



שומרי משמרת הקודש
SHOMREI MISHMERES HAKODESH

Kunteres

קונטרס

Pekudas

פקודת

השורצים

HaShomrim



ON

INYANEI YERECH

HAFISANIM

.....

A Compilation of Divrei Torah from the Members and Friends of

Kehillas Shomrei Mishmeres HaKodesh

Baltimore, Maryland

Tishrei 5784

Kunteres Pekudas HaShomrim On Inyanei Yerech HaEisanim

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**This Kunteres is Dedicated
In Loving Memory of
Our Grandmother and
Great Grandmother**

חיה דרייזל בת אברהם ע"ה

**By
Mr. and Mrs. Eliezer Hamby
And
Mr. and Mrs. Mayer Hamby**

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Divrei Beracha

י' אב, תשפ"ג

The *Yomim Noraim* reset, realign, and reconnect us with Hashem and His will. We seek not only to change our ways but also to find new paths in which to develop and renew our relationship with Him. The Torah contained in this *Kunteres* represents this desire, as the *Mechabrim* are all *Bnei Aliyah* who seek to grow and share their inspiration. It is an honor to be part of this *Kehillah*, amongst our *Chevra*, who are sincere *Bnei Torah* committed to living, teaching, and growing in their *Yiddishkeit*.

Our *Kehillah*, Shomrei Mishmeres HaKodesh, is a renewal of the Lloyd St. Synagogue and the faithful, committed people who planted the seeds of Jewish Orthodoxy in Baltimore in the early 1900's. My father, Rabbi Avraham Dov Schwartz ZT"l, grew up in this *Shul* and his father, Hyman (Chaim Shmuel) Schwartz ZT"l, was the president for over 30 years. My father and the members of the old *Shul* thought that *Yiddishkeit* in America would be lost after them. They would hardly believe that a *Kunteres* of Torah, *Halacha*, and *Hashkafa* would be printed in their name.

This *Kunteres* is named *Pekudas HaShomrim*, based on the *Pasuk* in *Parshas Bamidbar*, "*Pekudas Shomrei Mishmeres Hakodesh*" in the context of the *Levi'im* and their responsibilities in the *Avodah* of the *Mishkan*. The Lloyd St. Synagogue was established on *Parshas Bamidbar*. The word "*Pekudas*" emanates from its root "*Pakad*," a "charge". The Radak in his *Sefer HaShorashim*, explains that "*Pakad*" has numerous meanings to include: "remembrance", "a count", and a "command." The name *Pekudas HaShomrim* represents our *Kehillah's* recognition of what our charge is; *Avodas Hashem*. But

it also represents our hope that this *Kunteres* be *counted* among our *Zechuyos*, and that through it Hashem should *remember* our *Kehillah* for Life. May this compilation *B'Inyanei Yerech HaEisanim* be the first of many, and may it take on the many facets of the name "*Pekudas HaShomrim*."

Thank you to our holy *Mechabrim*. May their Torah & *Mesiras Nefesh* be a *Zechus* for them and their families. On behalf of us all, I share our special thanks to Zev Winchell and his wife Huvie for their inspiration, encouragement, and administration of this effort. We are grateful to Eliezer & Arlene Hamby and Mayer & Melissa Hamby for their generous sponsorship and for their commitment to the Shul and to our co-sponsors Dr. Erik & Ellen Roskes. May Hashem bless you all with good health, happiness, and success in all of your endeavors.

It is my prayer that the souls of my father and grandfather of blessed memory, and the venerated Rabbi Avraham Nachman Schwartz ZT'L and his *Talmidim* of over 115 years ago be elevated in their places in *Gan Eden*, and it is my *Beracha* and wish that we all will be inscribed into the Book of Life so that we can continue to grow together and learn from each other.

B'Birkas Yedidus V'Ahava,



חיים שמואל שווארץ

Rav, Kehillas Shomrei Mishmeres HaKodesh

Introduction

"The Book of Torah should never leave your mouth (*Lo Yamush*), rather you should contemplate it day and night" (*Yehoshua* 1:8)

"R' Yochanan says in the name of R' Shimon bar Yochai, 'Even if a person recited only *Krias shema* in the morning and in the evening, he has fulfilled the *Mitzvah* of *Lo Yamush*.'" (*Menachos* 99b)

"R' Shimon bar Yochai says, 'If a man plows at the time of plowing, sows at the time of sowing, harvests at the time of harvesting, etc., what will become of Torah?! Rather, when the people of Israel do the will of the Omnipresent, their work is done by others... but at a time when they do not do the will of the Omnipresent, their work is done by them, as it is stated 'And you will harvest your grain.'" (*Berachos* 35b)

These two statements of R' Shimon bar Yochai appear contradictory. On the one hand, in *Meseches Menachos*, R' Shimon bar Yochai says that a person can discharge his obligation to study Torah merely by reciting *Krias shema* in the morning and evening. Yet, in *Meseches Berachos*, it is none other than R' Shimon bar Yochai who states, rather firmly, that a person must absolve himself of all worldly matters and completely devote himself to Torah study. Is there any way to reconcile these opposing statements?

