

בעזרת ש"ת

The Way of Emunah

Collected Thoughts
on the Weekly Parshah

From

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Rosh Hashanah



The Way of Emunah

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Rosh Hashanah



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Erev Rosh Hashanah

Saying Tehillim on Erev Rosh Hashanah:

The Tzemach Tzedek of Lubavitch *zy"u* (quoted in Sefer Sichos Hashana, 5705, Erev Rosh Hashanah, Ois 4) states that on *erev* Rosh Hashanah, one should spend time reciting Tehillim from the depths of his heart. However, he adds that the recitation must be with great joy “because when soldiers go out to war, cities cannot be conquered with tears; rather, **they always march with a happy tune.**”

Teshuva With Joy:

The Magid of Kozhnitz *zy"u* (Sefer Avodas Yisroel, Parshas Netzavim) writes that *teshuva* must be done with joy and with *bitachon* that Hashem will never abandon His

nation. He says that the reason we do not recite Tachanun on *erev* Yom Kippur may be to show that we are not falling on our faces with sadness; rather, we stand up and express our joy and love for Hashem.

Rectifying the Entire Year:

The Gemara states (Rosh Hashanah 2B) that when it comes to a king, one day is considered like an entire year. Sefer Chesed L'Avrohom (on Rosh Hashanah) writes that the same idea applies to someone who comes to the King of Kings to do *teshuva*. Even if someone did not properly serve Him all year, and only returns to Him at the very end of the year, **it is considered as if He acted correctly for the entire year.**

From this, we can see how

kind and merciful Hashem is. **Even if one only returns to Him on the very last day of the year, He allows him to use this day to rectify the entire year.**

Uplifting the Entire Year:

My grandfather, the Admor of Kretchnif zy"ra, would say that this is the reason we still recite the words "*bareich aleinu Hashem Elokeinu es hashana hazos* (bless this year)" during Minchah of *erev* Rosh Hashanah, even though the year is almost over. We see that **even the final moments of the year can still be considered a full year of goodness!**

Sharpening Knives on Erev Rosh Hashanah:

It is written in the writings of

Rav Chacham Tzvi Halberstam *zt"l* (quoted in *Sefer Hachaim*) that *erev* Rosh Hashanah fell out one year on a Monday, and a large crowd arrived in Sanz before Shabbos to spend the holy day in the presence of the Divrei Chaim zy"ra.

That *leil* Shabbos, while Rav Chaim was conducting his *tish*, he began to cut the *challos* and realized the knife was dull. He expressed his disapproval to the *gabbaim* who had failed to sharpen the knives.

One of the guests overheard what he said and decided that he would sharpen the knives, and he did so right after Shabbos. On *leil* Rosh Hashanah, when Rav Chaim saw the knives, he loudly asked, "Who sharpened these knives?"

The guest was afraid to open

his mouth. He was scared that Rav Chaim would be upset at him for sharpening the knives without permission. However, Rav Chaim then called out, “Whoever sharpened the knives should be blessed to live until 120!”

When the guest heard this, he said out loud, “Rebbi, I want all 120 years, not a day less.”

Rav Chaim nodded his head. And so it was! The man lived a full 120 years.

On the last day of his life, he got into a fight with a huge gentile in the city’s street. When he was asked why he wasn’t afraid of the non-Jew, he answered, “I’m not afraid of anything. I know that I still have one more day to live.”

And so it was.

Rav Y. Horowitz of Dzikov *zt”l* knew this Jew and testified to his age.

Rosh Hashanah

The Source of Goodness and Joy:

Rav Moshe of Kozhnitz *zy”a* (Sefer Daas Moshe on Rosh Chodesh Elul) describes the greatness of Rosh Hashanah by stating: “Although it is the Day of Judgment, it also creates holiness and purity that lasts all year because it is the head and all-inclusive day of the year. Although it is the Day of Judgment, since it is also a day of holiness and purity, it is a time of great joy because one can obtain influences of *ruchnius* and *gashmius* that last for the entire year.”

He goes on to relate, “I recall

that my father (the Magid of Kozhnitz zy" a) was always very happy on Rosh Hashanah. This was very confusing to me. How can one be happy on this day? However, this is, as we stated, due to the fact that it is the head of the year, the time when holiness and purity and all types of goodness descend to this world for the entire year."

Hashem Treats Us Like a Father:

In the Tefillos of Rosh Hashanah, as well as in the Haftorah, we recite the verse: "*Haben Yakir li Efraim. Im yeled shashuim.* (Is Efraim my beloved son? Is he a lovely child?)"

