will be good.

### Blueprint

After Rosh Hashanah, Reb Eliyahu Dessler (*Michtav Me'Eliyahu Elul* p.74) would say, "I wasn't in heaven, and I don't know *beis din*'s conclusion. However, I will know what happened in heaven, as the year passes."

We say, היום הרת עולם, "Today the world was created." The Rokeach explains that הרת means pregnancy, because everything that will happen during the year, has its origin, its pregnancy, on Rosh Hashanah.

As Rashi (*Rosh Hashanah* 8.) writes, "Hakadosh Baruch Hu judges the entire world [on Rosh Hashanah, to determine] what will happen to them until next year Tishrei."

Every holiday we say זמן, such as on Pesach we say זמן חרותנו, and Succos we say זמן שמחתנו. But on Rosh Hashanah, we don't say זמן בריאת העולם. This is because Rosh Hashanah doesn't commemorate the past. It is determining the future.

There was a time when there was a financial crash in the world, and the business people in Yerushalayim were also affected by it. They were anxiously waiting to see

how matters would turn out.

However, there was a wealthy Yid in Yerushalayim called Reb Yosef Weinberg z'l, and he didn't show any signs of worry at all. The Birchas Avraham noticed his tranquility and asked him how he maintains his serenity when everyone is so worried. Reb Yosef Weinberg replied, "My market day is Rosh Hashanah. (מיין יריד איז ר"ה). On Rosh Hashanah it was decided what will be, and now it is being played out. There is no reason to worry."

The Birchas Avraham was very impressed by this answer, and he repeated it several times.<sup>8</sup>

## The Awesome Judgment

Although we are optimistic that only good things will happen to us and to all Klal Yisrael (and the optimism and *bitachon* is a *segulah* for a good year, as we will discuss,) nevertheless, we must be afraid of the judgment too, because our future is being judged.

The *Magan Avraham* (end of 591) says that sometimes, the judgment on Rosh Hashanah isn't only for what will be this year, but for what will be in the next few, or more, years. Pharaoh had a dream on Rosh Hashanah, which foretold seven years of bounty followed by seven years of famine. That one Rosh Hashanah sealed the fate for the next fourteen years.

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8. A *yungerman* was *niftar* from pneumonia in the middle of the winter. Reb Chaim Shmuelevitz zt'l said, "He wasn't *niftar* in the cold of the winter. He was *niftar* on Rosh Hashanah, when the sun was shining brightly." Because the decree was sealed on Rosh Hashanah.

Therefore, it states about Rosh Hashana (*Koheles* 3:14), והאלקים עשה שיראו מלפניו, "Hashem made it that we should fear Him." The *Zohar* (vol.3 98:) says this *pasuk* refers to Rosh Hashanah.

Rosh Hashanah is a frightening day, because our future is being judged.

Rosh Hashanah is called, בכסה ליום הגינו, "a concealed holiday," (*Tehillim* 81:4), because the results of the awesome judgment are concealed from us until they happen.<sup>9</sup>

The Navi (*Shoftim* 5:1) writes, ותשר דבורה וברק בן אבינעם, ביום ההוא לאמר, "Devorah and Barak sang on that day..."

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9. A mother was *r'l niftarah*, and the family sought counsel how to break this tragic news to her young child. They came up with the following idea: They bought the young child a new suit, and in one of the pockets was a letter, describing the tragedy that occurred.

The *nimshal* is:

Rosh Hashanah, everyone receives a verdict for the upcoming year, only we don't know what it is. At the moment, it is concealed from us, as though the verdict is tucked away in one of our pockets. But as time passes, it will be revealed and we will know what happened on Rosh Hashanah.

Another *mashal* is about a young son who was playing at his father's *levayah*. He was too young to understand why everyone was so solemn. The child began playing with the *tzitzis* that covered his father.

Fearing he may pull off the talis, someone told him, "Do you know who is under the talis? It's your father, whom you love and whom you won't see again." Similarly, some people are lightheaded on Rosh Hashanah, but it's not right. No one knows what is being concealed on this day.

and they praised Hashem that they won the war against Sisro.

In this song, they said (5:28), בעד החלון נשקפה ותיבב אם, סיסרא... מדוע בושש רכבו לבוא, מדוע סיסרא's mother was looking out the window, crying... Why isn't his chariot here yet? Why is he coming so late?"<sup>10</sup>

Why was Sisro's mother so worried about her son? Sisro was a powerful warrior; he won every war he fought. She should have assumed he would certainly win this war too. Apparently, she thought, "He won every war until now, but maybe this time it will be different?"

The past doesn't promise the future.

So although we are obligated to be happy on Rosh Hashanah, and to have positive thoughts, trusting that Hashem will grant us a good year, we also need fear. It is the mixture of both emotions that are *mesugal* for attaining a good year.

Further on, we will elaborate on these two conflicting emotions that we need on Rosh Hashanah: joy and fear.

### ***Tefillah***

Tefillos are always powerful, particularly tefillos said at the beginning of the year.

It states (*Iyov* 22:28), ותגזר, אומר ויקם לך "Whatever you

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**10.** Several laws of shofar are learned from this *pasuk*, because the Navi calls her cries תיבב, and Onkelus on תרועה writes, יבבא. This tells us that a shofar should sound like someone crying.

The Midrash states that Sisro's mother shed one hundred tears. This is the origin of our custom to blow the shofar one hundred times on Rosh Hashanah.

decree will occur." A Yid requests, and Hashem grants him his wishes. The Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 106., *Rashi*) teaches that this *pasuk* refers especially to *tefillos* said at the beginning of the year. *Tefillos* said at the beginning of the year are very effective.<sup>11</sup>

The Aruch L'Ner teaches that *tefillos* are always powerful, but the uniqueness of the *tefillos* said at the beginning of the year is that such *tefillos* are always answered.

Therefore, let's take advantage of the *tefillos* on

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**11.** The Gemara is discussing a hired worker who didn't listen to his boss, and instead of planting wheat kernels, as he was required to, he planted barley.

If the barley grew, he would need to pay the landowner for the financial loss he caused him, because wheat is more valuable than barley and sells for more money.

But there was a flood. A river overflowed, and all crops of his field and of other people's fields were destroyed.

The negligent worker claims that he doesn't have to pay, because even if he planted wheat it wouldn't grow.

The Gemara says that he has to pay. As *Rashi* explains, the owner of the field tells him, "At the beginning of the year, I didn't pray that the barley crop should succeed. I prayed that the wheat crop should succeed." If his worker would have planted wheat, as instructed, his *tefillah* could have saved the crops. Either the river wouldn't overflow, or some other miracle would occur. Either way, his crops would be safe, because he prayed for the success of his wheat crop at the beginning of the year. But the worker planted barley, which didn't have the protection from the *tefillah*.

We see from this Gemara the amazing power of *tefillos*, and especially those said at the beginning of the year.

Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, and Aseres Yemei Teshuvah. Our *tefillos* can make the difference.<sup>12</sup>

As a child, Reb Yitzchak Tuvyah Weiss *shlita* (the *gavod* of Yerushalayim) lived in a city about four kilometers from Pressburg. He remembers when the Germans entered his city and ordered the members of the Jewish community to board the trains. The Germans claimed that they were transporting them to a work camp, and all those who remain behind will be shot.

The Jewish community didn't know whether this was a hoax, to bring them to gas chambers, or if it was true. The rabbanim

and community leaders didn't know whether they should encourage people to listen to the Germans, or if they should encourage everyone to hide and escape.

Reb Tuvyah Weiss (still a child) was sent to Pressburg, to take counsel from the ראש הקהל of Pressburg.

The ראש הקהל of Pressburg replied that they were in great danger, no matter what they do.

He also told him that the king of England agreed to save one thousand children. The ראש הקהל said, "I don't know who to save, and who has precedence over whom. But since you

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**12.** Reb Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld *zt'l* wouldn't listen to *shidduchim* for his children unless he davened for their *shidduch* on Rosh Hashanah. Once, a *shidduch* was suggested for one of his children and pressure was placed on him to consider it. He didn't really want to consider it, because he didn't pray for that child's *shidduch* on Rosh Hashanah. But due to the pressure, he considered it, and the *shidduch* was finalized. Sadly, this marriage didn't last too long, *rachmana litzlan*.

came here, take a ticket and save yourself."

Reb Tuvyah gave over the bleak report to the community leaders of his city, and then Reb Tuvya went home to quickly pack his bags. He said goodbye to his parents, and went on the transport.

(His mother's last words to him were that he must always remember that he is a Yid.)

Soon, he was safe on English soil, together with a thousand other children.

The king of England wanted to see the thousand children he saved.

The children stood on both sides of the road, and the king drove between them.

There was a courageous lad standing next to Reb Tuvyah Weiss. When the king's chariot came near, this boy jumped forward. The king's servants wanted to send the boy off, but the king said he wants to hear

what the child has to say. The child thanked the king for saving so many children, "But it upsets me that the king's compassion isn't perfect, because I left my parents and family behind. How can I be happy with my salvation when I'm worried about the safety of my parents and family?" The king asked him for his parents' address.

Two weeks later, his parents and extended family came to England.

Reb Tuvyah Weiss Shlita emphasized that this courageous boy took advantage of the king's presence. There were another nine hundred and ninety nine children there, but none of them thought to come forward to speak with the king. Only this boy did, and he benefitted so much from that.

Let this be a reminder that we should take advantage of our ability to daven, which we have at this time of year. The King

is present, as it states: דרשו ה' בהמצאו. If we take advantage, and we call out to Him, we will earn so much.

### Ask for a Lot

During Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, some people ask for a drop more money, or

a little bit more success, etc. But we can ask for so much more, and Hashem will give it to us. This is the time when our *tefillos* are answered. And as the Aruch l'Ner writes, our *tefillos* at this time will certainly be answered. Therefore, why shouldn't we ask for a lot?<sup>13</sup>

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**13.** An angel once said to a person, "Ask whatever you want, and your wishes will be granted."

This person was blind, poor, and childless. What should he ask for? He can only ask for one thing, but he needs three salvations. He said, "I want to see my great-grandchildren eating off of golden dishes." When one is given the option to ask, he should ask wisely.

Czar Nicolai would sometimes dress like a regular person, and mingle with the populace, to hear what people are saying about him. Once, he spoke to four people at a bar, and he asked them, "If the king would grant you whatever you want, what would your request be?"

One said, "I'd ask for a million dollars."

Another said, "I would ask for a mansion."

The third requested a bank.