Perhaps we can offer the following solution; that these teachings were both said by R' Shimon bar Yochai, but during two different periods in his life. The *Gemara* in *Meseches Shabbos* 33b famously

recounts the story of how R' Shimon bar Yochai and his son were forced to flee from the Roman authorities and hide in a cave, where they studied Torah uninterrupted for twelve years. The *Gemara* relates that upon exiting the cave for the first time they were unable to reintegrate back into society. Upon seeing people who were plowing and harvesting, R' Shimon became incensed that they were engaged in temporal worldly matters instead of engaging in Torah study which leads to eternal life. The *Gemara* relates that anything R' Shimon and his son rested their eyes upon immediately burst into flames. Finally, a heavenly voice commanded R' Shimon and his son to return to their cave to prevent them from destroying the world.

R' Shimon and his son remained in the cave for another twelve months until the heavenly voice reappeared and told them that the time had come for them to exit. Upon exiting for the second time, they encountered a man who was rushing to prepare for Shabbos while holding two bundles of myrtle. They asked him why he needed *two* bundles of myrtle, to which the man responded that one bundle was for the mitzvah of *Shamor* (guarding the day of Shabbos), and one bundle was for *Zachor* (remembering the day of Shabbos). The *Gemara* attests that R' Shimon and his son were so impressed with the man's love for *Mitzvos* that their minds were immediately put at ease.

R' Shimon bar Yochai's worldview completely changed in that moment. Prior to this encounter, R' Shimon was uncompromising in his disapproval of involving oneself in worldly matters. *Avodas Hashem* required a complete disregard for the mundane and a complete devotion to Torah study. Perhaps R' Shimon's statement in the *Gemara* in *Berachos* was said during the period prior to this encounter. However, after this encounter, R' Shimon realized a synthesis between the mundane and the spiritual was possible. He

recognized that a person can be involved in the needs of this world while still maintaining a connection to HaKadosh Baruch Hu. He therefore retracted his original position; in the *Gemara* in *Menachos* he states that it is possible for a person to fulfill the obligation of *Lo Yamush* with the mere recitation of *Krias shema*, so long as he uses his involvement in worldly matters as a means by which to develop his *Avodas Hashem*, and not an end in and of itself.

Our *Kehillah*, Shomrei Mishmeres HaKodesh, epitomizes this idea. It is a *Makom* where devoted individuals escape to from the grind of daily life, to learn, grow, and come closer to the *Borei Olam*. On Shabbos, even after a hard week's work, congregants and guests flock to our *Bais medrash* to *Daven* with fervor, to hear words of *Chizuk*, and to study Torah with enthusiasm. Our *Rav*, Rabbi Chaim Schwartz *Shlit"u*, a professional by day, yet an erudite *Talmid chochom*, often weaves his experiences from the workplace into his *Derashos*, transforming the mundaneness of everyday life into an opportunity for growth in *Avodas Hashem*.

This *Kunteres*, *Pekudas HaShomrim*, that you hold in your hand bears testimony to our *Kehillah's* devotion to *Avodas Hashem* and their yearning to connect to *Nitzchiyus*. This is true both of those individuals who were *Makdish* their time to write the Torah thoughts that you find in this *Kunteres*, and those who contributed their talents or supported this endeavor financially to bring it to fruition. Lawyers, businessmen, medical professionals, educators and more all contributed to this *Sefer*. The common thread that connects them all is a deep love of Torah and a shared understanding of man's *Tafkid* in this world.

It is with much *Simcha* and gratitude to HaKadosh Baruch Hu that we present this *Kunteres* to you. We would like to thank Eliezer and Arlene Hamby and Mayer and Melissa Hamby for graciously

sponsoring this project in memory of Eliezer's grandmother. May the Torah that is learned from this *Kunteres* be a *Zechus* for her *Aliyas neshama*, and may she continue to be a *Meilitz yosher* for the Hamby *Mishpacha* and for *Klal Yisrael*. We would also like to thank all of those who contributed *Shticklach Torah*, and all those who contributed their time, monetary support, and efforts to ensuring that this project was successful. We would like to especially thank the *Rav*, Rabbi Schwartz *Shlit"z*, for his enthusiastic support of this project and for his constant guidance throughout its development. This is, of course, in addition to the tremendous gratitude we have to the *Rav* and *Rebbetzin* for their tireless efforts in leading our *Kehillah*.

As mentioned, *Kunteres Pekudas HaShomrim* is the product of the collective effort of many individuals. As the *Yimei HaDin* approach, we are instructed not to consider ourselves as individuals but rather as members of a *Klal*. "*B'soch ami anochi yosheves (Melachim II 4:13)*," says the Isha Hashunamis to Eliyahu Hanavi on Rosh Hashana, "I dwell among my people. I do not wish to be singled out or given any preferential treatment, but rather I wish to be a member of the congregation." When an individual is judged, he must be able to withstand the scrutiny of Hashem's judgement based on his own merits. However, when a congregation is judged, the merits of one person can counteract the deficiencies of another.

How fortunate are we to be counted among the members of this esteemed *Kehilla* and to have had the *Zechus* to aid in the publication of this *Sefer*. May our collective work, and the Torah that is learned as a result, be a *Zechus* for our families, our *Kehillah*, and the entirety of *Klal Yisrael*.