Sefer Toras Emes (Lublin – Rosh Hashanah) explains the connection between this *pasuk* and Rosh Hashanah by stating that on this

day, Hashem treats us like a father of a very young child. When the child is a baby, his character traits and personality have yet to be revealed, yet the father loves him nonetheless. So too, on Rosh Hashanah we become instilled with holiness and purity that envelopes our hearts, but which has yet to be revealed externally. Still and all, Hashem expresses His love for us and says that He will surely show compassion.

The Gates of Purity and the Gates of Impurity:

In the *piyyut* of Rosh Hashanah, we recite: "*Shavoseinu m'merchak alos l'har kadsho.*

(Your captives from afar ascend to Your holy mountain)." Rav Avrohom of Stretin zy" a (quoted in Sefer Ohalei Shem) explains that there are both

50 gates of holiness and 50 gates of impurity. We are saying that even if one is very far – meaning he is at one of the distant gates of impurity – if he does *teshuva*, he can ascend to a lofty gate of holiness.

Getting Out of Jail:

Chazal say (Rosh Hashanah 11A) that Yosef got out of jail on Rosh Hashanah. Sefer Siach Sarfei Kodesh (Erev Rosh Hashanah, Ois 15) states that this is symbolic of the fact that every Jew has the ability to escape from his own spiritual captivity on Rosh Hashanah.

Trusting in Hashem to Grant us a Good Judgment:

Rav Noach of Lechovitch *zy"ra* (quoted in Sefer Toras Avos on Rosh

Hashanah, Ois 7) states that although everyone is judged on Rosh Hashanah, and no one knows if he will be found worthy or not, one should remain positive and upbeat. One should retain trust in Hashem's kindness and, therefore, rejoice on this day, with confidence that he will be granted a good judgment. And **through the power of *simcha* and *bitachon*, one will, in fact, merit a good judgment.**

The Way One is Now:

One year, after Kriyas Hatorah on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk *zy"ra* raised his eyes upwards and said, "Ribono Shel Olam, we just read in the Torah the story of Hagar and Yishmoel. It says there (Bereishis 21:17) that You heard the voice of the lad

‘like he is now.’ Chazal (Rosh Hashanah 16B) explain this to mean that a person is only judged according to his current actions. What he has done in the past and what he will do in the future are not taken into consideration.

“All we ask of You is to judge us by our current actions. Right now, we are all gathered in shul. We are all praying and pouring out our hearts before You. We solemnly stood to listen to the sounds of the shofar, as You commanded in the Torah. On this day, we are fulfilling Your will completely. We ask You to judge us according to these actions. Don’t look at the way we acted in the past or how we may act in the future. Treat us the way You treated Yishmoel and judge us only on the present.”

Asking to be Blessed for Hashem’s Sake:

Sefer Tiferes Yisroel writes that his father, Rav Dovid Moshe of Tchartkov zy”a, related that one year, on the night of Rosh Hashanah, Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchov zy”a, the great defender of Klal Yisroel, said, “Ribono Shel Olam, whenever a Jew has anything, he uses it for You. If a Jew obtains a bit of money, he spends it on hiring people to teach his son’s Torah, on beautifying Shabbos, and on charitable causes. The main expense of the Jewish people is fulfilling Your mitzvos. Therefore, it behooves You to save us!”

Rav Yisroel of Tchartkov zy”a uses this idea to explain the words we recite in Shemonah Esrei during the Yomim Noraim: “Remember us for life... and

write us in the Book of Life, for Your sake.” We are saying that **our entire lives and all the money we have are dedicated for the sake of Hashem, and we ask Him to grant us life for this purpose.**

We Have No One Else to Rely On:

The Gemara (Sotah 49B) says about the generation before the arrival of Moshiach: “Who will we be able to rely on? On our Father in Heaven.”

The Satmar Rov zy”a (Divrei Yoel on Rosh Hashanah, Ois 9) asks why it says these words specifically about that time. Don’t they apply in every generation?

He answers that in earlier times, we had a Bais Hamikdosh,

where we brought *korbanos* to atone for our sins. We also had prophets who helped us do *teshuvah*. Even after the destruction of the Bais Hamikdosh, we had Tannaim and Amoraim, and the *tzadikim* of all subsequent generations, who helped us merit atonement. Since the world is judged based on the majority, we could be found meritorious through the mitzvot of the *tzadikim*.

In our times, however, we don’t even have this. If we were to be judged by the *malachim*, they wouldn’t understand the difficulties we face, and they would find us guilty. Our only hope is to be judged directly by Hashem.

Thus, this is a time when the only one we can rely on to judge us favorably is Him.