The fourth said, "I request that you leave us in peace, and stop bothering us with your foolish questions. You're not the king, and your hypothetical question is bothersome and a waste of our time."

The king wrote letters to all four people. To one he gave a million

Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz *zt'l* told the following story:

An enemy soldier aimed and shot his rifle at Czar Nicolai. A soldier loyal to Nicolai saw this and shouted loudly. Because of the shout, Nicolai's horse jumped. This saved Nicolai's life, as the bullet

hit the horse instead of Nicolai himself.

"You saved my life," Nicolai said to the soldier. "Your shouts caused the horse to leap, and that saved me. How can I repay you?"

The soldier replied, "I don't get along well with the commander of my unit.

dollars. To the second, a mansion. To the third he gave a bank. And to the fourth he wrote, "You wanted to be left in peace, therefore I will do so."

These days, the King is giving us the option to request whatever we want. We should be wise, and be like the first three, and not like the fourth, who didn't recognize the potential that was right in front of him.

When the poor go around a *beis medrash* collecting money, they don't get too much money. The *mispalelim* generally give small donations - a quarter, a dollar, and the like. But when the poor visit the wealthy in their homes, they get larger donations. What's the difference?

Reb Tzaddok HaCohen explained that the paupers don't expect to get too much money in the *beis medresh*, and that's the reason they don't. When the pauper goes to the wealthy homes, he expects to receive more, and therefore he receives more.

The lesson is that one receives according to his expectations, and therefore when we daven we should raise our expectations. Then we will receive more.

I want to be moved to a different brigade."

"No problem," Nicolai said. "Your request will be fulfilled. But you are a fool, because you could have requested so much more, and I would have given it to you. You could have asked to be the general, and I would have granted that to you."

Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz *zy'a* taught that people are just as foolish when they ask for small things from Hashem. They can ask for so much more, and Hashem will grant it to them.

The Midrash (ילקוט מעם לעז) (ראה "נתן נתן") tells a story that happened when Alexander Mokdon came to Eretz Yisrael. A Yid came forward, greeted Alexander, and blessed him.

Alexander rewarded him with a city.

Alexander's servants asked, "He is a poor man.

He would be satisfied with a smaller present too. Why did you give him a city?"

Alexander replied, "When one gives a present, it should be a present in the eyes of the giver, and not according to the perception of the receiver."

The Lev Simchah *zt'l* repeated this Midrash and explained that when Hashem gives us presents, it should also be according to how Hashem understands the notion of a present.

As we say in תפילת טל (said on Pesach): דוד כערכך העמד שמינו, "Friend, according to Your assessments, establish our name." This means that Hashem should give us kindness as He understands kindness, for that will be a much greater kindness than when it is given according to our limited perception.

### Everyone Can Daven

Perhaps you will say that you are on a low level, and you fear that Hashem won't accept your *tefillos*. Therefore, we say in the *yotzros* of Rosh Hashanah, ומשוה קטן וגדול, "Hashem acts equally towards the small and the great people." Even if you are on a low level, Hashem will accept your *tefillos*.

The word וּבָנָה, is repeated several times in the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur *Shemonah Esrei*. The Abudarham explains that the word comes from the *pasuk* וּבָנָה אֲבוּיָה אֶל הַמֶּלֶךְ (*Esther* 4:16), "And in this manner I will go to the king," because on Rosh Hashanah, we come before the King.

The *pasuk* states, וּבָנָה אֲבוּיָה, "and in this manner I will go to the king, which isn't proper." Rebbe Yehoshua of Belz *zt'l* explains that we say וּבָנָה to express אֲבוּיָה, that even those people who aren't acting properly,

according to the Torah, they too can come before the King in prayer, and Hashem accepts their *tefillos*.

### Hav! Hav!

The *Zohar* says that those who daven for their personal needs on Rosh Hashanah are like dogs who shout, "Hav hav - Give more, give more!" The *Zohar* explains that on Rosh Hashana, one should primarily pray for *ruchniyos* (spirituality), and for the coming of Moshiach. Nevertheless, *tzaddikim* say that we should daven for *gashmiyos* too. As Rebbe Meir of Premishlan *zt'l* once said in a prayer to Hashem, "If You take the essence of all the *tefillos* of Klal Yisrael, You will see that it is all about money. (Everyone is asking for money, and that is their primary *tefillah*.) But when You consider the purpose of money, it is solely about *mitzvos*." Klal Yisrael uses their money to

pay for cheder and school, to marry off their children, and so they can make Shabbos and Yom Tov seudos, etc.

The *Zohar* says we shouldn't daven for *gashmiyos*, and we don't. Even when we ask for *parnassah*, health, and our other needs, it so that we can serve Hashem.

One year, before *tekiyas shofar*, the Baal Shem Tov *zy'a* told his students to daven for *parnassah* and for all their worldly needs.

The students were surprised, because they knew that the *Zohar* says we shouldn't daven for *gashmiyos* on Rosh Hashanah.

The Baal Shem Tov explained to them that when Hashem grants their *gashmiyus* requests, it will enable them to be devoted to *avodas Hashem*. Thus, even asking for *gashmiyos* can be called davening for *ruchmiyos*.<sup>14</sup>

Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz *zy'a* also encouraged people to daven for their physical needs on Rosh Hashanah. He said, "Those who don't ask, don't have."

Rebbe Asher of Stolin *zy'a* says, "The *Zohar* prohibits shouting, "*hav hav* - Give more, give more!" This prohibition is when he has enough, but he wants more. But for one who doesn't have enough,

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**14.** Another benefit of praying for your material needs is that such a *tefillah* is often more sincere, since these matters lay heavily on one's heart. The Tzemech Tzedek said that when one asks for his personal needs, it is *teshuva'ah iloya* (a very high level of *teshuva'ah*), because his words come with sincerity and truth from the depths of his heart to Hashem.

there is nothing wrong with asking.<sup>15</sup>

We say in the Rosh Hashanah Shemonei Esrei, קדוש אתה ונורא שמך ואין אלו"ה מבלעדך. Rebbe Moshe of Kobrin *zt'l* explains that we are saying that Hashem is קדוש, extremely holy, and it doesn't seem right to ask Hashem for *parnassah* and other worldly matters.<sup>16</sup>

However, we say, אין אלו"ה מבלעדך, "There is no other G-d but You." We are telling Hashem, "Perhaps it seems disrespectful to ask You for our worldly needs, but where else can we go to get our needs? Who can help us, if not You? Only You can give us our needs,

therefore it is proper that we request them from You."

Also, on Rosh Hashanah, we ask Hashem for our needs, and thereby we express our *emunah* that we are totally dependent on Him.

### Torah

In *Shofros* (said in *mussaf Shemonah Esrei*) we discuss the shofar of *mattan Torah*, because the merit of Torah helps us in the judgment.

*Shulchan Aruch* (585:1) states, "The custom is to blow the shofar at the *bimah* where the Torah is read." The *Mishnah Berurah*

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15. The tzaddikim of Karlin *zy'a* taught their chassidim to read *Parashas Haman* every day of Aseres Yemei Teshuvah. At this time Hashem is determining our *parnassah* for the entire upcoming year, so we should daven for *parnassah*.

16. It can be compared to going to a great, powerful king and telling him that you need help changing a lightbulb or that you need a ride to the store. There are things that aren't appropriate to ask from a king. And similarly, it doesn't seem correct to ask Hashem for *gashmiyos*.

explains that we do so, "so the merit of Torah shall protect us, and Hashem will remember us *l'tovah* (for good)."

For many people, there isn't much time to learn Torah on Rosh Hashanah (depending on how long the *tefillah* is), however, it is

worthwhile to set a time for studying Torah on Rosh Hashanah, as this helps us in the judgment.<sup>17</sup>

Also, one can make a *kabbalah* on this day to study more Torah in the upcoming year. This *kabbalah* will help us attain a good judgment.<sup>18</sup>

**17.** When the Brisker Rav *zt'l* had time on Rosh Hashanah, he said *Tehillim*. He explained that *Tehillim* is also Torah, and on Rosh Hashanah he wants to be busy only with Torah and *tefillah*.

He explained that when he studies Gemara, he occasionally stops to look something up, and on Rosh Hashanah, he wanted to be occupied in Torah and *tefillah* constantly.

**18.** On the *pasuk*, לא תקח שוחד, "Don't take a bribe," Rebbe Naftali of Ropshitz *zy'a* explains that one shouldn't take *shochad* from the mitzvos. The mitzvos are endlessly precious and beloved. Sometimes, this lures people to be so occupied with their performance that they forget to make Torah study a prominent focus in their life. The Torah urges us, "don't take this bribe. Make Torah study prominent in your life."

Rebbe Dovid of Tolne *zy'a* asked someone why he doesn't learn Torah. The man replied, "I don't have *yishuv hadaas* (peace of mind)."

The Rebbe told him, "One doesn't need *yishuv hadaas* to study Torah, because one can study without *yishuv hadaas*, and as he studies, the Torah will give him *yishuv hadaas*."

It states (*Koheles* 8), האלקים עשה את האדם ישר והמה בקשו חשבנות רבים, "Hashem made man straight and they sought many thoughts." If a person's mind isn't straight anymore, how can he straighten it out? Rebbe

## Humble Beginnings

The Chozeh of Lublin *zt'l* came late to *tekiyas shofar*. He explained that he didn't want to begin the mitzvah before he found some good deed that he had done, but due to his humility he only found faults. Then he remembered one good deed he performed. One day, he asked his *gabai* to wake him early, because he wanted to perform a certain mitzvah. The *gabai* overslept, and by the time the Chozeh awoke, it was too late to do the mitzvah.

The Chozeh wanted to rebuke his *gabai* harshly for his negligence, but then he reconsidered. "Why did I want to wake up early? It's because I wanted to do Hashem's will. Now Hashem's will is that I shouldn't get angry." When the *gabai* came in, the

Chozeh spoke with the *gabai* as usual. He didn't show any signs of anger. It was with this merit in mind, that he came to *tekiyas shofar*.

One factor that we see in this story is the Chozeh's broken heart when he came to hear the *tekiyas*. He felt that he doesn't have any merits, aside from that one good deed. It is with such feelings of humility, that we should approach the *tekiyas* and *tefillos* on Rosh Hashanah.

Before starting the *tekiyas*, Rebbe Yissacher Dov of Belz *zt'l* shouted, "Hashem! Only You know my broken heart." And then he began *Min HaMeitzar* and *tekiyas shofar*.

The Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 16:) writes, כל שנה שרשה בתחלתה מתעשרת בסופה, "Every year that the Jewish nation is poor at the

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Shlomo of Karlin *zy'a* replied, "With a *blatt* Gemara." Studying Gemara makes a person calm, tranquil, and settled.

beginning will be successful in the end."

According to Tosfos, *שרשה*, poor, is literal. When Klal Yisrael are poor, and they feel desolate, this rouses Hashem's compassion and they will have a good year. As Tosfos writes, *שמתוך שישראלים רשים לבם, נשבר ומרחמים עליהם מן השמים*, "Yidden are poor, their hearts are broken, and this rouses Heaven's compassion."

Rashi writes, *עושין עצמן רשין בר"ה לדבר תחנונים ותפלה כענין שנאמר תחנונים ידבר רש*, "They act like they are poor on Rosh Hashanah, for they daven in a pleading manner. As it states (*Mishlei* 18), "The poor plead."

So according to *Rashi*, it isn't that they are actually poor, rather they pray with a feeling of desperation, in the manner that the poor plead for help. When Klal Yisrael prays that way on Rosh Hashanah, they will merit a good year.

We can also explain that *רש*, poor, means that people feel that they don't deserve a good year. They remember their *aveiros*, shortcomings, and faults, and feel spiritually poor. As the Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 26:) says, Rosh Hashanah we should use a curved shofar, because "On Rosh Hashanah, the more one bends his heart [with humility], the better." He should feel that he isn't worthy of anything. That will help him receive a good judgment.

One year, before Rosh Hashanah, the Baal Shem Tov *zy'a* taught Reb Wolf Kitzes *zy'a* the kabalistic and chassidic thoughts to contemplate when he blows shofar.

Reb Wolf wrote them down, so he could remember them when he blows shofar, but he lost the paper.

He blew the shofar that year amidst many tears and with a very broken

heart, because he regretted that he couldn't blow the shofar in the most ideal way, concentrating on the *kavanos* the Baal Shem Tov had taught him.

After *mussaf*, he told the Baal Shem Tov that he lost the paper, and he forgot all the *kavanos*. He feared that this might mean the *tekiyos* didn't accomplish what they were supposed to.

The Baal Shem Tov told him that he wanted him to lose the paper, because he wanted Reb Wolf to blow the shofar with a broken heart. The Baal Shem Tov explained, "The kabbalistic thoughts (*kavanos*) are keys that open the locks of heaven. Each kabbalistic thought opens another lock. But a broken heart is an ax that opens up all the doors and locks of heaven. Your *tekiyos*, blown with a broken heart, went straight up to heaven and accomplished everything."

The *baal makri* (the one who calls out *tekiyah*, *shevarim*,

etc.) asked my grandfather, Rebbe Dovid Biderman *zy'a*, what kabbalistic *kavanos* he should have in mind when he calls out the *tekiyos*. Rebbe Dovid Biderman replied, "I don't know *kavanos* and you also don't know. But one *kavanah* I will tell you. *Shevarim* is a small broken heart, and *truah* is a big broken heart."

Reb Velvel Eisenbach *zt'l* was from the elders of Yerushalayim. He was *niftar* a few years ago on Rosh Hashanah at the age of 106. He repeated what he heard from his grandfather, who heard it from his grandfather, to whom the following story happened.

When this great-great-grandfather was a child, he was by Rebbe Aharon Chernobyler *zy'a* for Rosh Hashanah. He told that he *davened* on a balcony, which was built to accompany the many guests who came for *yom tov*. It was extremely

crowded there, and he fainted.

People threw water on the child, and they gave him water to drink. They also brought him to the large opening in the floor, which opened to the beis medresh below, so he would have air.

Lying there, he was able to watch Rebbe Aharon Chernobyler approach the *bimah* for *tekiyas shofar*. He was also able to hear the *vort* Rebbe Aharon Chernobyler said before the *tekiyos*.

Rebbe Aharon said, "It is written (*Tehillim* 47), עלה אלקים בתרועה Elokim represents *middas hadin* (punishment). עלה אלקים, the *midas hadin* is raised and removed, בתרועה, with a broken heart.

The next words are ה' עלה... בקול שופר. This can mean ה', Hashem's compassion (represented by the name הו"ה) will also ascend and leave us, בקול שופר, when one thinks that everything is good, and he isn't worried at all."<sup>19</sup>

When the Rebbe said this, the entire congregation cried. The child became wet again, this time from their tears.

### Tears

The Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 59.) states, "From the day the Beis HaMikdash was destroyed, the gates of tefillah were closed... Yet, the gates of tears weren't locked."

Therefore, it is important to pray with tears.

There are *techinos* (supplications) written in

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19. שפר means good, as we say in the Rosh Hashanah *tefillah*, שפרו מעשיכם, improve [make good] your deeds..." and as the Gemara says, שפיר קא אמרת, "You said well."

Yiddish. They were composed so women who don't understand *lashon hakadosh* can also pray.

There were also many ignorant men (*am ha'aratzim*) in the past generations who didn't know *lashon hakadosh*. Yet *techinot* weren't composed for them. Why?

It is because we primarily need the *tefillot* of the women, because they daven with tears, and tears break down all barriers.<sup>20</sup>

A young girl came to a jewelry store, and she was focused on a certain necklace on display. "Is that a real necklace?" she asked the merchant.

"It is real gold," the merchant affirmed.

"Can I see it?"

The merchant knew that most likely, the girl couldn't buy the necklace. Nevertheless, he didn't mind doing her a favor.

He gave her the necklace to hold, and her eyes lit up. "How much does it cost."

"A lot of money. Too much for a young girl like yourself."

"I want to buy it," she said. "I have money."

She opened her purse and took out seven dollars and eighty cents.

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20. Reb Elyah Lopian *zt'l* said he received through *kabbalah* that on the *yomim nora'im* the women who stay home to take care of their children have their own, individual channel that elevates their *tefillot* before Hashem's throne. Although they pray less, and they don't have the benefit of davening with a congregation, their few words of *tefillah* can accomplish what an entire holy *kehilah* accomplishes with many hours of *tefillah*. Partly, this is because of the special quality of *tefillah* with tears, which women excel in. These *tefillot* are always answered.

Startled by her determination, the merchant asked her, "Why do you want the necklace?"

"Our mother died last year. My older sister takes care of us, and today is her birthday. I know she will like this necklace. I want to buy it for her."

"But it costs a lot more money than \$7.80. I'm sorry. I have nothing in the store for that amount of money."

The girl cried.

The merchant's heart broke for this girl and for her family. "You can have the necklace," he told her, and he took the seven dollars and eighty cents as payment.

Later that day, the older sister came to the store.

"Did my younger sister buy this necklace in your store today?"

"Yes."

"How much did it cost?"

The merchant explained, "My store doesn't have set prices. I quote a price, and the consumer says his budget. We negotiate until we reach a decision. Your sister bargained well with me, and convinced me to sell it for less."

This story illustrates how people will accede to your requests, when you touch their heart with tears.

Tears touch people's hearts. *Keviyachol*, something similar occurs when we cry before Hashem. Our tears open up all gates, and our *tefillos* are answered.

The Satmar Rebbe *zt'l* told the following *mashal*:

A prince rebelled against his father, the king, and was imprisoned in a distant land for many years. The queen yearned to see her child, so she traveled the long distance and spoke with her son from outside the prison walls.

The son told her how terrible it was in prison. She threw him a key to unlock the gate, so he could go free, but the key didn't work.

"Perhaps it's the wrong key," the prince said. "The lock isn't budging."

"It's the right key," she replied. "The problem is that you've been in jail a long time and the lock became rusty. The only solution is that you must cry. Your tears will wash away the corrosion, and the lock will open."

The *nimshal* is that when we *daven* with tears, it will open up every lock, and we can return to our Father in heaven.

The Yismach Moshe said, "A king was angry at his servants and they didn't know what to do to appease him. The king's *sar hamashkim* said, "I have the solution. There's a good wine that the king loves. I'll give him the wine, and

when he is in a happy mood, he will certainly forgive us."

As it says, מלך מתרצה בדמעות, "The King who is appeased with tears."

Reb Shlomo Kluger *zt'l* taught that since tears on Rosh Hashanah are so precious, one should pray *before* Rosh Hashanah that he should be able to cry on Rosh Hashanah. He said that this is alluded to in the *pasuk* (*Tehillim* 42), צמאה נפשי לאלקים לא"ל חי... היתה לי דמעותי. Reb Shlomo Kluger explained, צמאה נפשי, my heart thirsts, לאלקים, that on the day of judgment - Rosh Hashanah, היתה לי דמעותי, I should be able to cry.

In *Selichos* we say, מכניסי דמעה הכניסו דמעותינו לפני מלך מתרצה בדמעות, "[*Malachim*] who bring in the tears, bring our tears before the King who is appeased with tears."

This can be explained with a *mashal*:

After working for a long time in a store, the salesperson knew the store well, and he knew what his boss would say when a customer asks for a deduction or some other special arrangement.

One day, the boss told the salesperson, "When a consumer wants a reduction or another special deal, you don't have to ask me for permission anymore, because you know what I will say. But that is solely for minor matters. However, if a businessman comes to the store and he desires to do big business with us, you don't have authorization to make those decisions on your own. All you can do is usher the businessman into my office for a meeting."

Similarly, we tell the *malachim* that they mustn't tend to our tears. All they can do is take our tears and bring them before Hashem. The *malachim* aren't able to understand the depth, sincerity, yearning, and

pain that the tears of the Jewish nation contain. And being that tears are so powerful, we want that only Hashem should deal with them.

As the Rebbe of Piasnetza *zt'l*, *hy'd*, (who was killed in the Holocaust) said, "Did a *malach* ever experience the pain of being beaten up, as Yidden have experienced? Does a *malach* know the humiliation of being pursued and hunted? Did a *malach* ever experience the pain of hunger?"

Therefore, we tell the *malachim* to daven for us (השתדלו והרבה תחינה) but when it comes to our tears, they should kindly just bring them before Hashem. They shouldn't get involved with the tears, at all.

### **Tears Rouse *Kavanah***

The *Alef HaMagen* (582:45 and see *Maaseh Rav*, Gr'a 207) writes that if by nature one is unable to cry, he should pray on Rosh Hashanah in

a sobbing voice, like one who is crying. This will awaken his *kavanah* and it will arouse his merits Above. As it states (*Tehillim* 6:9), "כי שמע ה' קול בכי", "Hashem heard *the voice* of my cries." It isn't an actual cry. Nevertheless, Hashem hears *the voice* of the cries.