Wishing you a *K'siva V'Chasima Tova* and a wonderful *Yom Tov*,

The Editors

Ani L'Dodi V'Dodi Li

Rabbi Yisroel Gelber

I have always wondered about the meaning of the month of Elul. What type of feelings should I have during this month? Is it trepidation before the High Holidays? Is it a continuation of the sadness from the month of Av which preceded it? *Chazal* teach that Elul is an acronym of a verse from *Shir HaShirim*, "*Ani L'Dodi V'Dodi Li*, I am to my beloved and my beloved is to me (or as my kids came home from school singing, '*Ani L'Dodi V'Dodi Li*, I love Hashem and Hashem loves me')." This concept - loving G-d, and feeling His love for us, is a central theme of Elul. Yet, this month has not even one love-inspiring holiday in it! We don't have Pesach, when we remember how G-d displayed his love for us by performing miracles for us and bringing us out of slavery to freedom. We don't celebrate Sukkos in Elul, when we remember Hashem's love for us in the desert, where He took care of us, sheltered us, and provided for our every need. Shavuos, when we remember how G-d showed his love for us by giving us our greatest gift - the Torah, isn't in Elul either. So, what is it about this month that represents the relationship of love between us and the Almighty?

I would like to share a lesson in love that I learned about many years ago, when my oldest son was born. As the sleepless nights, endless diapers, and seemingly endless crying morphed our lives into survival-mode-zombies, the crushing realization of all that my parents had done for me, from birth (and even before birth), until the present, began to sink into my consciousness like never before. The physical and emotional exhaustion of caring for a newborn - one that liked to cry and didn't like to sleep - was like nothing my wife

and I had ever encountered before. Reflecting on all that our parents had done for us (happily, too) was like hitting an iceberg of debt; there was no way we could ever appreciate them enough, there was no way we could ever repay them. The sheer enormity of all they gave us in caring for us was bigger than we were. In these life-changing weeks following the birth of our first child, when we transformed from being children into being parents, our appreciation and love for our own parents transformed as well.

We all know about the natural love that a parent has for a child. Even before birth, the mother is giving of herself, literally, and the giving never stops. It is difficult to put into words the depth of a parent's love for a child, and this is because their giving and level of sacrifice is so intense and all-consuming. But what about a child's love for his parents? When does this truly climax? A child also loves his parents - but it is different. As the child matures, their level of appreciation deepens, and their love for the parent grows. Perhaps the tipping point is when the child becomes a parent themselves, and feels, experientially, how much his parents have done for him. To the degree that the child recognizes how much his parents have given him, to that degree his love for his parents grows.

Rav Wolbe discusses this in his monumental work, *Alei Shur*. "Gratitude awakens love in the receiver and naturally inspires it in the giver as well."

With this idea, perhaps we can understand the experience of love in Elul. Every year on Rosh Hoshana and Yom Kippur we humbly submit our *Tefillos* and supplications to Hashem, begging to be inscribed and sealed for a good year. As the season of the *Yomim Noraim* draws to a close, and during the rest of the year, we watch as our fate unfolds. It is not always easy, fun, or happy. There are times of intense joy, and there are times of challenge. Not everyone makes

it back to *Shul* next Rosh Hashana. But many of us do. It is during that last period of the year, the final month of Elul, that we can look back and see the entire past year spread out before us. We can realize how we were sealed in the *Sefer Hachaim*, The Book of Life, and how the Almighty granted us another year. We can see the myriad upon myriad of blessings that Hashem heaped upon us and our loved ones. We can see His infinite gifts. The more comprehensive our discovery of Hashems bounty upon us is, the more our appreciation will grow. Not only was I granted another year of life, but I had a home to live in, I had food to eat, I was given friends and family, my organs worked without me even thinking about them, I was able to send my children to school, I could see and hear and taste and smell, etc., etc. In Elul, we can come full circle, back to where we started from, and see with a new depth of feeling the enormous gift of love that Hashem has showered upon us. It is in that moment of gratitude to Him that we feel a deep love for Him as well. And, so, it is logical for *Ani L'Dodi V'Dodi Li* to be synonymous with Elul.

Rabbeinu Yona confirms this idea in a comment on *Pirkei Avos*. He asks, how does one come to love Hashem? He answers that if one works on focusing on all the good that Hashem has done for them, he will be able to reach a level of loving Hashem.

This is a valuable lesson for all our relationships - in marriage, friendship, or business. We are natural experts at seeing what those around us are doing wrong, we have to make a real effort to focus on what's going right. But it is only when we re-train our eyes to see how much the other is actually doing and giving for us that our feelings of gratitude and love will grow.

Rav Wolbe recommends that people engage in daily exercises to strengthen their "gratitude muscle", the most potent of which is a verbal recognition of another's kindness. He recommends that

three times a day we practice saying thank you to people who may perform everyday kindness to us. And if one looks carefully, they will see that there are more than enough opportunities. There is the postman who delivers the mail, the cashier who scans our food at the supermarket, and the salesman who helps us find what we need at the store. It is like opening our eyes to a blinding light when we begin to realize how much we are receiving - constantly - from Hashem and others around us, and how much we have to be grateful for.

Elul is as an opportunity to recognize the kindness that others have done for us, and especially to reflect on how much our Father in Heaven has done for us over the past year.

New Year's Resolutions and Elul

Dr. Jonathan M. Lasson

The beginning of a new year prompts us to improve on certain aspects of our lives that could use a bit of tweaking. Whether it is our *Bein Adam L'Chaveiro* or *Bein Adam L'Makom*, most of us contemplate what we can do differently this year that will make that meaningful change. Then again, many of us make the resolution with the gripping terrifying thought that we will just return to our ways. We have a *Chazakah* of doing **that thing**; that we make similar resolutions or, perhaps, the same exact resolution we had made in previous years. There is no magical answer to avoid this psychological conundrum. I can only go by personal anecdotes that have worked and stuck for myself, and the reports of clients of mine who fell into a funk by going back to feeling that they are the same as they were the year before.

