



Torah U'Tefilah

A Collection of Inspiring Insights

ראש השנה תשפ"ז 5787 Rosh Hashanah

Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg

Staten Island Z'manim

	Erev Rosh Hashanah	First Day	Second Day
Sof Z'man Shema M"A		9:07	9:07
Sof Z'man Shema Gra		9:43	9:43
Sof Z'man Tefilah		10:46	10:46
Chatzos		12:52	12:52
Candle Lighting	6:54		
Sh'kiah	7:12	7:10	7:08
Tzeis HaKochavim	7:54	7:52	7:50
Rabbeinu Tam (72 mins)	8:25	8:24	8:22

Rosh Hashanah Treasures

Rebbe Aharon of Karlin, *zt"l*, when he went up to be the Chazan for Shacharis on Rosh Hashanah, he would begin with strength and awe to say 'HaMelech!' and he would be gripped with anxiety and fear until he felt weak. He would wait some time before he regained his composure and he would continue with the holy Davening. After Davening, someone asked him why he had felt weak? He replied that when he began to say 'HaMelech', the words of the Gemara (Gittin 56a) passed before his eyes where it relates that Rebbe Yochanan ben Zakai greeted the Caesar as 'king'. Caesar asked Rebbe Yochanan, "If I am a king, why did you not come to me until today? If you truly accept me as king, then why have you not come before me until now?!" Rebbe Aharon continued and said, "When I remembered this pointed question a great fear fell upon me, as we are asked this same question when we come before Hashem Yisbarach and call Him 'The King'. If we are really accepting Hashem as King, then why have we not mentioned this before now? Where have we been until now? Why has it taken so long for us to recognize that Hashem is the King of the world?! This is why I couldn't continue Davening without pausing to reflect on this!"

Pearls of Wisdom ... A Word for the Ages

Every year before Rosh Hashanah, Rav Mordechai Gifter, *zt"l*, would give a check to the Yeshivah to pay for any food he may have eaten from the Yeshivah kitchen that he was not entitled to. He wanted to make certain that he was clean from any slight infraction of the Aveirah of stealing!

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

ותשליך במצולות ים כל חטאתם (מיכה ז:יט)

You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea (Michah 7:19)

The Admor HaRav HaKadosh Rebbe Yekusiel Teitelbaum, *zt"l*, of Siget, writes in his *Sefer Yitav Panim* in the name of the Eitz Yosef that it is brought in a Medrash that the reason we say *Tashlich* at waters is because the waters on earth are called *מים בוכים*, 'Waters of Weeping', because when Hashem separated the waters, He placed some above and some below. The waters below began to weep saying: "Woe to us that we did not merit to be above and be closer to our Creator." The Holy One, Blessed is He said, "Since you are doing this for My honor, you will be honored by being destined to be offered on the Mizbei'ach as a water libation. Therefore, we learn a moral lesson from this since we have fallen so far away from Hashem Yisbarach, and how we can return to Hashem and to cling to Him. If the waters down below can weep and request that they be constantly before Hashem, then how can we, living people, not cry? This is why we go to the water to learn the *Kal V'Chomer*. (Torah Tavlin)

Parshah Thoughts – Ideas and Reflections

By: Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

Rashi (Rosh Hashana 28a) explains that *Mitzvos* were not given for pleasure. Rather, they were given as a yoke of responsibility on our necks. Rav Avrohom Schorr wonders: aren't responsibility and yokes generally borne on one's shoulders and not on their necks? We associate one wearing jewelry on their neck! He answers that while it is true that *Mitzvos* are a responsibility, however, we should strive to wear that responsibility with pride, like it was a piece of jewelry, and not as a burden. This helps us understand why there is no mention of Rosh Hashanah being a Day of Judgment. The Maharal (Tiferes Yisrael, Ch. 27) explains that judgment is not something enjoyable by the one being judged. Therefore, Hashem does not reference the *Yom Tov* to the judgment. Rav Moshe M. Eisemann suggests that we, who are the recipients of the judgment and strive for that relationship with Hashem, happily refer to the judgment aspect as the holiday itself.

Pearls of Wisdom ... A Word for the Ages

Rav Elimelech of Lizhensk, *zt"l*, quoted Chazal, which teaches that whoever acquires a Jewish servant, acquires a master for himself. The reason for this is that a master may not just benefit from the work of his servant, rather, he must make sure that his servant is taken care of and provides for all of his needs, and this is learned from *Pesukim* in the Torah. We say in Davening on Rosh Hashanah that 'Hashem acquires His servants in Judgement', and therefore, Hashem must take pity on His people, *Klal Yisroel*. As per the *Halachah*, since we are the servants that Hashem has acquired and Hashem is the Master, Hashem is 'required' to make sure that we are taken care of, and see that the needs of the Jewish people and their continued wellbeing are provided for throughout the coming year!

Rosh Hashanah Gems

Rav Yitzchok Zilberstein relates that during the *Shivah* for his mother, he was visited by the *Ozorer Rebbe*. The *Rebbe* quoted his grandfather, the author of the *Aish Das*, who asked a question on the *Laining* of Rosh Hashanah. The *Torah* section which we read on the first day of Rosh Hashanah discusses about Sarah *Imeinu*, her experience becoming a mother, and the incident with her maidservant, Hagar. On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, we read the story of Avraham *Avinu* and his son Yitzchak, and their preparations for the *Akeidah*. Why is it that on the first day we read about the *Imahos* and on the second day we read about the *Avos*? The *Aish Das* answers that if a child stumbles, his father helps him up, and supports him as he continues along his way. His mother, on the other hand, will guide and teach her son to be careful, so that he will not fall again in the future. A father offers comfort after the fall. A mother sees to it that the child won't fall again. This is why the merit of the *Imahos* exceeds that of the *Avos*, because mothers provide the foundation that prevent us from falling in the first place. This is why we read about Sarah *Imeinu* before we read about Avraham *Avinu*!

Pearls of Wisdom ... A Word for the Ages

In the *Ponovezh Yeshivah*, it gets particularly crowded on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, since both current students and alumni flock back to the *Yeshivah* to *Daven* with their great *Roshei Yeshivah* and *Rebbeim*. One year, the expected crowd was going to be too large for the *Bais Medrash*, and those in charge of the seating suggested that they open the women's section and use it for additional men's seating. When they went to Rav Shach, *zt"l*, the *Rosh Yeshivah*, to ask his opinion, he refused. He said, "You may not take away the women's section. We need the tears and *Tefilos* of the women davening there!"

Rosh Hashanah Treasures

The *Minhag* to eat special fruits on Rosh Hashanah is from the *Gemara* (*Horiyos* 12a). While the *Gemara* gives a list of recommended fruits to eat, dipping apples in honey is not mentioned. The earliest source for the apple dipped in honey is from the *Avudraham* as quoted by the *Rama* (583:1). What is the significance of this famous *Minhag*? The *Sefer Mo'adim L'Simchah* offers a number of reasons: 1) The *Maharil* says that Yitzchok *Avinu* smelled an apple orchard when he commented on the beautiful smell as Yaakov came in to him to receive the *Brachos*. The *Vilna Gaon* says that this happened on Rosh Hashanah. 2) The *Ben Ish Chai* writes that apples give three pleasures, as they have a pleasant smell, appearance, and taste, which corresponds to three *Brachos* we request from Hashem that we would like to receive for the next year: *Banei* (Children and *Nachas* from our Children), *Chayai* (Life and Health), and *Mezonei* (Wealth). 3) The *Zohar* notes that wine symbolizes *Din* or judgment. Apples are eaten after strong wine in order not to be harmed by the strength of the wine. Therefore, since Rosh Hashanah is a time of *Din*, we eat apples in order to sweeten the judgment. 4) On Rosh Hashanah we want Hashem to remember the ashes of *Akeidas Yitzchok*. The ashes that accumulated on the *Mizbei'ach* from all the *Korbanos* are called '*Tapuach*', which means 'apple'.

Pearls of Wisdom ... A Word for the Ages

When it comes to eating the *Simanei Milsa*, the foods that have special significance at the *Seudah* of Rosh Hashanah, the *Sh"lah Ha'kadosh* says that eating foods just because they have names that connote good fortune is a waste of time and does not help us at all. The real reason we eat the *Simanim*, he explains, is solely in order to say the *Yehi Ratzon*, the *Tefilah* that accompanies eating these foods. When eaten like this, it provides us with a reminder and a means with which we can *Daven* to Hashem in the beginning of our first meal of the year for things that are important.

Rav Yechiel Spero writes that during the late 1700's the Russian authorities followed the orders of the Czar to enter towns and grab a certain number of children to become "cantonists," soldiers in the army of the Czar. Some of these children were only 5 or 6 years old, and they were taken away and put in wagons. The children were brought to a distant location in the frozen Siberia. In most cases, within a few short months, they had forgotten almost everything from their previous lives. The Russian officers brainwashed them into believing that the Czar was their father and that he would provide them with all they needed. During the first few weeks after being taken captive, Naftali, a 5-year-old boy, was very quiet and withdrawn. The memory of his mother was forever etched on his soul. But over the next few months, his emotions became as cold as the weather outside. The boys gathered together every night in their quarters when they were ready to go to sleep. A 7-year-old named Binyamin became the leader of the younger boys. He tried to remember everything his *Rebbi* had taught him, and he repeated what he could to his younger friends. Before they had left, the boys had been learning together in Cheder about the upcoming *Yamim Tovim*. Their *Rebbi* had taught them about the importance of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. He had told them how Hashem accepts our *Tefilos* as long as they come from the heart. One night, Binyamin sat down with the boys and told them that that night was Rosh Hashanah. He spoke to them about the importance of the day and how it was the time when everything was decided for the coming year. There was some soft crying in the room as many of the boys became homesick, remembering what it was like to be home getting ready for *Yom Tov*. Finally, as Binyamin finished his '*Drashah*', he asked if anyone in the room remembered the *Tefilos*, because he could not remember the words himself. When there was no response, he asked if one of the boys remembered any of the words of *Tehilim* by heart. Suddenly, Naftali began to speak. "I don't remember any of the words of *Tehilim*, but I do remember this..." and slowly, softly, he began to sing the tune he used for saying *Tehilim*. As he walked to the front of the room, he sang, and the rest of the children, who also knew this tune, sang along with him. As these little children '*Davened*', they were not held back by their lack of words. The stirring melody took them higher and higher. Tears flowed as the boys continued to sing, with little Naftali as the *Chazan* and the rest of the children as his *Tzibur*. A short time later, somehow, word of this incident became known, and it reached the ears of Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev, *zt"l*, the great advocate for *Klal Yisroel*. When he heard the story, he, too, began to cry. He then revealed that he had been granted a vision of a terrible tragedy that had been decreed upon the Jewish people. A great fire came, and no matter how hard he tried, he could not extinguish the flames. Suddenly, a powerful stream appeared. The fire raged until it reached the stream. And then, suddenly, it was extinguished. Rav Levi Yitzchak said, "That stream was formed from the tears of those children. They accomplished what no one else could!" As lost as they were, with no hope in sight, they had found a glimmering spark. And that spark unleashed a river of tears, which, according to Rav Levi Yitzchak, caused the terrible decree to be annulled. Rav Levi Yitzchak taught that wherever a *Yid* may find himself in life, he is never really lost!

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