As we wrote above, the Gemara (*Bava Metzia* 59) states that the gates of tefillah are locked, but the gates of tears remain opened.

Reb Eliyahu Dessler *zt'l* explains that the gates of tefillah are open. The problem is that the gates to our hearts are closed, and we don't daven with *kavanah*. But when we cry (or when we daven in a crying voice), this arouses our *kavanah*, and the gates of heaven are open to receive our *tefillah*.

## Tears of Joy

Reb Chaim Vital *zt'l* writes, "Although Rosh Hashanah is a *yom tov*, the Arizal would cry a lot during the *tefillos* of Rosh Hashanah. On Yom Kippur, he cried even more. He would say that if one doesn't cry on these days, it's a sign that his *neshamah* isn't complete."

Crying isn't a contradiction to the joy of *yom tov*. The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* taught that בכייה (crying) is *roshei teivos* בשמך יגילון כל היום, "In Your name we rejoice all day long."

Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer explains that when one is happy, he is able to cry whenever he wants to. It isn't crying from fear or distress, rather it is from a yearning for Hashem.<sup>21</sup>

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21. Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz *zt'l* (*Imrei Pinchas* ח"ט) notes that in *Nechemyah* (8:10) it states that we should be happy on Rosh Hashanah. However, the Arizal teaches that if someone doesn't

We eat דבש honey on Rosh Hashanah. The Rebbe of Gostinen *zt'l* said that ש"ד is *roshei teivos* שימה דמעתי דב"ש, *בנאדך*, "Put my tears in Your bag." It shouldn't surprise us that the tears are implied in the word דבש, honey, because every part of Rosh Hashanah, including tears, is sweetened with deep happiness.<sup>22</sup>

### Tears with the *Shofar*

One year, the Bardichover Rav *zy'a* raised

his shofar, and called out to the women's section, "The shofar needs to be rinsed," and they all cried.

The Arvei Nachal *zy'a* told the following *mashal*:

A king was traveling with his son in a distant country, and he told his son, "Be cautious, because I have enemies here who want to hurt us."

But the prince wasn't cautious, and evil people

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cry on Rosh Hashanah it's a sign his *neshamah* isn't complete. The answer is that it is similar to the joy of a *chasunah*. The *simchah* is great, but there's fear there as well, as they hope the marriage will be successful, peaceful, etc. Similarly, on this great day of judgment, the day the world was created, there is immense joy, because Hashem is מחדש, renews, His *meluchah* (kingship), and we, human beings, made of earth, have the privilege to announce Hashem as the king. Is there a greater joy than that? On the other hand, we cry, because we don't know what the future holds.

22. Rebbe Naftali of Melitz *zt'l* said that דבש is *roshei teivos* for שימי דמעתי בנאדך, "Place my tears in Your pouch." He explained: When Hashem desires to write good things for the Jewish nation, the Satan dries the inkwell, and the ink doesn't write. We request, שימי דמעתי בנאדך, "Place a drop of our tears into Your inkwell, and then you will be able to write with it."

Rebbe Moshe of Kobrin *zt'l* said that דבש is *gematriya* אב הרחמן, compassionate Father.

kidnapped the prince and held him captive.

The prince knew the day, each year, when the king passed through that country. The prince planned to shout on that designated day. The king would hear him and save him.

His kidnapers knew the prince's plan, so they put him in an iron room, where his voice couldn't be heard.

The child had special stones that he received from his father, years before. These stones had a *segulah* that when they are thrown at an iron wall, the wall collapses.

As the king passed through the city, his son was throwing the stones at the iron walls, but the walls didn't fall down. This was because only clean stones have this special power, and his stones weren't clean.

The child cried, and his tears fell on the stones, cleansing them.

The prince threw another stone, and this time the wall fell down. The king heard the prince's shouts and saved him.

The Arvei Nachal explains that the shofar has the potential to break down the iron walls that separate us from our Father in heaven and to bring the long awaited *geulah*. But it doesn't seem to be working, though. Why? The answer is that the shofar works together with tears. It will not function fully when one blows it without a broken heart and tears.

As we wrote above, if one can't cry, he can pretend to cry. The main thing is that they should be tears of yearning and joy, and not tears of worry and distress. The tears, combined with the call of the shofar, knock down all iron barriers.

### ***Tehillim***

Klal Yisrael has a custom to say more *Tehillim* these days.<sup>23</sup>

Throughout Rosh Hashanah, the Baal HaTanya *zy'a* was busy with either his *machzor* or with his *Tehillim*.

The Brisker Rav *zt'l* also used every spare moment of Rosh Hashanah to say *Tehillim* (as we mentioned above).

**23.** There is a *segulah* to say the entire *Tehillim* twice on the first night of Rosh Hashanah. I know people who have practiced this *segulah*, and saw miracles.

The *magid*, Reb Ben Tzion Yadler *zt'l*, gathered a group of older *bachurim* on the night of Rosh Hashanah and they said the entire *Tehillim* twice. All of them got engaged shortly thereafter.

There's an *askan* in Eretz Yisrael who had two boys and a girl in *shidduchim* and nothing was progressing. They didn't even hear offers. They did this *segulah*, and the three were engaged that year.

A *yungerman* told me that his wife suffered from an illness, and every few weeks she was hospitalized. One year he did this *segulah*, and she never returned to the hospital for that illness again.

Another person, who had the privilege of marrying off all his children, had three couples who didn't have any children. The father did this *segulah*, he said *Tehillim* twice on Rosh Hashanah night, and that year all three of them were blessed with a child.

I've heard several other stories of people who received their salvation with this *segulah*.

Obviously, this is a very hard *segulah* to do, and it isn't advised for everyone. If keeping this custom will prevent you from being awake and alert by the tefillos, it is probably better to refrain from doing it. It is more important to daven with *kavanah*.

However, even if one can't say the entire *Tehillim* twice, one can say some *Tehillim* on Rosh Hashanah night (and over the two days of Rosh Hashanah). Another idea is for a family to divide the *Tehillim* between themselves, so they say the entire *Tehillim* twice, jointly.

The Emek HaMelech *zt'l* writes the following story:

In a village near Leport, there lived a simple person who only knew Tanach. He was *niftar* at an old age, and thirty days after his demise, he came to the *chacham* and *tzaddik* of the city in a dream, holding an old *Tehillim*. The *chacham* asked, "Aren't you the person we buried recently?"

"Yes, it is I."

"What's that *sefer* under your arm?"

"It's a *Tehillim*. I came to tell you to warn the people of the town where I lived, that they should escape. When I was alive, I said the entire *Tehillim* daily.<sup>24</sup> I did this for several years, and my *Tehillim* protected the entire town. But now they don't have this protection anymore."

In the morning, the *chacham* told the people of the town his dream. Those who escaped survived. Those who remained perished.

The Emek HaMelech concludes, "From the day my father heard this story, he would say the entire *Tehillim* each week, because whoever says *Tehillim* regularly saves himself, his family, and his generation from all kinds of sorrows. He brings down bounty, *brachos*, and *hatzlachos*. Fortunate is the one who is *זוכה ומזכה הרבים*, who does good for himself and for others."

The Noam Elimelech writes, "Some people ask, 'How can a *tzaddik* pray for an ill person and the sick person becomes better?' The answer is that man is connected to all worlds. When he sins, he

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**24.** The Shlah's version of this story is that he would finish *Tehillim* once each week.

becomes detached from his connection above, and the result is that he becomes ill, *rachmana litzlan*. When the tzaddik davens, he reconnects the person to his source, to where he was before. Automatically, he becomes healed. However sometimes, the tzaddik's *tefillah* doesn't help, *chalilah*, because there is a *kitrug*. [There are prosecuting angels in heaven who prevent the person from becoming reconnected to his source in heaven, due to his sins]. When this occurs, he needs to become attached to the עולם הגדול, הנקרא תהלה, to the great world called 'Tehillah', because that world is solely a great light, and the *mekatrigim* (prosecuting angels) aren't able to get in his way. In that world there is solely compassion, רחמים גמורים, and everything is fixed. This is the reason Dovid HaMelech's songs are called תהלים, because with them, one can accomplish everything (because when one says *Tehillim*, he becomes

attached to the world of compassion called Tehillah). There is no Satan there and there are no problems."

These amazing words give us a glimpse at the wonders of *Tehillim*. When we say *Tehillim*, we are being connected to a place where there is only compassion. Therefore, with *Tehillim*, we can attain all our needs.

### **Simanim**

*Shulchan Aruch* (583:1) states, "One should eat on Rosh Hashanah רוביא...כרתי, סלקא, תמרי, קרא. When he eats the רוביא he should say יהי רצון שירבו זכויותנו כרתי. When he eats כרתי he should say יכרתו שונאינו... Some have the custom to eat an apple sweetened in honey, and to say, תתחדש עלינו שנה טובה מתוקה, "Make this new year a good, sweet year", and that is the popular custom. Some eat pomegranates and say, נרבה זכויות כרימון. And the custom is to eat fatty meat and all types of sweet foods."

The *Mishnah Berurah* writes, "There are those who don't cook sour foods on Rosh Hashanah, such as borsht and the like. Those who eat fish as a *segula* that we should multiply like fish, shouldn't cook it in vinegar."<sup>25</sup>

The origin of this concept is the Gemara (*Krisus* 6) that states, סימנא הווי מילתא, a sign has significance.

The *meforshim* elaborate on how making *simanim* has an effect on the year.

The *Eliyahu Rabba* (quoted in *Mishnah Berurah*) writes, "The Shlah teaches that these signs remind the person to rouse himself to do *teshuvah* and to pray for these matters."

For example, when he eats the apple in honey, he

is reminded to daven for a sweet, good year, and he does *teshuvah* to merit this. It is the same with all the *simanim*. They are reminders to do *teshuvah* and to pray for these matters.

Reb Shlomo Kluger's (*Chachmas Shlomo*) approach is that these foods show our *bitachon* that it will surely be a sweet, good year. More than the foods, it's the *bitachon* in one's heart, combined with his words, which make it a good year. He writes, "The idea isn't that eating these foods is a tefillah, because eating isn't a tefillah. Rather, we eat these foods to illustrate our trust that Hashem will give us a good year. We eat these sweet, good foods, and we say on them [that it should be a good year] so if *chas veshalom* there was a

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25. As we write above, Rebbe Pinchas of Koritz *zt'l* explains that we don't eat sour foods on Rosh Hashanah because we don't want to make a sour face on this day. We want to show solely expressions of pleasure and satisfaction, as a good sign for the upcoming year.

harsh decree, it will be turned over for good, by our words. Amen, so shall be His will."

So according to Reb Shlomo Kluger, the *simanim* are demonstrations of our *bitachon*. We express our *bitachon* with words, and this turns over all harsh decrees for the good.

Reb Shlomo Kluger adds, "On Rosh Hashanah, after *shacharis*, one should say, כל מה דעביד רחמנא לטב עביד, 'Everything Hashem does is for the good.' וגם זו לטובה 'This, too, is good.' This turns things over so that they should truly be good."

### The Primary *Siman*

The Gemara (*Brachos* 18) tells us, "A chassid gave a *dinar* to a poor person on *erev* Rosh Hashanah. His wife was angry with him for doing so, so that night he slept in the cemetery. He heard two *neshamos* (who were buried in the cemetery) speaking with each other. One said, "My

friend, let's swim around the world and listen in from behind the curtain [of heaven] to know which punishments are coming to the world."

The other soul said she can't swim around the world, since she is buried in a mat of reeds.

So one soul went alone and when she returned she said to her friend, "Heaven decreed that all crops planted by the first rain will be ruined by hail."

The chassid heard their conversation, and he planted his field by the second rain. Everyone's crop was ruined except for his.

The next year he returned to the cemetery and he heard the souls speaking again. One asked the other to join her on her travels to heaven, to hear what will be decreed that year. Like the previous year, the other said she can't travel, because she

was buried in a mat of reeds. So the soul went by herself. She returned and said, "I heard from heaven that the crops planted by the *second* rain will be destroyed by disease (*shidafon*)."

That year everyone planted by the second rain. (They remembered that the previous year only the chassid's crops prospered because he planted by the second rain, so they planted that year before the second rain.)

And this time, the chassid planted before the *first* rains. His crops grew well and everyone else's harvest was ruined.<sup>26</sup>

When we think about this Gemara, we understand that the chassid had terrible *simanim* on his Rosh Hashanah. We can't imagine worse *simanim*! His wife was angry at him and he ended up sleeping in a cemetery! But despite the bad signs, he became wealthy two years in a row! This is because even more important than the foods we eat, is the person's disposition. This chassid remained happy, despite having to sleep in the graveyard because his wife was angry with him. His happiness brought him two successful years.

As we see, the primary *siman* is joy. As the Mishnah

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**26.** The *Iyun Yaakov* explains, "It seems to me that the chassid [slept in the cemetery] because he was afraid that if he remains at home, he might quarrel with his wife on Rosh Hashanah [and it certainly isn't a good *siman* to fight on Rosh Hashanah night]. He didn't want to sleep in somebody else's house, to protect his wife's honor. He chose to sleep in the cemetery so no one should know about the fight.

"In the merit of *tzedakah* [that he gave to the poor] he was rewarded, because he heard the spirits, and he knew when to plant..."

Berurah writes, "We do the *simanim* for a good *siman* on our year. Therefore, it's obvious that one must be cautious that he doesn't become angry during these days. In addition to the severe sin, one must make a good sign for the new year. Instead, he should be happy and he should trust in Hashem."

People in Yerushalayim would say, "If an apple dipped in honey is a sign for a sweet year, the same way, if a person makes himself a 'sweet Yid,' by keeping a smile on his face and by greeting others warmly, what better sign for the new year could there be?"

The Nesivos Shalom *zy'a* told the following story:

One Rosh Hashanah night, in the home of a certain tzaddik, everything

was going wrong. The *becher* filled for Kiddush spilled on the table, before he was able to say Kiddush. When he was cutting challah, the challah slipped from his hand to the floor.

His rebbetzin didn't serve fish that night, because it burned.

She said, "I'm afraid that these are bad *simanim*. So many negative things are happening."

Her husband replied, "The main *siman* is a happy disposition. We eat meat and sweet foods on Rosh Hashanah because these foods make us happy, and happiness is a good *siman* for the upcoming year. The main *siman* is not what we eat, rather the happiness we have. Baruch Hashem, despite everything, we are happy. So we have a very good *siman* for the coming year."<sup>27</sup>

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27. Someone told Reb Mordechai Chaim Slonimer *zt'l* that he doesn't have enough money to buy a head of a fish, and he is

## Why Are We Happy on Rosh Hashanah?

We've already stated a few of the reasons, and we will repeat them briefly here, adding a few new reasons:

1) It's a mitzvah to be happy, since it's Yom Tov.

An early source for the joy on Rosh Hashanah is the *pesukim* in *Nechemyah* (8:9-10). Rosh Hashanah morning, Ezra read the *sefer Torah* before the entire nation, and they were all crying, because they recognized that they

weren't keeping the Torah properly. It states, ויאמר נחמיה...ועזרא הכהן...לכל העם היום קדוש הוא לה' אלקיכם אל תתאבלו ואל תבנו כי בוכים כל העם כשמעם את דברי התורה, "Nechemya and Ezra said to the nation, 'This is a holy day for Hashem. Don't mourn and don't cry,' because the entire nation cried when they heard the Torah. ויאמר להם לנו אכלו משמנים ושתו ממתקים.. כי קדוש היום לאדונינו ואל תעצבו כי הודת ד' היא מעוזכם, 'Eat fatty foods and drink sweet drinks... because it is a holy day for our Master. Don't be sad. Your joy with Hashem is your strength.'"<sup>28</sup>

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worried how he will succeed that year without this *siman*.

Reb Mordechai Chaim told him, "Buy a fish tail (which is called an עק, end, in Yiddish) and pray, יהי רצון 'May it be Hashem's will that it should finally be the עק, end, of all our suffering.'"

**28.** The Avodas Yisrael *zt'l* (ד"ה אהם *Netzavim*) explains that we don't fall on our faces and say *tachanun* on *erev Rosh Hashanah*, because a person shouldn't have a fallen face, these days. He should be happy and trust in Hashem.

Each month has a formation of Hashem's name הוי"ה. The formation for Tishrei is והי"ה. The Magen Avraham (of Trisk) *zt'l* explains that this is because Chazal tell us that והיה represents joy, and we are supposed to be happy this month.

An even earlier source is from the *pasuk* (*Devarim* 16:15), ושמחת בחגך. Rosh Hashanah is a חג, as it states (*Tehillim* 81:4), בכסה ליום חגנו. Therefore, the *Mishnah Berurah* (597:1) and the *Shaagas Aryeh* (62) say ושמחת בחגך applies to Rosh Hashanah, too. There's a mitzvah from the Torah to be happy on this day.

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* proves that Rosh Hashanah is a Yom Tov from the *Mishnah* (*Rosh Hashanah* 4:1), יום טוב של ראש השנה. The *Mishnah* calls it a Yom Tov, therefore we must be happy.<sup>29</sup>

2) We have *bitachon* that Hashem will give us a good year.<sup>30</sup>

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**29.** The Chasam Sofer *zy'a* writes that it is obvious that one should be happy on Rosh Hashanah since it is a Yom Tov. Why did Ezra and Nechemyah have to teach the nation to be happy?

He answers that the *Gemara* (*Rosh Hashanah* 19) says, "From after Ezra's time, Elul was never *me'uber* – thirty days." That year, Elul had thirty days instead of the usual twenty-nine. This means the first day of Rosh Hashanah was the last day of Elul. It wasn't a regular Rosh Hashanah. The first day was the final day of the previous month. Therefore Ezra and Nechemyah had to tell the nation to be happy on that day. But there was no need to tell them to be happy on a standard Rosh Hashanah, as that is obvious, as it is a Yom Tov.

**30.** On the words זכרון תרועה (*Vayikra* 23:24) the Seforno writes, "Although, on this day, Hashem sits on his throne of judgment, it is proper that we should rejoice even more, because He is our King, and He will seek to do kindness with us and to judge us with merit, in His judgment. As it states, כִּי ה' שׁוֹפֵטנוּ ה' מְחַוְקֵנוּ ה' מְלַכְנוּ, הוא יושעניו, 'Hashem is our judge... Hashem is our King, and He will save us.'"

The *Tur* (581, quoting a Midrash) writes, "No nation compares to this nation... When a person is on trial, and his life is being judged, he will wear black clothing, let his beard grow, and he won't cut his nails, because he doesn't know what will be decided in the judgment. But the Jewish nation, on the day of their judgment, they wear white clothes, shave their beards, cut their nails, and they eat, drink, and are happy on Rosh Hashanah, because they know Hakadosh Baruch Hu will make a miracle for them."

Many people find this surprising. The judgment is so awesome. Our future and the future of our families and the future of Klal Yisrael is being determined. How can we be happy?

But we are happy, because it is our Father in heaven who is judging us, and He wants to grant us goodness. He seeks ways, within the rules of justice, to grant us a good year. The fear is great, and fear of Hashem should be upon our faces throughout Rosh Hashanah. But laced within our fear is immense joy.<sup>31</sup>

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**31.** The Sma'k teaches that there's a custom to wear white clothing on Rosh Hashanah because they resemble *tachrichim* (shrouds), to help us maintain the joy of Rosh Hashanah in the correct proportions.

Reb Moshe Chaim of Slonim *zt'l* would say to those who were excessively afraid of the Days of Awe, "It isn't a band of thieves who are seated in the court, up in heaven. It is our Father in heaven, and we can trust that He will save His children."

There was a *bachur* who was very afraid of the judgment of Rosh Hashanah because of his sins. The Chazon Ish *zt'l* asked the *bachur*, "When Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbos, why don't we say *Tashlich*?"

3) Happiness is a good *siman* for the new year.

4) We are also happy because Hashem meets with every Yid on Rosh Hashanah. And that is reason to celebrate.

To explain this, we begin with a story that the Pnei Menachem *zt'l* related:

Someone heard that the president was just a few blocks away. He jumped into his car, passed two red lights, and committed several other driving violations to have the privilege to meet with the president. There were many body guards and obstacles preventing him

from reaching the president. He jumped over all of them and spoke with the president for a few moments. The police caught up and arrested him, but he says it was all worth it, for the few moments he spoke with the president.

*L'havdil*, on Rosh Hashanah every Yid passes before Hashem כבני מרון like sheep passing by, in a single file. The fear is immense, our deeds are being reviewed, but it is all worth it, to have a moment with Hashem.

The Sfas Emes (5639) writes, "Although they

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The *bachur* replied that the *Mishnah Berurah* (583:8) teaches, "When the first day of Rosh Hashanah is Shabbos, they go to the river on the second day. Perhaps this is because the river is outside the city, and it is forbidden to carry. People generally take along *machzorim* to *Tashlich*. Therefore the *chachamim* established they should go on the next day (*Pri Megadim*)."

The Chazon Ish told him, "For you, the problem isn't only that you are carrying the *machzor*. For you, it is also that you are carrying your sins. Because I see you're carrying a heavy burden of sin on your shoulders."

know that Hashem is judging them, nevertheless, every Yid understands that it is a great merit to be remembered by Hashem... and they consider it worthwhile to be judged by Him, just to have the merit that Hashem will think about them. Since they feel privileged and happy that Hashem is thinking of them, Hashem remembers them for good. Hashem leaves His throne of justice and sits on His throne of compassion. They deserve this, because they understand that having Hashem think about them in His judgment

is the greatest good that we can receive from Hashem."<sup>32</sup>

6) On Rosh Hashanah, we crown Hashem as King of the world, and we are joyous to have that privilege. As Rebbe Pinchas Koritzer *zt'l* said, אין לך חוק, מתוק מזה, "There is nothing sweeter than that."

7) The Chinuch (311) explains that Rosh Hashanah is a happy day, because on this day, Hashem removes our sins. He writes, "Hashem does kindness for His creations and...reviews their deeds,

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**32.** At the beginning of *sefer BaMidbar*, Hashem told Moshe and Aharon to count the Jewish people. One of the reasons for this census, writes the Ramban (*Bamidbar* 1:45) is so they can stand before Moshe and Aharon. Standing before these two great tzaddikim was a great benefit for the Jewish nation. The Ramban writes, "When one comes before the greatest *navi* [Moshe] and his brother, the קדוש ה', [Aharon] and he tells them his name, this will be a merit for him and life, because he is being enlisted and counted together with the Jewish nation. Moshe and Aharon will look at them with a good eye and pray for them..."

Similarly, to be in Hashem's presence is a blessing in itself, which results in spiritual and material success.

one day each year, before their sins become too many... Their sins are still few, and therefore Hashem forgives them. Even if there are sins that need to be cleansed, He punishes slowly, little by little. As Chazal say (*Avodah Zarah* 4.), 'To the one he loves, he punishes little by little.' If He wouldn't remember them [once a year], rather only once in a long while, their sins would be so many, the world would almost be destroyed, *chalilah*. So Rosh Hashanah is a very special day. Because of it the world continues to exist. Therefore, it is proper to make this day a Yom Tov. It is among the special Yomim Tovim of the year."

The Chasam Sofer *zt'l* (ב"ז אלו תק"ע) writes "Although Rosh Hashanah is an awesome and fearsome day, the Day of Judgment for the entire world, it isn't a sad day. On the contrary, one

should have a happy heart filled with thoughts of *teshuvah*, love, *deveikus*, and he should cry from joy. As it states, בשמך יגילון כל היום, "In Your name we rejoice all day long." The first letters spell בכ"ה, crying. But sadness shouldn't be experienced at all on Rosh Hashanah, because sadness is associated with *kelipah*, *din*, and we shouldn't arouse *din* on this day."

The Mahari'l teaches that the first day of Rosh Hashanah is דינא קשיא, very severe and harsh *dinim*. The second day is דינא רפיא, a softer judgment.

The Shaul u'Meishiv (מהדורה רביעא ח"ג קכ"ה) disagrees. He writes, "This idea that the first day is דינא קשיא, is difficult, because there are clear proofs that it isn't a harsh day, at all. The halachah is that we say *shehechyanu* this day, and we wouldn't say *shehechyanu* if it wasn't a

day of joy.<sup>33</sup> We don't say *shehechyanu* in *sefiras ha'omer*, because there isn't joy, due to the Churban Beis haMikdash. If the first day would be a sad day, a day of *dinim*, we wouldn't say *shehechyanu*. Therefore, it isn't דינא קשיא. It's a day when Hashem forgives our sins. It is a holy day. On this day the *imahos* were

remembered [to bear children] and all goodness and holy bounty comes from this day..."<sup>34</sup>

### Fear

Together with our joy, we have immense fear.

As the Chinuch (ibid.) writes, "However, being that it is a day of judgment,

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**33.** According to the Raavad, one doesn't say שהחיינו on the shofar because of the fear of the judgment.

We follow the opinions that we do say *shehechyanu*.

Shulchan Aruch (584:2) states that it is customary that the person who blows shofar should have an *aliyah*. The Levush explains, פקודי ה' ישרים משמחי לב, Torah makes people happy, and thereby, he will be able to blow the shofar with joy.

**34.** The Navi (*Shmuel* 1) tells that Chanah was sad because she didn't have children. Her husband, Elkanah, told her, "Why do you cry? Why aren't you eating? Why are you sad? I am better for you than ten children."

The Navi tells us that she ate a little, but she was still very upset. She went to Mishkan Shilo to daven for children. After her *tefillos* the Navi writes, ותאכל ופניה לא היו לה עוד, "she ate, and she didn't have a sad face again." She succeeded in finding happiness in her life despite her misery, and the Chasam Sofer teaches that in this merit she had her salvation. Chazal say, בר"ה נפקדה שרה רחל וחנה, "On Rosh Hashanah...Chanah was remembered," to bear a child, and it was in the merit of her happiness.

it is proper to have fear, more than the other Yomim Tovim... This is the reason we don't say *Hallel* on this holiday... It isn't proper to say *Hallel* when one is standing in judgment."

Similarly, the Mishnah Berurah (584:1) writes, "We don't say *Hallel* on Rosh Hashanah because the books of life and death are opened. How can we sing *Hallel*? Although we are certain we will exit זכאי, righteous in the judgment, nevertheless, one must be afraid because of the awe of the judgment. In merit of his fear, he will be remembered לזכות," to merit a good year.

The Rambam (*Pirush HaMishnayos Rosh Hashanah* 4) writes, "*Hallel* isn't said on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, because they are days of service, humility, fear, awe of Hashem, to escape and to run to Him, *teshuvah*, supplications, requests, and forgiveness. And for all of these matters, joy isn't appropriate."<sup>35</sup>

Notice that the Rambam calls Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur days of fear and days, "to escape and run to Hashem." Unlike most fears that cause people to run away from what they fear, this fear draws people closer to the One we fear.

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**35.** The following are the Rambam's holy words:

שלא היו קורין בהלל לא בראש השנה ולא ביום הכיפורים לפי שהם ימי עבודה, והנענה, ופחד, ומורא מהשם, ויראה ממנו ומברח ומנום אליו, ותשובה, ותחנונים, ובקשה כפרה וסליחה, ובכל אלו הענינים אינו הגון השחוק והשמחה

The Chasam Sofer taught another reason why we don't say *Hallel*. He says: We have a tradition that the *neshamos* of people's ancestors join them in their *tefillos* on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. It is written, לא המתים יהללו י-ה, "the dead don't say *Hallel*" therefore we don't say *Hallel* on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

Similarly, we say in *Selichos*, אַתְּכֶסֶה מִחַמּוֹתַי בְּצִלְךָ, "I hide from Your anger in Your shadow." This is the uniqueness of fear of Hashem. It draws us in closer.

Reb Bunim of Peshischa *zt'l* writes in a letter, "These days the joy and the worry are concealed in fear. May Hashem grant us that it should be both of them together."

One must have two opposing feelings on Rosh Hashanah, yet they aren't contradictory.

The Beis Aharon of Stolin *zt'l* told two of his *chassidim* to study *Reishis Chachmah* (*Shaar HaGehinom*) the section that describes Gehinom. He told them to return to him in three months to report what they learned.

Three months later, when they returned, the Beis Aharon asked one of them what he learned.

The chassid replied, "It was extremely frightening. *Reishis Chachmah* describes Gehinom in detail, and the fear is unbearable. I tremble, just thinking about the great punishment that's in store for each *aveirah*."

The Rebbe replied, "You don't need to worry. We have a compassionate Father. When we do *teshuvah*, Hashem forgives us. Don't worry."

Then the Rebbe asked the other chassid to repeat what he learned in *Reishis Chachmah*. He nonchalantly repeated the ideas. It was obvious he wasn't afraid.

The Rebbe told him, "You must know that this is only a *mashal*. Gehinom is far more severe than that."

There was a third chassid present, and he asked the Rebbe, "You are saying two opposing ideas, so what is the reality? Is Gehinom frightening, as you told the second chassid,

or should we be calm and unafraid, as you told the first chassid?"

The Rebbe replied, "If a person is afraid of Gehinom, he has nothing to fear. But if he isn't afraid, then he has a lot to be afraid of."

Similarly, regarding the awesome judgment of Rosh Hashanah, we *should* be afraid. In the merit of our fear, Hashem will give us a good judgment. But if we aren't afraid, we have a lot to be afraid of.

The Beis Aharon (*Netzavim*) writes, "The main thing is [that on Rosh Hashanah] everyone should draw fear on themselves. What is the definition of fear? [The higher form of fear] is when one recognizes Hashem and is close to Him. This is called *yirah iloyah*, divine fear [fear from Hashem's greatness and awesomeness]. If he isn't on this level, he should be afraid of the judgment. The main thing is that

everyone must be very afraid, and then Hakadosh Baruch Hu will do *tzedakah* (kindness) with him."

## Joy and Fear

The Rabbeinu Yonah (*Brachos* 21.) writes, "Although in human beings joy and fear are opposites, by Hakadosh Baruch Hu it isn't so. In fact, the fear increases one's joy."

Similarly, on Rosh Hashanah, we are very afraid, and we are very joyous. In Hashem's service, these two emotions aren't contradictory.

The sounds of the shofar also express fear and joy. The holy *sefarim* write that *tekiyah* expresses joy, while *shevarim* and *truah* are sounds of a broken heart.

Yitzchak Avinu's primary attribute was fear of Heaven (*Pachad Yitzchak*). Yet his name was Yitzchak, which means laughter, happiness. The Sfas Emes *zt'l* writes, "It is very

possible he was called Yitzchak because his face shone with happiness, because there is no one happier than the person who truly fears Hashem, and doesn't have any other fear."

### ***Teshuvah with Shofar***

The Rambam (*Teshuvah* 3:4) writes, "Although

blowing the shofar on Rosh Hashanah is a *gezeiras hakasuv* (a Torah decree) it is telling us something. The shofar is saying, עורו ישנים, משנתכם, "wake up, from your sleep... Examine your deeds, repent. Remember your Creator, all you people who forgot the truth."<sup>36</sup>

The Or HaMeir asks that if the purpose of shofar

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**36.** Someone told me the following:

"One Rosh Hashanah I was in the hospital, and someone came to blow the shofar for us. There was a non-religious Yid in the room who was intrigued by the shofar. He asked us a lot of questions about it, as he wanted to understand what the shofar was all about. Then he told us his story:

"I served in the Israeli Navy, in a submarine. Under the water, the means of communication was Morse Code. I was an expert in Morse Code. I could send and decipher messages very quickly.

"A couple of years after serving in the navy (and after spending a very long vacation in India), I saw an advertisement: The army was looking for a Morse code expert to be in charge of several submarines. To apply for the job, I had to be at a certain office between 10:00 and 12:00 in the morning. I arrived at 11:50. The room was packed with applicants, but no one was being called in. Music played in the background and I sat down for a few moments and listened. Then I got up, brazenly opened the door to the office and said, 'I came for the interview.'"

"There are many people waiting in line ahead of you," the secretary

is to arouse people to do *teshuvah*, why doesn't the

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said. "You just came. Please wait your turn."

"I didn't listen to her. I walked into the room and talked with the person in charge. After speaking for a few moments, I was hired for the job."

The interviewer went out to the waiting room and said, "Thank you all for coming. and I'm sorry about the delay. Anyway, we've already hired someone. You can all go home."

"That isn't fair" they all shouted. "This man came in last. Why did you interview him before us?"

"Didn't you hear the music? Listen carefully. Don't you get it? It's Morse Code. It says: 'If you've come for the interview, just open the door and come inside.' This man heard the message. You didn't. So you're obviously not fluent enough in the language."

The irreligious man in the hospital said that he thinks the shofar is speaking a language, only it needs to be deciphered. If you could hear its words, you would hear the shofar telling us, "Just open the door and come inside. Come to Hashem. He is waiting for you."

Returning to the story: One person said, "I heard the Morse code in the music, but I decided not to open the door because I saw no one else was."

"That's not a valid excuse," the interviewer told him. "If you heard the message, you should have come in. Why do you care what other people are doing?"

Similarly, the shofar tells us to do *teshuvah* and it will be inexcusable to say, "I heard the shofar's message, but I decided not to act upon it, since I didn't see anyone else doing *teshuvah*." That's not a valid excuse. If you understand the shofar's call, open the door and come close to Hashem. You can disregard what others are doing.

Torah say that the rabbanim of each beis medresh should deliver a *drashah* to arouse people to do *teshuvah*? What is special with the shofar?

The Or HaMeir answers with a *mashal*:

A lad was hired to be the town crier. He sat on a hilltop, and if he saw thieves or any other tragedy he rang his bells and shouted, to warn the townspeople down below.

Once, the lad saw thieves. He rang his bell and shouted, "*Ganavim!* Thieves! Thieves are approaching!" The wealthy people frantically went to save their properties. The poor people, however, weren't worried. They knew that the thieves weren't after their meager belongings.

There was another time when the lad shouted, "Fire! There's a fire!" This time, even the poor people

ran to put out the fire, because a fire could consume all their meager belongings.

The Or HaMeir explains that if the mitzvah would be for the rav of every congregation to give a *mussar drashah* on Rosh Hashanah, many people would think, "The rav isn't speaking to me."

For example, if the rav would speak about the importance of *hasmadah* in Torah study, some listeners will say, "I'm glad the rav is speaking about this, because there are many people here who should be studying more." He doesn't think the *drashah* applies to him, he thinks he studies enough.

If the rav speaks about *tefillah*, giving *tzedakah*, good *middos*, and so on, there will always be those who think the rav is speaking to others and not to them.<sup>37</sup>

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37. Someone came to a *gadol* and told him about his *shalom bayis*

Therefore, the Torah tells us to blow shofar. The shofar shouts, "There's a fire! We're in danger!" And this is a call for everyone. It's a call without words, and everyone is inspired to repent.

### The Struggle

In *mussaf* of Rosh Hashanah we say, כי אתה שומע קול שופר ומאזין תרועה ואין דומה לך, "You listen to the sound of the shofar and you listen to the *teruah*, and there is no One like You."

We begin with some questions:

1) שומע and מאזין both mean "to listen," but there is certainly a difference between them. What is the difference?

2) What is the קול שופר and what is the תרועה?

3) Why is שומע phrased together with קול שופר, while מאזין goes with תרועה?

4) Why is this phrase ואין דומה לך, "There is no one like You", added to this *brachah*?

The *Pri Megadim* (592:1, quoting Reb Chaim Rappaport *zt'l* of Lemberg) answers:

1) מאזין is to listen from nearby, and שומע is to listen from the distance. As Moshe Rabbeinu said, האזינה השמים... ותשמע הארץ, "The heaven shall listen... The earth should hear..." Moshe, איש אלקים, was closer to heaven than to the earth, therefore when he spoke to heaven he said האזינה, that they should listen from nearby. To the earth he called ותשמע הארץ, that they should hear from the distance.

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problems. The *gadol* told him, "The solution is to be *mevater*. You have to be *mevater*."

The man replied, "I know, and I tell that to my wife all the time, but she doesn't get it. Maybe the rav can tell her!"

2) קול שופר is the *tekiyah*, the one unbroken call, and it represents the *teshuvah* of tzaddikim who make one strong resolve to become better, and they never fall from it.

תרועה is the hesitant, halting sound, representing the *baalei teshuvah* who have ups and downs. Sometimes they tread on the path of *teshuvah* and sometimes they revert to their old ways.

3) The *brachah* says, כי אתה שומע קול שופר. For the tzaddikim, Hashem listens to their *teshuvah* from the distance.

ומאזין תרועה, Hashem hears from nearby the *teshuvah* of the *baalei teshuvah*.

4) ואין דומה לך, no One compares to Hashem, because only Hashem will be nearer to the imperfect *teshuvah* of the *baalei teshuvah* than to the perfect *teshuvah* of the tzaddikim.

A human king doesn't pay attention to the

imperfect people. But Hashem is מאזין, listens from nearby to the imperfect people who struggle to do His will.

On Rosh Hashanah, we blow the shofar thirty times before *mussaf* (תקיעות דמיושב) and then we blow again during *mussaf* (תקיעות דמעומד). The Gemara asks why we blow both times. The Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 16) replies, "It's to confuse the Satan."

Tosfos (quoting the *Yerushalmi*) explains, "It is written, והיה ביום ההוא יתקע בשופר גדול. On that day, a great shofar will be blown..." The Satan is afraid of that shofar of the future, because when it is blown, he will be judged and slaughtered. When the Satan hears the first set of *tekiyos*, "He is afraid and he isn't afraid." (He fears that this might be the shofar heralding the future, when the Satan will be slaughtered, but he isn't certain). When he hears the shofar a second time, the Satan says, "This must be the *Shofar*

*Gadol*. The time has come. I will be destroyed.' Confused and frightened, he isn't able to say *kitrug* (*lashon hara* on the Jewish people)."

Why does the Satan becomes so afraid when he hears the shofar? Doesn't he remember from last year, and from the years before, that every year on Rosh Hashanah we blow shofar? Why does he suspect that this year will be different?

The Satmar Rebbe *zy'a* answered that in each generation it becomes harder to serve Hashem, and that makes our *avodas Hashem* all the more precious to Hashem. The Satan thinks, "This year, the Jewish nation is more precious than ever before. The shofar I'm hearing is

certainly the *Shofar Gadol* of Moshiach."

The Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 16) asks, "Why do we blow shofar with a ram's horn (שופר של איל)? Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, 'Blow for Me with a ram's shofar so I will remember *akeidas Yitzchok*, and I will consider it as though you were bound on the *akeidah* before Me."<sup>38</sup>

We wonder, that if the purpose of the shofar is to remind Heaven of *akeidas Yitzchak*, wouldn't any part of the ram do? For example, the Torah could have told us to take a foot of the ram, or any other limb. Why do we specifically perform the mitzvah with the horns?

It's because the ram's horns were caught in a bush, and it couldn't get

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**38.** By *Akeidas Yitzchak*, Avraham sacrificed a ram. As it states, וישא אברהם את עיניו וירא והנה איל אחר נאחו בסבך בקרניו וילך אברהם ויקח את האיל ויעלהו, "לעלה תחת בנו, Avraham raised his eyes and saw a ram, its horns were caught in the bush. Avraham went, took the ram, and sacrificed it instead of his son" (*Bereishis* 22:13).

out. This represents our challenges and struggles. The shofar was chosen for the mitzvah, because Hashem desires our struggle.

### ***Segulos of Tekiyas Shofar***

Shofar is *mesugal* for *parnassah*.

The Shaar HaMelech (3:2) writes, "Before the *brachah* for *tekiyas shofar*, rouse yourself to cry a lot, especially when answering amen after the *brachah*, because that's when it is decided how much money you will get this year."

The Gemara (*Shabbos* 117) says, שופר ורדיית הפת חכמה היא ואינו מלאכה, "Blowing shofar and removing bread from the walls of an oven require talent, but they aren't *melachos* [on *Shabbos*]." Why does the Gemara juxtapose blowing shofar and taking out bread?

The Tiferes Shlomo explains that the Gemara is

hinting that shofar is *mesugal* for *parnassah*.

Shofar is also *mesugal* for the barren to bear children.

The Baal HaTanya *zy'a* taught that the letters after עקרה are שופר. This implies that shofar is *mesugal* for the barren to bear children. As the Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 11.) states, בראש השנה נפקדה שרה, רחל וחנה, "Sarah, Rachel and Chanah were remembered to bear children, on Rosh Hashanah."

As the Zera Kodesh writes, "On Rosh Hashanah, the day the world was created, it is a time *mesugal* for פקידות עקרות, for the barren to be remembered to bear children."

In the *Mussaf Shemonah Esrei* we say, מי לא נפקד כהיום, הוזה, The Imrei Noam *zt'l* teaches that the *roshei teivos* of הני"ך is נפקד כהיום הוזה, which is Hashem's name for pregnancies, as it states, הנהך, הרה, "Behold you will be pregnant..." This hints that

Rosh Hashanah is a time when Hashem remembers the barren, to bless them with children.

It states, וידגו לרוב בקרב הארץ, "They shall multiply like fish..." Tzaddikim taught that the *gematriya* of רוב בקרב is ראש השנה.

In נתנה תוקף we say, כמה יעברון וכמה יבראון. The Tiferes Shlomo *zt'l* translated these words as follows: כמה יעברון, Hashem judges how many women will enter עיבור, pregnancy, that year. וכמה יבראון and on Rosh Hashanah there's a judgment how many people will become בריא, healthy, and cured from their illnesses.

The Pnei Menachem *zt'l* told a *yungerman* who was waiting several years for children, that he should have *kavanah* by כמה יעברון, for this is a בדוק ומנוסה, a tested and proven *segulah*, to be beneficial for the barren to bear children.

The Apter Rav *zt'l* (*Ohev Yisrael*) teaches that when

we read וה' פקד את שרה (that Hashem remembered Sarah, to grant her a child) it is *mesugal* for פקידת עקרות, to bring down the salvation for bearing children.

The *segulah* stated in Chazal for shofar, is that it rouses Hashem to leave the throne of justice and to sit on the throne of *rachamim*, compassion.

As the Midrash states, "When the Jewish people take the shofar and blow it before Hakadosh Baruch Hu, He stands up from the throne of judgment and sits on the throne of compassion."

The Ahavas Shalom *zt'l* explains how this happens:

Hashem finds Himself sitting on the chair of judgment to judge the Jewish people, and Hashem asks Himself, "How did I get here? Why should I be judging the Jewish people whom I love?" Hashem realizes that the Satan convinced Him to judge

them. Hashem says, "If the Satan is so talented, powerful, and influential, that he can convince even Me to judge the Jewish nation, then the Jewish people aren't guilty for their *aveiros*. How can they stand up against such a cunning Satan?"

With this thought, Hashem abandons the throne of judgment and sits on his throne of compassion.

The Rambam writes, "I, Moshe ben Maimon, when the time for shofar came, took the shofar in my hand and I thought about Who commanded us to do this mitzvah. My knees knocked against each other from fear, and then I began to blow shofar."

Yom Kippur, the *kohen gadol* didn't wear gold clothing when he did the *avodah* in the Kodosh Kadoshim, because the gold clothing would remind Heaven of the golden calf.

The *kohen gadol*, however, may wear gold clothing outside the Kodosh Kadoshim. Gold becomes an issue only when he stands in the Holy of Holies.

The Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 26) teaches that one cannot use an ox horn for a shofar, as the ox horn will remind heaven of the *egel*.

The Gemara asks that the *kohen gadol* was only forbidden to wear gold inside the Kodshei Kadoshim. So why are we concerned about blowing the shofar outside the Kodosh Kadoshim?

The Gemara answers, *בין דלורון הוא כפנים דמי*, "Since the shofar rouses Hashem's memory (to remember our good deeds, and His love to us, etc.), it is as if it is being blown inside the Kodshei Kadoshim."

The Sfas Emes *zt'l* quotes this Gemara and recommends that when we hear the shofar, we should listen with great awe, similar to the awe and fear

one would have when he enters the Kodesh Kadoshim.

Rebbe Yechiel of Moosh zy'a once went to the *bimah* to blow shofar and saw through the window a *davar acheir* (pig) eating in a Jewish field. He said, "I will not blow shofar until the *davar acheir* is removed from the Jewish field."

Some people left the beis medresh, chased the *davar acheir* from the field, and when they returned, Rebbe Yechiel blew shofar.

This story was repeated each year by the Slonimer tzaddikim zy'a. The Beis Avraham of Slonim zy'a would say, "Such a story of the *Moosher* (Reb Yechiel of Moosh) I never heard before!" But it was somewhat of a mystery among the chassidim why this story was so special to the Rebbes. What did they

see in this story that was so outstanding?

Most chassidim assumed that the story teaches concern for one's fellow man. Because Reb Yechiel of Moosh was about to blow shofar, his emotions and fervor to perform the mitzvah were at a peak, but this didn't cause him to ignore his fellow man's needs. His fellow man's property was being damaged, and he wouldn't blow the shofar until that was taken care of.

Reb Mottel Slonimer zy'a corrected them. He said, "Why don't you understand! Reb Yechiel of Moosh was saying that he's not blowing shofar until the *davar acheir*, the *yetzer hara*, is removed from the Jewish hearts. Because this is the purpose of shofar! The shofar removes all the bad and the *yetzer hara* from the hearts of Yidden!"<sup>39</sup>

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39. The Gemara teaches that *chilul Hashem* is only atoned for with death. Nevertheless, there are ways to get atonement without

### A Good Eye

The Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 25) states "Rebbe said to Reb Chiya 'Go to עין טב (a city where there was a prominent *beis din*) and establish [Rosh Hashanah]."

עין טב literally means "good eye."

The Chidushei HaRim *zt'l* said that this Gemara hints that on Rosh Hashanah we should have a good eye.

A good eye means seeing the good in others, forgiving others, helping others, etc. These attitudes will help us in our judgment.

We will give some examples of עין טובה.

#### 1. *Hachnasas Orchim*.

The Alef Hamagein (583:4) writes "When one has guests on Rosh Hashanah, it is considered as though he concentrated on all the *kavanos* of the Arizal in his *tefillah*."<sup>40</sup>

#### 2. *Chesed*.

A community near Radin asked a *bachur* from the Chofetz Chaim's yeshiva to join them for Rosh Hashanah. They wanted him to speak *divrei Torah* and *mussar*, to arouse them to do *teshuvah* on these holy days.

The *bachur* refused. He wanted to be with the Chofetz Chaim on Rosh Hashanah.

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death too. The Remak quotes the Gemara which states "[Hashem says] 'Blow with a ram's horn before Me, so I will remember *akeidas Yitzchok*, and I will consider it as though you sacrificed yourself before Me.'" When one listens to the shofar, it is like he sacrificed himself before Hashem, and all his sins are forgiven.

**40.** The Arizal taught kabbalistic ideas to think while praying. The average person isn't able to incorporate those lofty thoughts into his prayer. However, when one has guests on Rosh Hashanah, it will be considered as though he concentrated on all those lofty thoughts.

The Chofetz Chaim told the *bachur* the following important message: "A *mentch leibt nisht far zich* - man doesn't live for himself." A person came down to this world to help others.

The *bachur* went to the neighboring town for Rosh Hashanah.<sup>41</sup>

### 3. Tzedakah.

The Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 16:) states, תשובה תפילה וצדקה מעבירין את רוע הגזירה, "Teshuvah, tefillah, and tzedakah annul the harsh decrees."

How does *tzedakah* annul harsh decrees? How does *tzedakah* help us in the judgment?

The Leket Yosher answers in the name of החבר משה מיניץ:

The Gemara (*Bava Basra* 10) teaches that when you give *tzedakah*, Hashem feels indebted to you, because you helped the poor. Hashem considers it as though you loaned money to Hashem. As it states (*Mishlei* 19:17), מלוה ה' חונן דל, when one is helping the poor, it is like he is מלוה ה', Hashem's lender.

The halachah is: When there is a monetary dispute between the לווה and מלוה, the מלוה has the right to choose which *beis din* they should go to.

So when one gives *tzedakah*, he is called Hashem's מלוה. As the מלוה, he can request to be judged in a compassionate court.<sup>42</sup>

This is how *tzedakah* can help you in your judgment.

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**41.** Someone spent most of his Rosh Hashanah in the hospital helping his sick friend. Rebbe Shlomke of Zvhil zy'a said about that man, "He is a ben Olam HaBa." His prayers were fewer on that day, but Reb Shlomke knew that he will inherit Olam HaBah in merit of the *chesed* that he did, and the concern for his fellow man.

**42.** In נתנה תוקף we say, ויכון בחסד כסאך, with deeds of *chesed*, one has

4. *Vitur*.

The Gemara (*Yoma* 23) says, "Whoever is *maavir al midosov* (and is *mevater*), Hashem forgives all his sins."

In the beis medresh of the Rashash *zy'a* (*Nahar Shalom*), the *gabai* accidentally sold the same seat to two people for the Rosh Hashanah *tefillos*. When they both came to the same seat, they realized there was a problem. They quickly went over to the *gabai* and asked him who bought the seat.

The *gabai* checked his files and admitted that he had made a mistake.

One of them would need to be *mevater*, but neither of them wanted to. On Rosh Hashanah night, there weren't so many people in the Beis Medresh, and they both had a respectable place to pray. But they knew, (and everyone around

them knew) that the next morning there will be a dispute over the seat.

That night, one of the two men had a dream. He saw beautiful caravans being led by *malachim*. "What's this all about?" he asked a *malach*.

"Today is Rosh Hashanah, and these wagons are carrying your good deeds. They will be placed on the scale, and it will determine what type of year you will have."

Soon he saw very ugly caravans being led by frightening-looking angels. "What's happening now?" he asked.

"These are your *aveiros*. They will be placed on the other side of the scale."

The man looked up at the large scale and saw that it was tipping to the side of guilt. He was frightened. What would his verdict be?

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the right to decide which throne Hashem should sit on by the judgment. Whether the throne of *din* or the throne of *rachamim*.

The *beis din* ruled that he would die that year because of his many sins.

Then a compassionate angel arrived and said, "This man had a lot of *yesurim* (pain and troubles) this year, and *yesurim* atones."

The angels began to remove several packages of sins from the scale, and then it was just about equal, but it was still slightly tipped to the side of guilt.

The merciful angel said "If this person was *mevater*

(gave in to others to avoid a *machlokes*) we can remove some more packages of sins. Because Chazal say that *vitur* removes *aveiros*. Let's check his deeds, to see whether he was *mevater*."

Still sleeping, the man realized that if he is *mevater* his seat, his life will be saved. "I'm *mevater*!" he shouted. "I'm *mevater*!" And then he awoke.

In the morning he quickly ran to the *gabai* and told him that he is *mevater* his seat to the other person.<sup>43</sup>

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**43.** Shame is also a form of *yesurim*, which removes many sins.

Someone suffering from a *dibbuk*, was brought to the Chofetz Chaim *zt'l*. Reb Elyah Lopian *zt'l*, who was present, repeated that this *dibbuk* avoided G-d fearing people, but it especially enjoyed being near sinful people.

There was a great sinner in the room, and the *dibbuk* hugged him and kissed him, and listed all the sins he did. After doing this, the *dibbuk* didn't want to have anything to do with this man anymore. The people in the room asked the *dibbuk* about this, and the *dibbuk* replied, "After I revealed his sins in public, his embarrassment purified him. Now he's a *tzaddik*, and I don't want to have anything to do with him anymore."