When We Ask Hashem to Remember Us, He Says That He Will Have Mercy:

On the Yomim Noraim, we recite the words of the *pasuk* (Yirmiyahu 31:19): “For whenever I speak of him, I still remember him (*zachor ezkirenu*): therefore, My very innards are agitated for him; I will surely have compassion on him, says Hashem.” Rav Mordechai of Lechovitch *zy”a* explains the words “*zachor ezkirenu*” to mean that Hashem remembers when a Jew is “*zachor*”, meaning that when a Jew remembers Hashem and recognizes that He rules and guides the world, Hashem has compassion on him.

Traveling With Tears:

The Imrei Chaim of Vizhnitz *zy”a* was a son-in-law of Rav

Zev of Rachmastrivke *zy”a*. The first year after his wedding, the Imrei Chaim wanted very much to travel to be with his father, the Ahavas Yisroel *zy”a* for Rosh Hashanah so that he could say Malchius, Zichronos and Shofros with “the Vizhnitzer Nusach”. However, a number of issues got in the way, and it looked like he wouldn’t be able to go.

In later years, he related, “What do you think I did? During the week of Selichos, I took my machzor and went into a private room. I said the *nusach* of Malchius, Zichronos and Shofros and cried copiously. In the end, I did, in fact, travel to my father.”

For Me and For You:

Sefer Imrei Yehuda (Berzhan,

Parshas Ki Seitzei) relates that Rav Hirsch Leib of Alek zy”a once told Rav Boruch of Mezhibozh zy”a, “Last year on Rosh Hashanah, I saw that there was a tremendous accusation against Klal Yisroel. The Satan created a barrier so that no *tzadik* could come forward in defense of the nation. However, I was informed that you walked through the barrier and made one claim that broke down the wall and upended the accusation. Please tell me what it was that you said.”

Rav Boruch told him, “If you promise me that you will come to me for Shabbos, I will tell you.”

Rav Hirsch Leib replied, “First tell me and then I’ll decide if it is worth it.”

Rav Boruch then said, “I know about a hidden place in the

Heavens that the Satan cannot block. I entered through that place and saw him making his accusations. He was saying, ‘Hashem, Your children are sinners. Even when they do a mitzvah, they don’t do it because You commanded them to. Rather, they do it for themselves. They just want to be rewarded.’

“I answered him by saying, ‘Hashem. You treat everyone measure-for-measure. Since people do mitzvos for their own benefit, please save them for Your own sake, like the *pasuk* says (Yeshaya 48:11): ‘For My sake, I will do it.’

“This claim was accepted over the Satan’s claim.”

A Broken Heart Breaks Through All Barriers:

Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen quotes Rav Mordechai Chaim of Slonim *zy"ra* as relating that the Sar Shalom of Belz *zy"ra* once was entering the bais knesses for Shacharis on Rosh Hashanah when he saw two young men conversing. He told his son, Rav Yehoshua of Belz *zy"ra*, to go listen in on what they were saying. He heard them sadly saying to each other: How can we daven on the Yomim Noraim? We are so lowly and far from Hashem?

When he told his father what he heard, the Sar Shalom said, **"You should know, my son, that since these two young men have broken hearts, they can break through all barriers between them and Shomayim."**

He continued to say that there had been a major accusation against Klal Yisroel due to their

sins. One defending angel then came and said that the people give a lot of charity and do much *chesed*. The prosecutor countered that even non-Jews do those things. When these young men began to converse, the defender jumped up and said, "Yes, gentiles also give charity, but only Jews have broken hearts like these men."

With this defense, he annulled the decree.

Asking for Blessings on Credit:

The Dubno Magid *zt"l* explains the fact that we recite the words "Avinu Malkeinu, show us grace and answer us, for we have no deeds" quietly, with the following *moshol*:

A clever merchant once went

to a large warehouse where a lot of merchandise was being sold wholesale. He acted like he was a wealthy businessman who wanted to purchase large quantities of goods. It goes without saying that all the salesmen gathered around him, trying to interest him in their merchandise.

After loading up his wagon, he walked over to the owner and whispered to him that he didn't have a penny in his pocket. He asked if he could have the goods on credit, promising to pay as soon as he made some money.

If he had disclosed this in the beginning, no one would have given him any attention, and he certainly wouldn't have been helped with so much respect. Only because he kept his secret until afterwards was he treated nicely.

On Rosh Hashanah, we act like this merchant. We loudly ask to “purchase” a good year, wealth, health, and blessing. Only at the end, we say quietly, “Please show us grace because we have no deeds.” We admit that we need it all on credit and ask Hashem for mercy.

A Good and Sweet Year:

We ask Hashem to grant us “a good and sweet year.” Rav Yehoshua of Ostroha zy”a explains that even things that seem bad to us may actually be good. Therefore, we ask Hashem to grant us a good year that is also sweet, meaning that we can clearly see the goodness.

Remembering the Avos Only for Good:

We recite: “And Akeidas Yitzchok for Your children, remember today with compassion.” The Shlah Hakadosh states that the memory of the Avos has both a benefit and a downfall. On one hand, their merits are a *zechus* for us. On the other hand, we are supposed to learn from their ways and emulate them. Thus, bringing up their memory may lead to accusations against us. Therefore, we ask Hashem to remember Akeidas Yitzchok with compassion, meaning only in the positive way.

Believing that Everything is Good:

We say on Rosh Hashanah: “He is garbed in vengeance. His concealment is uprightness. His advice is *emunah*. His actions

are just.” Rav Moshe of Kobrin *zy”a* (Sefer Ohr Yesharim) explains this to mean that even if it appears that Hashem is acting in a vengeful way by sending us difficulties, this is, in fact, only a concealment of His goodness. The advice for this is to have *emunah* – to believe that whatever He does is for our benefit – and then we will see how everything He does is just and good.

Yirah Silences Din:

The *pasuk* states (Tehillim 76:9-10): “From Heaven, You let judgment be heard; the earth feared and became calm. When Hashem rises for judgment, to save all the humble of the earth forever.”

Sefer Siach Arfei Kodesh (Erev Rosh Hashanah, Ois 18) quotes Rav

Dov Berish of Biala zy"ra as explaining that when the shofar is blown, the judgments begin to be called out. If one feels fear in his heart from the judgment he is facing, this can silence the judgment.

Accordingly, the *pasuk* is saying that when the judgment from Heaven is heard but is not yet finalized, the earth fears but then remains calm. But **on Rosh Hashanah, when Hashem truly rises in judgment, the only way to be saved is to be humble and annul oneself to Him.**

We learn two important things from this. 1. Feeling fear on Rosh Hashanah quiets the judgment. 2. Through humility, one can avert harsh judgment completely.

Teshuva

The Rectification of Teshuva:

Rav Sinai of Zemigrad zy"ra (Sefer Chemda Genuza) relates the following story:

There was a Sanzer *chasid* named R' Shimshon who lived in the city of Kishinov. He once met a friend of his who looked very sad. He asked him what was wrong, and his friend told him that, due to a specific occurrence, he had violated the sanctity of Shabbos. He told Rav Hillel of Kolomaya zy"ra what he had done, and Rebbe gave him a very difficult regimen of *teshuva* that he must do. These rigorous *tikkunim* had caused him to become depressed.

Rav Shimshon advised his friend to come with him to Sanz and present his problem to the Divrei Chaim zy"ra, and the man

agreed to go.

When the man told Rav Chaim what he had done, he didn't give him any hard *tikkunim*. He only told him to do one small, easy thing.

He was full of joy as he left the room. R' Shimshon then went in and told the Divrei Chaim about the hard forms of teshuva Rav Hillel had ordered his friend to do. Rav Chaim told him, "Let me explain this to you with a *moshol*.

"There once was a wealthy man who owned a big grocery store that sold food at a low price. He once saw his wife shopping in his store. She went to pay for a chicken and, when she got to the cashier, she asked her to give her a five-dollar discount. He wondered why she was making a big deal out of

such a small amount of money. After all, he thought, he always gave in on small amounts when he sold products in his store. He kept wondering until he realized that she was correct. If a *baalas habayis* wouldn't care about even small amounts of money, she very likely would not keep any budget and would run through all the money in the house. He, on the other hand, as the owner of a large store, couldn't make a big fuss over every few dollars. He couldn't demand five dollars more from every customer because, if he did so, he soon wouldn't have any customers at all."

The Sanzer Rov concluded, "That's how it is here as well. I am 'running a big store', so I have to give *tikkunim* away 'for cheap'. Rav Hillel is running a 'small household', so he has to

make careful calculations to keep the house in order.”

One Who Sins to Still His Desires Can Still do Teshuva:

Nothing can stand in the way of *teshuva*. Even if one fully knows that something he is doing is wrong, and he only does it to still his desires, he can repent.

The Gemara says (Yoma 85B) that if a person says, “I will sin and then I will repent”, he is not given the opportunity (*ain maspikin*) to do *teshuva*. The Sanzer Rov *zt”l* explains this Gemara in a positive way. He translates it as saying: “If one says that he will sin, but even while he is sinning, he says that he will do *teshuva* and he is only doing it to still his desires, then **“*ain maspikin*”, there is no**

doubt (*safek*) that he will have the opportunity to do *teshuva*.

Hashem Waits for Us More than a Father Waits for His Son:

One of the respected, elderly residents of Yerushalaim was named R’ Nochum Yazar *zt”l*. In his younger years, he lived in Russia, where he taught Torah for many years. Sadly, one of his sons got caught up in communist ideology and abandoned Yiddishkeit. This was a tremendous source of pain for R’ Nochum.

One day, R’ Nochum was teaching his students the Rambam in Hilchos Teshuva (7:6) that says: “*Teshuva* is great as it brings a person close to the Shechinah... *Teshuva* draws close those who are far.

Yesterday, this person was hated by Hashem. He was disgusting, far-off, and abominable. Today, he is beloved, precious, close, and cherished.”

The students asked how one moment of *teshuva* could change things so greatly, to the extent that Hashem considers it as if the person never sinned and He is no longer angry with him at all. Rav Nochum answered, “You should know that if my son would knock on my door and say that he misses me and wants to come back, the love I would feel for him would be indescribable. Although he caused me a lot of pain in the past, at that moment it would all be forgotten. So why do you think that Hashem can’t do the same thing?”

He then quoted the Tana D’Bei Eliyahu (Rabbah, Perek 31) that says: “I testify that Hashem is

sitting and eagerly waiting for Yisroel more than a father waits for his son or a woman waits for her husband.”

He said, “Imagine the scene. It is late at night, and a man has yet to return home. It is midnight or 1 am, and he is nowhere to be seen. The entire time, his wife is sitting by the window to see if he is coming. Tana D’bei Eliyahu is saying that Hashem waits for us even more than that. He is sitting by the window of Heaven, looking to see if we are returning to Him. He is always waiting to greet us as soon as we do *teshuva*.”

Commitment for the Future:

Sefer Darchei Hayashar V’Hatov (Chelek Bais, page 23) relates that Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Liska zy”a once spent Rosh

Hashanah in the court of Rav Tzvi Hirsch of Rimanov zy"l. He related that before Kiddush, Rav Tzvi Hirsch said, "People think *teshuva* is very difficult. But the truth is that *teshuva* just means resolving not to do what we have done until now."

The Liska Rebbe said that these holy words made a strong impression on him, and he felt as if a massive weight was lifted from him.

Teshuva in a Short Time:

The Mishnah states (Avos 4:10): "One hour of *teshuva* and good deeds in this world is better than all of life in Olam Haba." Chazal (Avodah Zara 10B) say similarly that one can acquire an entire world in "one hour."

(Sefer Ohr Haganuz L'Tzadikim, Parshas Netzavim) writes that "one hour" doesn't literally mean an hour of 60 minutes, as *teshuva* is not bound to any specific amount of time. Rather, it simply means a very short amount of time, as one can even do *teshuva* in a moment. This is as the Gemara says (Kiddushin 49B) that if one marries a woman on condition that he is a *tzadik*, the marriage is valid, even if the man is a *rasha*, because we suspect that he may have had a momentary thought of *teshuva*.

He concludes by saying that when one recites "*Hashiveinu...*" in Shemonah Esrei and asks to do *teshuva*, he should think that this is the moment of *teshuva* that Chazal say is better than all of Olam Haba.

Rav Aharon of Zelichov zy"l

With One Second of Teshuva One Can Reach Great Heights:

The Magid of Mezheritch zy”a (quoted in Sefer Mayan Hachochmah, Parshas Mishpatim) states that the word “*sha’ah*” (an hour) can also mean to turn to face something (as in Bereishis 4:5). Accordingly, the Gemara is saying that if one turns to Hashem for one moment of enthusiastic teshuva, he can reach a very lofty level and “acquire an entire world”.

Forgiveness

Even if one Sinned Many Times:

Even if one does *teshuva* every year during the Yomim Noraim but still falls quickly back to his old ways year after year, he should not despair and think that there is no hope for him. He

should know that the gates of *teshuva* are still open for him. In His infinite mercy, Hashem will forgive him again and give him another chance.

It is related that the Ruzhiner Rebbe zy”a was once instructed by his doctors to spend time by the ocean. For this purpose, he traveled to the seaside city of Odessa.

The Rebbe was informed that a grandson of Rav Yaakov Emden, whose name was Meir, lived in Odessa. This Meir had been a *talmid chochom* and *ben aliyah* who had left the proper path. He also was extremely poor. The Rebbe met him and invited him to come live in Ruzhin, promising to support him financially if he did so.

R’ Meir agreed. He moved to Ruzhin, where the Rebbe took

care of all his physical needs, and he became a *baal teshuva*.

One day, the Rebbe noticed that Meir looked very sad. He asked him why he seemed so upset, and said, "If it is because of your sins, your *teshuva* took care of that!"

He answered, "I sinned so much, and even after I did *teshuva*, I have sinned some more. I don't know if my *teshuva* will be accepted again."

The Rebbe told him, "Meir, they say that you are a genius and a big *lamdan*. Therefore, I will answer you in an analytical way.

"During the *tefillos* of Rosh Hashanah, we say: 'For You are the forgiver and pardoner (*salchan u'machlan*) of the tribes of Yisroel. We may ask why we say the words '*salchan u'machlan*',

when the words '*soleach u'mochel*' seem more appropriate. The answer is seen from the verse that states (Shemos 23:5): '*Rovetz tachas masai* (crouching under its burden).' The Gemara (Bava Metzia 33A) says '*rovetz v'lo ravtzan*.' Rashi explains that '*ravtzan*' means an animal that is accustomed to this, as opposed to '*rovetz*', which means that it happened once. We see that an extra '*nun*' indicates something that happens consistently.

"Thus, we are saying that Hashem forgives us consistently, not just one time. Even if we need to do teshuva many times, He will always forgive us."

One Who Forgives Others is Forgiven by Hashem:

One year before Rosh Hashanah. The Chofetz Chaim *zt"l* said in a *shmuess* to his students, "When a person turns to Hashem on *erev* Rosh Hashanah and declares that he wants to do *teshuva*, Hashem could answer him, 'Why should I forgive you? You were busy with your desires all year. You sinned against Me. Why should I allow you to repent?'

"There is, however, one way that we can appease Him. If we forgive our friends who sinned against us, then He will, in turn, forgive us. This is a *kal v'chomer*. If a flesh and blood human being can overcome his natural instinct to hold a grudge, then Hashem, the Father of Mercy, will certainly forgive him."

All Sins are Considered

Accidental:

The *pasuk* states (Hoshea 14:2): "Because you have stumbled in transgression." Sefer Avodas Yisroel writes that this refers to the time of the destruction of the Bais Hamikdosh, when everyone was surrounded by suffering. Since life was so difficult and people could not think straight, all their sins were considered accidental.

Our Defense is that We Accepted the Torah:

The Medrash (Pesikta on Rus, 61) states that in the future, the leaders of the nations of world will come with claims against the Jewish nation. They will say that the Jews served idols just like they did. At that time, the Heavenly defender of Klal Yisroel will be silent, as the

pasuk states (Daniel 12:1): “At that time, Michael stood (in silence).”

Hashem will then say, “Why are you remaining silent and not defending My children? I promise that I will speak of their charity and save My children.

“With what charity? With the charity they did to My world by accepting My Torah. For if they had not accepted it, I would have returned the world to nothingness.”

The Satmar Rov zy”a (Divrei Yoel on Rosh Hashanah, Ois 62) asks why Michael was silent. Why didn’t he even attempt to defend Klal Yisroel?

He answers that his silence actually helped the Jewish people. This prophecy is regarding the end of days, the era right before the arrival of Moshiach, when the nation will

be full of sin, and the prosecuting forces will come with many accusations. Michael will have no good defense. Therefore, he will be silent because he knows that Hashem will then step in Himself to speak up in the nation’s merit because they accepted the Torah. And when Hashem Himself speaks in defense of Klal Yisroel, no angel will have the audacity to dispute Him.

With this in mind, he explains the words of the piyyut: “*B’ein meilitz yosher...* Without any defender against the reciter of sin.’ This means that when we have no one to defend us from the words of the prosecutor, and even Michael is silent, then Hashem will come and speak “words of laws and judgements”. He will defend us by bringing up the fact that we accepted His

laws in the Torah, and this will save us.

Tefillah

Davening for One's Friend:

Rosh Hashanah is referred to as Yom Hazikaron (the Day of Remembrance). Sefer Tiferes Shlomo (on Rosh Hashanah) explains that on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, one is meant to daven for the honor of Hashem and for the pain He feels from the fact that the Shechinah is in exile. On the second day, one should daven for the nation of Yisroel as a whole and to beseech Hashem to grant His people all their needs.

This is seen from the verse (Malachi 3:16): "Then the G-d-fearing men spoke to one another, and Hashem hearkened and heard it. And a book of

remembrance was written before Him." This can be understood to mean that when one davens for others in Klal Yisroel, Hashem hears and accepts the prayers.

This also explains the verse that states (Bereishis 8:1): "And G-d remembered Noach and all the wild animals and all the domestic animals that were with him in the *teiva*." The word "*teiva*" can also mean "a word". Accordingly, the *pasuk* can mean that since Noach spoke about the animals and prayed for them, Hashem remembered him. It is thus certain that He hears the prayers of one who davens for his fellow men.

With this in mind, we can explain that Rosh Hashanah is called "Yom Hazikaron" because on this day everyone must remember his friends and pray for them.

The Tefillah of the Public:

Sefer M'Zekeinim Esbonen (on Rosh Hashanah) writes that someone once came to Rav Moshe Midner *zt"l* with a sick child and asked him to daven for the boy. He advised him to sit with the boy by the door of the mikvah on erev Shabbos, and to ask for a *bracha* from each of the hundreds of Yidden who pass by. He said that it is certain that from all those *brachos*, at least one will be effective.

We see that the blessings of Jews have a strong effect, which is why we all bless each other to have a “*shana tov*”, as it is certain that at least one of the *brachos* we receive will bear fruit.

Davening, Not Learning:

Sefer Imrei Hakodesh quotes Rav Uri of Streisk *zy"l* as saying, “We see how great tefillah is from the fact that the early sages didn't decree that we should learn a lot of Torah on Rosh Hashanah. Rather, they said that we should daven a lot on this day.”

Crowning Hashem Through Tefillah:

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 16A) states: “Say before me “Malchius” in order for me to rule over you.” The Bais Avrohom *zy"l* explains this Gemara by quoting the *pasuk*: “*He'emanti ki adaber*”, which he translates to mean: “I have *emunah* because I speak.”

When one speaks about matters of *emunah*, he will come to have genuine *emunah*. This is

also the meaning of the Gemara. rules over you.

When one speaks about Malchius, meaning when one talks about having *emunah* in Hashem, he is able to have him rule over him because he will come to have a lot of *emunah*.

The Bais Avrohom continues by explaining the Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 32A) that says that one opinion holds that we should say ten *pesukim* of Malchius, while one opinion holds that we should say three. A third opinion says that even if we only say: “In Your Torah it says to say Shema Yisroel...”, that is sufficient to fulfil the obligation.

He explains that everyone must serve Hashem according to his personal level. Some need to do a lot, while others can do less. And for some, even very little is enough. The main thing is to anoint Him as the King who

Asking for Goodness in Order to Increase Hashem’s Glory:

In the *tefillos* of Rosh Hashanah, we recite the words: “And, therefore, give honor to Your nation.” The Sifsei Tzadik (on Rosh Hashanah, Ois 2) asks why we daven for honor. Don’t we usually say that it is preferable to flee from honor?

He answers that this actually refers to Hashem’s honor. We are davening that His honor should be increased through us. When one does this, he can ask for whatever he needs, as his intentions are to use the goodness he receives to honor Hashem.

Asking for Gashmius to be

Better Able to Serve Hashem:

Rav Hertzel Koppel's (quoted in Sefer Ohr Hachochmah, Ois 162) said that he heard an explanation from the Chozeh of Lublin *zy"ra* on the pasuk in Tehillim (119:91): "For Your judgment, we stand today, for we are all Your servants." The Chozeh explained that if one stands before Hashem for "His judgment, meaning that he wants to be granted *parnassah* or peace of mind so that he can better serve Hashem, then "we are all His servants", meaning that even the *yeitzer hara* becomes a servant of Hashem and doesn't try to stop him from receiving what he asks for.

Tekias Shofar

Blowing Barrels of Gold:

Sefer Chakal Yitzchok (Parshas

Re'eh) writes in the name of the Imrei Yosef of Spinka *zy"ra* that one year on Rosh Hashanah, as the Chozeh of Lublin *zy"ra* was going up to blow shofar, his *badchan*, Rav Mordechai Rackover *z"l*, asked him jokingly, "Rebbe, what are you going to blow?"

The Chozeh replied, "What do you want me to blow?"

The *badchan* said, "I want the Rebbe to blow big '*chavitin*' (barrels) full of gold coins for Klal Yisroel."

The Chozeh responded, "That is what I will do."

The Tekias of the Berditchover:

Sefer Shivchei Baal Shem Tov (page 157) relates that the Magid of Mezheritch *zy"ra* did not blow

the shofar himself. Rather, Rav Menachem Mendel of Vitebsk *zy”a* was the *baal tokea*, and the Magid was the “*makri*”. Even during the last few years of his life, when the Magid was very sick, he would be *makri* from his room.

One year, Rav Menachem Mendel was unable to be in Mezheritch on Rosh Hashanah. That year, the Magid asked Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchov *zy”a* to blow the shofar.

Rav Levi Yitzchok prepared for this task very enthusiastically and emotionally, as was his way. When the Magid called out the first *tekiah*, Rav Levi Yitzchok saw a bright light, and he fainted. The Magid said, “I don’t know what’s wrong with him. Mendel saw more than he did and he didn’t get so scared.”

He then told someone else who wouldn’t be so scared to blow the shofar instead.

A Small, Thin Voice:

The Kotzker Rebbe *zy”a* asked Rav Yechiel Meir of Guštini *zy”a* to blow shofar in his bais medrash. When it came time to blow, however, it was very hard for him to get the sounds out.

After davening, the Rebbe told him, “You blew well!”

He then quoted the words of the piyyut U’Nesana Tokef, ‘*Odom gadol yitaka*’, which he used to mean: “A great man blew.” He added, “Even though only ‘*kol demama dakah yishama*’ (a small, thin voice was heard), it was still ‘*malachim yichapeizon v’cheil v’raadah ye’echeizun*’ (angels hurried and fear

and trembling grabbed them).”

The Kavanos of Tekias Shofar:

R' Shmuel Deutsch, the *baal tokea* in the bais medrash of the Chasam Sofer *zy”a*, once asked him to teach him the holy intentions he should have in mind when blowing the shofar. The Chasam Sofer quoted the *pasuk* (Bamidbor 29:1): “It is a day of blowing for you.” He then said, “You must have intentions to fulfill this mitzvah that Hashem commanded us, nothing more.”

Tevilah Before Blowing:

Sefer Ohalei Shem relates that the Magid of Kozhnitz *zy”a* once asked Rav Levi Yitzchok of Beritchov *zy”a*, “What time

do you start davening by you?”

Rav Levi Yitzchok answered that he started davening late, especially on the Yomim Noraim, because he needed time to prepare for the holy prayers.

The Magid then said, “I finish davening early.”

The Berditchover then said, “This year, I will make sure to blow shofar before you do.”

On Rosh Hashanah, as the Magid was getting ready for *tekias shofar*, he saw that there were Heavenly accusations against Klal Yisroel. He began engaging in his *avodah hakedosha*, using lofty *yichudim* in an attempt to annul the decree. Since he was toiling so hard in this *avodah*, he became weak and fainted. He then had a vision in which he was standing in Shomayim and saw that there

was a tremendous accusation against the nation. Suddenly, he heard a loud noise breaking through the Heavens. He asked what it was, and he was told that Rav Levi Yitzchok of Beritchov was going to the mikvah before blowing shofar, and this was cancelling all the decrees.

When the Magid awoke, he said, “We must wait until after the Berditchover blows shofar. It will then be easier for us to blow.”

Hashem Does Not Give Negative Testimony:

Rav Yitzchok of Vorka zy”a was orphaned from both his father and mother as a young child. He was adopted by Rav Dovid of Lelov zy”a, who raised him in his home. As a child, he was known as “Itzikel”.

On erev Rosh Hashanah, the *chasidim* of the Chozeh of Lublin zy”a hired a wagon to travel to their Rebbe. Rav Dovid took leave of the boy and told him, “Itzikel, you will not be traveling to Lublin because it is very crowded and you could get trampled. I don’t want to have to watch you the whole time because I wouldn’t be able to concentrate on my *tefillos*. Therefore, you will be staying home.”

The boy didn’t say a word. Once all the *chasidim* were on the wagon, he ran over and tied himself to a plank that was sticking out in the back, without anyone noticing. When they stopped for a break halfway through the journey, someone realized he was there and brought him into the wagon.

When they got to Lublin, Rav

Dovid told him, “Since it is so crowded here and you might get pushed around, please hold tightly onto my belt so that you won’t get separated from me.”

On the first day of Rosh Hashanah, after Tefillas Shacharis, the Chozeh walked out of the bais medrash. The crowd waited for a long time for him to return so that they could start *tekias shofar*, but he didn’t come back. The *chasidim* began to worry, and they finally decided that Rav Dovid of Lelov should go to the Rebbe’s room and see what was taking so long.

Rav Dovid entered the room, with Itzikel still holding onto his belt. The Chozeh did not look at Rav Dovid. Instead, he turned to the boy and asked, “What’s your name?”

The boy answered, “Itzikel.”

The Chozeh asked him, “What are you learning?”

Itzikel answered that he was learning the *sugya* about how someone cannot give testimony about a relative. The Chozeh then asked, “Why can’t he?”

The boy responded, “Because he might testify falsely because he wants to help his relative.”

The Chozeh continued to ask, “Do you have any questions on this Gemara?”

Itzikel said, “Yes. It says that one can’t testify in favor or against his relative. I understand why he can’t testify in his favor, but why can’t he testify against him?”

The Chozeh asked, “Do you have an answer for this question?”

The boy said, “Yes. It is

because someone who testifies against his relative is not a *mentch*, and the Torah says (Devarim 19:17) that only a human being can give testimony.”

The Chozeh became excited and said, “**Hashem is our relative. He certainly would never testify against us.**”

He then immediately entered the *bais medrash* for the *tekios*.

**Tochacha Sweetens
Judgment Like the Shofar:**

The *pasuk* states (Yeshaya 58:1): “Like a shofar raise your voice.”

Rav Yissochor of Belz *zy”a* explains that this is a hint that just a like a shofar sweetens a harsh judgment, words of *mussar* can do the same and can cause sins to be forgiven.

**May we all be blessed with a
kesiva v’chasima tova and
sweet New Year!**



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