There is something I would like to offer in this essay based on personal experience and the wisdom of *Chazal*.

Let's start with some personal reflections and observations. As humans we are creatures of habit. Accept that and be conscious of it. It is only when we understand and accept this as a fact that we can make some "tweaks" for positive change. For example, I am a morning person. I like getting up early, as I find my most productive hours are between 5 in the morning and 11 a.m. Although this would seem pretty innocuous as a habit, it could impact family life as I am very tired by 10 p.m. That is when most other family members are animated and want to talk, play or just be up and have the house alive with activity. I can say to myself, "Well that is just not me" or

I can have a drink that would help me stay up a bit longer than ten. Or I can work on waking up a little later and be able to stay up later. This would constitute a change in routine and also an improvement in family life. That might be an easier fix than something that is personality based. What can I do to affect a change to better myself and feel good about my New Year resolution?

Firstly, we must accept our dispositions and unconscious desires as just that; they are unconscious, and they become real when prompted by what we see, observe in others, or become re-exposed to. If I like certain foods but know that they might cause a stomachache, I would probably avoid them even though deep down I want that steak at nine o'clock at night. I accept the fact that I would enjoy it at the moment, but I also know that moment of pleasure would be fleeting.

Secondly, we must appreciate that we have an all-forgiving G-d and not a punitive one. Hashem understands that we have aspects of ourselves that need improvement---otherwise he would have created us as perfect. We all know that we are not perfect, so accepting this as reality is a beginning step to self-improvement. Rabbi Dr. Abraham Twerski wrote many books on the subject of self-esteem and self-improvement. One of them, he cynically titled *Self Improvement-I'm Jewish!* I really appreciated this title and its contents because it reflects a mentality. How much better can I get? I'm Jewish! I'm one of the chosen people! But the intention is to demonstrate that while we all have things to work on---we also know that Hashem forgives and provides us with the tools to improve.

When looking to improve ourselves this coming year, we turn to the words used by *Chazal* to connote the idea of forgiveness. Many of us get lost in the quagmire of self-loathing. This is primarily because we do not know how to forgive ourselves. Let's take a look

at the most commonly used word we think of when it comes to forgiveness---*Selicha*¹.

How is this word typically used? Excuse me. When we are trying to get past someone in line who is blocking us or serving as an impediment for our own self-advancement, we might employ this word. If we ponder this for a little, we understand that there are many obstacles that prevent us from getting to a specific destination. **“I am trying to get somewhere so please move!”**

However, the word *Selicha*, is also used to get someone else’s attention. This signifies that I NEED you to help me get to where I am going. Whether it is “I have a question for you” or “How do I get to Ben Yehuda street?”, the question form of *Selicha* is saying... **“I need your help.”** So the term *Selicha* seems to present a dilemma in the word itself. “Get out of my way but I need your help?!”

Indeed, I am using the Modern-Hebrew usage of the word. But could it mean something deeper that can help lead us back to our original question of how can we improve and have that resolution stick?

In psychological literature, there is a term that indicates a specific psychological conflict that occurs when we have two incompatible thoughts. The term is “Cognitive dissonance.” For example, “I want something, but I know I can’t have it.” In order to resolve this tension, we adapt. We might compromise and cheat or we might just fall into the proverbial Guilt Trap. Some might just say to themselves “I am who I am, and I will no longer feel guilty about

1. “*Mechila*” and “*Kapara*” are also commonly used but are beyond the scope of this essay. Since the *Beracha* in *Shmoneh Esrei* of *Selicha* begins with “*Selach Lanu*” and then “*Mechal Lanu*”, there must be some deep meaning to the order. In general, *Selicha* is for unintentional sins and *Mechila* is for intentional ones. Therefore, we will stick with *Selicha*.

anything I do!" Or better yet, we can resolve to make this a point of conscious self-improvement. We all employ cognitive dissonance on a subconscious level.

In the *Beracha* of *Selicha* that we say every day in *Shemona Esrei*, we are essentially saying to Hashem, "we make mistakes unintentionally so please pardon us for those." Interestingly, when we go to *Shul* in those wee hours of the morning before Rosh Hashana, we attend *Selichos*, not *Mechilos*. There must be a reason for this. Reb Yitzchok Isaac of Tirna writes in the *Mateh Moshe* that *Selicha* is mostly associated with the word *Avon* (*Bamidbar*, 14:19). That is, *Selicha* is associated with sins that we are consciously aware of and, therefore, can relate to better. Sometimes we ask for *Mechila* from someone, such as deceased relative, for "anything that we may have done," which is more broad and includes those sins that are not in our conscious level of awareness.

Rav Yaakov Tzvi Mecklenberg (1785-1865) writes that *Selicha* carries more quantitative weight than the word *Mechila*, which carries more qualitative weight. He goes on to explain that *Selicha* simply delays punishment which can then extend to a pardon of sorts. It does not, however, completely eradicate the sin. I believe that the intention in asking for a delay is to give us more time to contemplate what we will do for ourselves to correct our ways, which is why I have chosen to focus on this aspect of forgiveness.

When we are trying to get somewhere in life and we ask for help, we are essentially asking someone or something to move over so we can get by, and that way we can get the help we need. Metaphorically we can apply this to therapy. We go to a therapist. That therapist will hopefully remove the obstacles impeding our progress and then offer us guidance as to how to get ahead. This fits neatly with our premise. "Get out of my way so I can get the help I

need.” We find this especially true in toxic relationships. Often, we find ourselves in toxic relationships at home, work etc. We cannot advance without either sidestepping these individuals or, while fully forgiving and accepting them for who they are, distancing ourselves for self-preservation purposes.

Rav Shimshon Refael Hirsch (1808-1888) offers somewhat of a different explanation of *Selicha* in that *Selicha* is actually attempting to correct the relationship between the person who sinned and the person he has sinned against or the person whom he wronged. This is a fascinating idea that tells us what we are trying to accomplish and may help with our New Years resolutions. We want to correct our relationships, especially our relationship with Hashem.

The problem therefore that leads us to believe that we will just go back to our old ways and remain creatures of habit is that we don’t have those conversations with Hashem in the same way we have conversations with humans whom we have wronged. Or we don’t know HOW to have those conversations with Hashem, so we therefore attempt through mere actions. We try to learn more, *Daven* better, take on various *Kabbalos*. These are good, but they may not affect an internal, lasting change. There is a reason why the *Gemara* tells us that it is often easier to be *Machmir* than to be *Meikel*².

The expression “time heals all wounds” rings true in my attempt to make a change that will have more sticking power. I would advocate that we spend slightly more time at whatever we are doing to try and change. If you go to *Shul* at seven in the morning every day, come about fifteen minutes earlier or stay about fifteen minutes later, whichever works out better for you. If you go to a *Shiur*, stay for

2. *Beitzah* (*Daf* 2b), See Rashi there.

a few minutes after the *Shiur* and internalize what you have gained from it. My personal recommendation is to write something down that you learned from the *Shiur*. Putting something down on paper makes it real and meaningful.

I would also like to share a personal life changing reflection based on learning the *Daf*. Learning the *Daf* is a 365 days a year commitment, one that as many “Daffers” will attest to, is taken seriously. After two previous attempts at completing the *Daf Yomi*, I finally completed *Shas* on my third time around. The first time I tried, I quit during *Maseches Eruvin*. The second time around, I quit during *Maseches Yevamos*. The third time around, I once again made it to *Yevamos*, and I was about to throw in the towel once again. What changed? The *Maggid Shiur* of the *Daf* that I was attending encouraged me to continue. I flatly stated that I could not because not everything was making sense to me. He asked me if I thought that all those in attendance at that *Daf Shiur* were grasping everything being taught on each *Daf*. I realized that my expectations of myself were way too high. I then began to write down three points from each *Daf* that were takeaways for me. It started to have an effect. I got through *Yevamos*, and then I was on cruise control till the end.

As was stated at the last *Siyum HaShas*, the word “*Daf*” can mean a board; the board that saves you when you feel you are drowning. I decided to jump on *board*, and I can say there was a noticeable change in my overall level of happiness and self-esteem.

I am not saying that everyone should begin the *Daf*. What I am advocating is consistency. A *Mishna* a day. A *Halacha* a day. Just give it some time. Time is of the essence. It cannot be replaced.

What I also realized was that because of my commitment to the *Daf*, I felt less inclined to utilize my time with things that were not very productive.

As developmental psychologist Erik Erikson stated, there is a stage of development that adults go through called Generativity vs. Stagnation. If we feel generative/productive, then we have succeeded in that stage of life. However, if we feel like we are stagnating, we will look back and feel regret.³

So let us all say “*Selicha*” with a newfound meaning and purpose.

“*Selicha*, can I get by?”

“*Selicha*, can I have some help?”

May we all merit the ability to get through the obstacles that prevent growth and the ability to ask for help when we need someone to help us grow.

May we all be *Zocheh* to a *K’siva V’Chasima Tova!*

3. Erikson, Erik. Can be found in every Human Growth and Development textbook.

Teshuva in The Teachings of Rav Kook

Rabbi Avraham Kowalsky

Based in part on the Explanations of Rav Arlah Harel

Adapted for Rosh Hashana 5784

Rav Avraham Yitzchak Ha-Cohen Kook, *ZT"l*, the first Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi of Palestine enlightened the world with a book on *Teshuva* called *Orot HaTeshuva*. I tried on many occasions to study this work with very limited success. Usually, I gave up reading it due to the complexity of the vocabulary, and an inability to comprehend the Kabbalistic references hidden and buried in the text. On the third of *Elul* 5779 (2019), on Rav Kook's *Yahrzeit*, I had the privilege of attending a commemoration celebration of his life in Beit HaRav and heard the inspirational words of Rav Arlah Harel. I was greatly impressed, and as I was leaving, I saw, and purchased, a small *Sefer* he published entitled *Teshuvos HaRA"i*¹, with a subtitle *Shiurim on Orot HaTeshuva*. This essay is predicated in part on Rav Harel's explications of Rav Kook's process of *Teshuva* as found in *Orot HaTeshuva*² with a mixture of my personal observations and opinions.

As Rav Kook points out in the introduction to *Orot HaTeshuva*, *Teshuva* is on the one hand the easiest *Mitzvah*, while, on the other hand, it is one of the most difficult of the *Mitzvot*. The proof that it

1. An obvious take off on the manner of referring to Rav Kook as HaRAI"i.

2. Inasmuch as this essay is in English, and both Rav Kook's and Rav Harel's works are in Hebrew, and there are additions of my own, if I make any mistakes in understanding and conveying the respective intentions and thoughts of the authors, I apologize in advance to them and the reader.

is difficult is that year after year, despite our resolve to repent each *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*, as the next year rolls around, by and large, we find ourselves repenting for many, if not all, of the same sins. It is a simple mitzvah, for the Talmud informs us that *Hirhur teshuva*, the mere thought of *Teshuva*, [i.e., sincere mental resolve to repent] transforms a person from a *Rasha*, a sinner, into a *Tzadik*, a righteous person. Incredulously, the Talmud cites a case of a man who proposed marriage to a woman and conditioned the marriage on the stipulation that he is a righteous person [a *Tzadik*] and she accepted those terms. The Talmud states that even if he was a sinner and not a righteous person in real life, the marriage is binding. The Talmud's logic is based on the fact that perhaps, at the moment of proposing the marriage, he had a momentary flash of *Teshuva* in his mind, and that thought transformed him into a *Tzadik*, even if thereafter he did not alter his wicked behavior³.

Thus, the *Mitzvah* of *Teshuva* remains a paradox. It is both difficult, yet also simple, complex but straightforward; and we need to try and understand this phenomenon. Let us explore its process. What is the *Tahalich* of *Teshuva*? What is the path of repentance in Rav Kook's view?

Tehilim: 112:1

“*Ashrei ish yarei es Hashem*” [Praised is the man who fears G-d]

The Talmud in *Avodah Zarah* 19b asks, “The text reads, ‘Praised is a **man** who fears G-d’, [query] a man, and not a woman? [A woman too is capable of fearing G-d, and she too is praiseworthy, so why does the saying refer only to a man?]”

3. How this works and how it is to be understood is elaborated on further in this essay.

Two answers are offered to this question. Rav Amram in the name of Rav is of the opinion that “man” is stressed in order to teach us that *Teshuva* is most appropriate when a person is in his/her potency. In youth, the inclination to sin is strongest, and that is when it is best to engage this inner enemy. Not to wait until old age, when desires wane, but to tackle your penchant for wrongdoing when it is predominant; conquer and control yourself then. Do not delay.

Rav Yehoshua’s opinion as to why “man” is iterated and not woman is that one must battle the *Yetzer Harah* with the strength of a male; with force and vigor, with all the power you can muster, symbolized by the male.

Thus, the very first step in the process of *Teshuva* is to realize: **a.** its urgency, that it has the ability to improve quality of life, and to procrastinate diminishes its effect on your spiritual and physical wellbeing; and **b.** that it takes strength, will-power and persistence. A penitent must marshal his or her inner strength as a prerequisite to repentance.

The first chapter in *Orot HaTeshuva* is startlingly entitled “*Teshuva tivis*” [“Natural Repentance”], that is, repenting for sins committed against nature. All the laws of nature emanate from G-d, and they are His way to order the world. When we violate and abuse nature, we sin against His design and need to repent. Rav Kook breaks down Natural Repentance into two sub-categories. There is:

1. Natural Repentance associated with the human body; and
2. Natural Repentance associated with the human spirit and mental health

Orot HaTeshuva: Chap.1

“In Natural *Teshuva*, there are two parts: Natural Bodily Repentance and Natural Spiritual Repentance. The Bodily [aspect] incorporates all sins against the laws of nature, ethics and Torah, that are connected to the Laws of Nature, for the result of all bad behavior is to bring about sickness and pains...”

Category one, Natural *Teshuva*, requires a person to recognize that his/her body and all physicality, including the earth itself, are entrustments from Hashem, and we are obligated to protect and preserve them. This obligation serves as a vehicle to enable humans to serve Him and observe His commandments. Thus, we are not to smoke, overeat, eat improper foods, consume late at night, imbibe without proper measure, fail to exercise, obtain insufficient sleep, or despoil the environment. In short, we must abstain from harming our physical bodies and our surroundings, and conversely, we must do everything within reason to fortify our health, strengthen our bodies and respect mother nature.

Category two requires us to protect and foster our mental and spiritual wellbeing. This should preclude taking mind altering drugs, alcoholism, reading salacious materials, watching improper movies or videos, wasting away playing games or doing anything else that undermines our spirituality or peace of mind. We need to protect against depression and despair and avoid destructive excesses. Each of us needs a healthy mind and a clear intellect to pursue Torah study and achieve its lofty goals.

Anything we do in contravention of nature and our health, requires repentance and is part of the mitzvah of *Teshuva tivis*. To achieve *Teshuva tivis* and control improper tendencies that harm nature, body, and soul, requires exceptional will power, *Ratzon*. That

exercise of self-control required for *Teshuva tivis* is the keystone to all levels and aspects of *Teshuva*. If we learn to suppress the tendencies, to disregard and ignore our lusts, desires, bad habits, and improper physically harmful behavior, we have taken the very first steps of doing proper *Teshuva*.

Hence, it is a fundamental condition, a prerequisite, to continuing on the path of complete repentance. We must demonstrate the power of will, *Ratzon*, to control all unhealthy urges and gain command over our bodies and impulses in order to further the process of *Teshuva sheleima*. It is an early, but most important step, on the road to final *teshuva*. This in no way minimizes its difficulty, for it is very hard for a person to gain control of his or her physical, emotional and mental tendencies and desires; but it is an imperative that we each exert control through the expression of will. Ultimately *Ein davar omed neged haratzon*, nothing can stand in the face of our will.

The supremacy of will is demonstrated in the Talmud in *Yoma*, for it states as follows:

Yoma 29a

“Contemplating and thinking of committing a sin is worse than commission of the sin itself; it is likened to the aroma of roasting meat.”

Rashi: Yoma 29a

“*Contemplating sin*: A wanton desire for women is more onerous and weakens the flesh more than the act itself.”

“*The Smell of Meat*: Roasting meat [on an open spit] produces an enticing smell that is difficult to resist.”

This *Gemara* posits that the mere contemplation of a forbidden encounter is worse than the illicit act itself. The *Gemara* draws an analogy to barbequing meat, the aroma is more enticing than eating the meat.

This is astounding! Contemplation of the act, the watering of one's mouth brought on by the smell of the barbeque wafting up from the spit is more enticing than eating the meat! Thinking about promiscuity is somehow more spiritually damaging than the prohibited act itself. How is this to be understood?

The explanation of this perplexing conclusion of the *Gemara* may lie in the fact that cognitive ability is what sets man above the animal. It represents the spirit of Hashem, blown into the nostrils of the first human being. Twisted thought and carnal desires damage the mind of man, whereas a sinful act involves and damages the body. Soiling the mind is more harmful than spoiling the body. The mind represents the absolute best of man, the body, the very base of man. Furthermore, a lustful desire persists and festers, and is not satiated until satisfied. A sin, on the other hand, ends with commission, and often times is followed by guilt and remorse.

The Rambam expressed this idea in the *Guide for the Perplexed*:

Rambam: Guide: Part III: Chap. 8

“When a person transgresses against G-d in his thought, behold he rebels in the part of him that is most exalted, his intellect; but when he commits a sin with his body, he commits it [the sin] with his base part, that which is his materialistic part.”

The physical commission of a sin stains and blemishes the body, the cognitive contemplation of sin, damages the intellect, the very

spirit and soul of man, which is G-dly in nature. So just as *Hirhur aveira* is more destructive than the *Aveira* itself, in similar fashion *Hirhur teshuva* is superior to the performance of the act of the *Mitzvah* itself. It is a reflection of the *Ratzon* to do that which is right and proper. That demonstration of will reaches into the very depths of the soul.

This point is stressed by the Sefas Emes:

Sefas Emes: Parshas Bo: 699

“As we wrote... from that which *Chazal* said, ‘contemplation of sinning is harsher than the sin itself;’ so too thoughts of performing a *Mitzvah* are better for the person than performance of the *Mitzvah* itself. This is because even though the primary stain of a sin is when it is committed, but the damage to the soul of man increases greatly through thinking of the sin. And so too with a *Mitzvah*, for the essence of the *Mitzvah* is to conform to the purpose of the A-lmighty, so the increased contemplation and desire to do the *Mitzvah*, corrects, enhances, and elevates the soul of the person.”

The primary emphasis on the performance of a *Mitzvah*, [in this case the *Mitzva* of *Teshuva*] is not its fulfillment, but the reflection of the will of the person to serve his or her Creator. It is the intent, formed in the mind, to adhere to and fulfill the command of G-d that is most important. So, at the moment that we feel such a will to repent, if embraced with truth and sincerity, we have returned [repented] to Him. What is left to be completed is to bring this intent, the will, to fruition. The honest, mental resolution to return to Hashem reflects a person’s strong desire, which is crucial and primary, and it guards the person from further sin.

But what good is served by a contemplation of *Teshuva* if the thought does not result in constructive action? If the thought of *Teshuva* does not endure and the sin returns, is there any benefit to such a *Teshuva* in the long run? Is there any purpose to this short-lived contemplation of *Teshuva*? If we know that each year we find ourselves in the same predicament, is it not hypocritical to try and convince ourselves that our *Teshuva* is effective?

Rav Tzadok Me' Lublin ZT"l addressed this issue¹:

Pri Tzadik: Parshas Beshalach: 5

“The primary corrective measure is when a person contemplates *Teshuva* from the depths of his heart, resolving to abandon the sin, until He who knows [G-d] what is hidden [in our hearts] testifies that the sinner will never return to commission of this sin, for this is the scope of *teshuva*, and then even if G-d forbid, thereafter his evil inclination will overpower him, and he will sin again, since at the time of his resolve, he truly intended to sincerely abandon the sin... in accord with his state of mind at the time,... he is called a righteous person.”

In Rav Tzadok's assessment of *Teshuva*, a sincere, firm, mental resolve to repent and never return to the sin is determinative of his then, current status, and he is deemed righteous. What happens in the future does not adversely impact him at the moment he stands before Hashem and is judged. This is all an indication of Hashem's kindness and mercy and is a gift to mankind.

As we know, there are various levels of *Teshuva*. There is *Teshuva m'yira*, repentance out of fear, and *Teshuva m'ahava*, repentance

1. Rav Harel brings this in his *Sefer, Teshuvos HaRA"H*, P. 80.

born of love of Hashem. When doing *Teshuva m'yira*, one repents for fear of the consequences of the sin, i.e., G-d's punishment for violating His commandments. When doing *Teshuva m'ahava*, one repents out of love of Hashem, and abandons sin, so as not to offend or hurt a beloved.

There is a profound difference between the two levels of *Teshuva*, not based merely on nomenclature but on essence. When one repents out of fear of punishment, he or she may not commit the sin again. Nevertheless, the desire for the sin has not abated. There is still a residue of wrongful desire. It is just quashed and suppressed to avoid the grave consequences of punishment. However, when one repents out of love of G-d, there is no longer any remaining desire to commit the sin. The person has no more will to sin, as that would harm, pain and be offensive to the Beloved One, Hashem.

Rav Avraham of Slonim *ZT"l* also addressed the troublesome issue of how contemplation of repentance works to absolve the sinner if he or she is destined to return to the sin². He understands that the standard in *Teshuva* that requires a level of sincerity so that Hashem can testify that the penitent will never return to the sin, applies only to *Teshuva* out of fear of the consequences of the sin, *Teshuva m'yira*. However, one who repents out of a sense of love for Hashem is definitely forgiven immediately without any tie-in to what will happen in the future.

Nesivos Olam: Vol. III: 2: 6

“For that is rudimentary, since the *Teshuva* was out of love for G-d, and it states: ‘Those who love G-d distain evil’ for sure it is known that he will be able

2. Rav Harel brings this segment from the writings of the Slonimer Rebbe in his *Sefer*, P. 81

to withstand a test, and he is called a 'person who did complete *Teshuva*', even though he was not tested; and the reference to being tested applies only to one who repents out of fear, since the underlying root of the sin [the desire] remains favored in his eyes, but he fears the consequences of punishment; however, one who repents out of a sense of love for Hashem, truly despises his [wanton] desires, therefore, even without being tested [to determine his bona fides] he is completely forgiven. Mental intention, the thought of repenting by a returnee, his heartfelt yearning for a life of holiness, this - this is primary."

But how does one develop this love of Hashem? Fear of punishment to the believer is axiomatic and needs no reinforcement. If you believe in *S'char v'onesh*, reward for good deeds and punishment for transgressions, then, when facing a Day of Judgement, one repents. Love of an incorporeal G-d, not seen and not tangible, is much more elusive and abstract. It may seem difficult if not impossible to form a relationship of love with the A-lmighty.

Query: Is there a thought process that can guide and lead us to this lofty concept of loving our Creator?

For Rav Kook, achieving *Ahavas Hashem* is directly related to the return of our people, after the long Diaspora, to the Land of our fathers. Here in this Holy Land, we see unfolding before our eyes the blooming and blossoming of *Am Yisrael al Admas Yisrael*, the nation of Israel on the Land of Israel. The ingathering of the tired, downtrodden, scrawny, beaten, and humiliated masses who survived and escaped from the Holocaust, was just the beginning. In the seventy years since the creation of *Medinas Yisrael*, the State of Israel, miracle has followed miracle.

This is not only in the form of military victories against insurmountable odds, but also advancement in all areas of civilized progress. Torah has been resurrected to unprecedented heights. It flourishes and grows stronger, more prevalent by the day. Israel is also on the cutting edge of the development of technology, artificial intelligence, medical science, agricultural techniques that include transforming arid land into fruitful harvests, water conservation, medical equipment, military devices and armaments, new discoveries as well as advances in many other arenas. It is astounding to think that, in the span of just 70 years, a new, third world country has risen to such world prominence. Hashem has truly blessed us in all these manifest ways. We are living the fulfillment of the ancient prophecies.

Zephaniah: 3:20

“At that time, I will bring you, and at the time that I gather you, for I will present you as a name for praise in the midst of all the nations of the earth, when I return your captivity before your eyes, says Hashem.”

The nations of the world, perhaps only begrudgingly, but none-the-less, are forced to acknowledge the advancement of our people and our contribution to society³. With G-d's help, we have risen from the ashes of Auschwitz, from the dregs of the earth to world prominence. This advancement is the result of hard and creative work and enterprise, which manifests itself in the most pronounced manner and degree in our Holy Land⁴. We are home, and twined

3. This takes many forms, but none less famously, than the disproportionate number of Nobel Prizes granted to Israelis, and the many startup companies that have captured world attention, recognition, and admiration.

4. It is interesting that Rav Kook's response to all who view the final redemption and the return to Israel as being reserved for the Messiah, was to cite the prophets

with the Land, we can reach our full potential both spiritually and materially. This, says Rav Kook is obviously not a coincidence but rather the fulfillment of our destiny, as the nation of G-d, blessed by Him, on our Land. In this vein, Rav Kook connects *Teshuva m'ahava* with the return to Eretz Yisrael. If we but survey our surroundings and open our eyes, we see that this homecoming, to the Land of our fathers, presages a reawakening all about us. The Land, which lay fallow and unproductive for so long in our absence, is blooming, coming to life, giving forth its produce and fruits in abundance. The Torah directly connects this development to the *Mitzva* of *Teshuva*.

Devarim 30:1

1. And when all these events befall you...
2. You will return to Hashem your L-rd and you will hearken to His voice... with all your heart and all your soul.
3. And Hashem will return your captivity, and He will have compassion upon you, and **He will return and gather you from all the nations in which Hashem your G-d has scattered you there.**
4. If you were pushed [exiled] to the edge of the heavens, from there will Hashem your L-rd gather you and from there He will take you.
5. **And Hashem your G-d will bring you to the Land that your fathers inherited, and you will inherit it** and He will be good to you and multiply you more than your fathers...

and the Talmud who marked, as a sign of the end of days, the fact that the Land will become productive, once again. How, asks Rav Kook, will the Land blossom without hard work and human effort? We cannot sit idly by and await, without toil, the advent of the Messiah. That is not what the prophets foresaw.

11. For this commandment which I command you today, it is not bewildering, nor is it distant from you.

12. It is not in heaven, as if to say, who will ascend to heaven and retrieve it for us and inform us so that we may do it.

13. