



Torah U'Tefilah

A Collection of Inspiring Insights

ראש השנה תשפ"ו 5786 Rosh Hashanah

Compiled by: Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg

❧ Rosh Hashanah Treasures

Rav Gamliel Rabinowitz once said that Rebbe Yeshaya of Kerestier, *zt"l*, was famous for his involvement in *Hachnasas Orchim*, hosting guests, and he devoted a lot of time to this. Once, during the break before *Shofar* blowing, his *Chasidim* saw him preparing food for the congregation for the *Seudah* after *Davening*. The *Chasidim* asked him, "Rebbe, why are you doing this now? All the *Tzadikim* are preparing themselves for blowing *Shofar*." Rebbe Yeshaya answered them, "The *Rebbes* are involved in what they do, but I am involved in 'L'sova V'Lo L'razon', for plenty and not for scarcity!" It is similarly told about the *Lelover Rebbe*, *zt"l*, that when he came to *Kever Rochel*, he would set up a *Seudah*, explaining that a mother loves to see her children eating!

Rav Gamliel said that we learn in *Parshas Va'eira* the trait of *Hachnosas Orchim* of Avraham *Avinu*, where Avraham was sitting at the entrance to his tent in the heat of the day looking for guests, while he was recovering from his *Bris Milah*. This was the third day after his *Bris*, and ultimately, Avraham was able to receive guests, who were really *Malachim* who took the form of Arabs. But there is also another aspect to this devotion, as it was then that *Hashem* came to visit Avraham *Avinu* while he was ill. When Avraham saw the guests, he asked of *Hashem*, "Please excuse me and wait while I receive the guests." This is truly astounding, as at this moment in time Avraham *Avinu* had reached a very high level in *D'veikus*, attaching oneself to *Hashem*. How could Avraham forego this high level to receive guests who appeared to be Arabs? Avraham was teaching us a great principle in *Avodas Hashem*. Sometimes we think that it is only possible to attain attachment to *Hashem* by spending long hours learning *Torah* or in *Tefilah*. But the truth is that it is possible gain *D'veikus* to *Hashem* with any *Mitzvah*, even one like doing *Chesed* and hosting guests. To do *Chesed*, one does not have to establish a *Chesed* organization. It is possible to begin doing *Chesed* with one's family, and to remember that this is a *Mitzvah* exactly like putting on *Tefilin*. Of course, this does not exempt one from learning *Torah* or *Davening*. We must remember to ask of *Hashem* to help us fulfill this *Mitzvah* for the sake of Heaven, and that we will become attached to *Hashem* with it!

By: R' Shmuel Winzelberg

לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם

May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year

We have the custom on Rosh Hashanah to bless everyone individually with "לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם לאלתר לחיים טובים ושלוש" – *May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year immediately for good life and peace*". It is interesting to note that the custom of the author of the *Tur* (*Orach Chaim* 586) was to express this statement in this way: *נוהגין באשכנז כל אחד – מבקש לחברו ואומר לו: תכתב בשנה טובה לשנה טובה – We Ashkenaz are accustomed that one person wishes one another: May you be inscribed in a good year.* Why does he change the format of the blessing from 'לשנה טובה' to 'בשנה טובה'? The 'Perisha' explains that in *Shamayim* there is a book titled "שנה טובה", and all those that merit life are inscribed in it, and so one should bless his fellow that he be inscribed in this book. (*Umatok HaOhr*)

❧ Parshah Thoughts – Ideas and Reflections

By: Rabbi Aron Moshe Jacobsohn

On Rosh Hashanah, there is a custom to dip an apple into honey, which symbolizes our hopes for a sweet new year (*Tur*, *Orach Chaim* 683). Rav Zecharia Wallerstein, *zt"l*, elaborates on the particular use of an apple and honey. When we think of the source of the apple, our initial thought would be that its source is from a seed or a tree. A deeper analysis would remind us that a key step in the process is the bee pollinating the flowers. Dipping an apple in honey expresses a recognition of the entire process, even the back process of the development of this fruit. This is shown on Rosh Hashanah as we recognize that *Hashem* is the true Source of everything we need and have in our lives!

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!

Pearls of Wisdom ... A Word for the Ages

Rav Chaim Tzvi Blau related that Rav Matisyahu Solomonm, *zt"l*, used to be the *Chazan* for *Mussaf* in the *Yeshivah* in Gateshead. One year during *Mussaf*, by the words, *U'Teshuvah U'Tefilah U'Tzedakah Ma'avirin es Ro'a HaG'zeirah*, *Teshuvah*, *Tefilah*, and *Tzedakah* will nullify the bad decree, Rav Matisyahu got a bloody nose because of the intense concentration he was having, and a drop of blood landed directly over the word 'Ro'a', evil, and covered it up. For the next three years, there was not one *Levayah* in Gateshead!

Rosh Hashanah Gems

Rav Yissochor Frand once told a frightening story. The *Chidushei HaRim* once traveled with a man on his carriage that was pulled by two horses. After a few miles, one of the horses died, and this caused great distress to its owner. A few miles later, the other horse also died. The owner was so distressed at the loss of his horses, because they meant so much to him. He was so overcome that he sat crying for a long time, until he cried so much that *he* died. That night, the *Chidushei HaRim* had a dream, and he saw that the man who had passed away had entered *Olam Haba*. However, what was this man's *Olam Haba*? It was a lovely carriage with two beautiful horses. Rabbi Frand said that this story teaches us that our *Olam Haba* is created by what we value in *Olam Ha'zeh*, on this world. For this man, the most important thing in his life was his horses and his carriage, and therefore, that was what he got for eternity. One may ask, it does not seem to be so bad for a person to receive in *Olam Haba* for that which he cherishes so much in *Olam Ha'zeh*. Rabbi Frand answers this question. He says that when he was a young child, he always wanted a slingshot to play with, but his parents refused to get it for him. He said, "Imagine if, at the time of my wedding, my parents would come to me and say, 'here is the slingshot that you always wanted!'" As a child, the slingshot was valuable to me, but now I have grown out of it." So too, he explained, we may strive to acquire various pleasures in *Olam Ha'zeh*, such as money or honor, believing that they will provide us with contentment. But when we arrive in *Olam Haba*, we will see the truth of the words of the *Ramchal* in *Mesilas Yesarim* (Ch. 1): "Everything else, apart from closeness to *Hashem*, that people believe is good, is nothing but emptiness." In the next world we will see with perfect clarity how meaningless those things are that we put so much energy into acquiring in this world. It is not enough to merely observe the *Mitzvos*. Rather, it must be the sole driving force in our lives. Honor, power, money, food, and any other 'pleasure', are all artificial sources of anything meaningful. However, declaring *Hashem* as King means that we realize that He is the only Source of true happiness!

Pearls of Wisdom ...A Word for the Ages

The *Kotzker Rebbe*, *zt"l*, said "People don't eat nuts on Rosh Hashanah because the word *Cheit*, *Aveirah*, has the same *Gematria* as *Egoz*, nuts. However, people forget that *Cheit* also has the *Gematria* as *Cheit*!"

Rosh Hashanah Treasures

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!

Pearls of Wisdom ...A Word for the Ages

Rav Dovid Hoffman writes in the name of
Rav Mordechai of Densburg, *zt"l*:
"Some people spend time reviewing the *Machzor* before
Rosh Hashanah. However, the *Machzor* won't change!
It is better that one review his deeds and correct them!"

One day, Chaikel, the town water-carrier, passed by the window of the holy *Baal Shem Tov*, *zt"l*, with two heavy buckets of water on his shoulders. The *Baal Shem Tov* stopped him and asked, "How are you, Chaikel? How's work?" "Oy vey, Holy Rabbi! What can I say?" answered Chaikel, "Things are bad and bitter, they should not happen to you! I trudge with these buckets of water up many stairs. Back and forth, back and forth, and I barely see any livelihood from all this exertion!" The next day, Chaikel the water-carrier again passed by the window of the *Baal Shem Tov*, just as he had done the previous day. Again the *Baal Shem Tov* stopped him and asked, "Nu, Chaikel, How are you? How do you feel?" "Praise and thanks to the Creator, *Yisbarach Sh'mo*!" Chaikel answered. "I can't complain. As the *Rebbe* sees, I am no longer a young man. Still, praise to *Hashem* above. I still have strength to carry buckets of water even up many stairs to people living on high floors, and *Boruch Hashem*, I am able to scrape together a living!" The Holy *Baal Shem Tov* turned to his students and said to them, "Have you heard the words of Chaikel? Yesterday he said one thing and today he says something entirely different! I have always been bothered by a *Machlokes* between the *Tana'im* (*Rosh Hashanah* 16a), *Rebbe Meir* and *Rebbe Yehuda* say that a man is judged on Rosh Hashanah, and *Rebbe Yosi* says that a man is judged every day. How is this possible? "Now, Chaikel comes and settles this *Machlokes*. As you see from Chaikel himself, these buckets of water are very heavy, and the steps leading to the high floors are hard to climb. Yet, yesterday Chaikel complained about his situation, and today he is happy and pleased. "How do we explain these two sides of the *Machlokes*? Man is judged on Rosh Hashanah when his *Parnasah* for the entire year is determined. Then it was established how much money Chaikel would make by carrying water. However, if Chaikel is happy with his work, or perhaps he will complain about it, for this he is judged daily. This is established in *Shamayim* on a daily basis, how Chaikel will feel about himself on any given day. Will he be happy with his job or will he not be happy with his job? Today it was decided that he would be happy!"

Sponsored as a *Zechus* for *Klal Yisroel*

To be Bentched With a Year Full of Only Brachah, Hatzlachah, Yeshuah, Parnasah, and Nechamah
And May This Year be the Year Moshiach Finally Arrives!!!

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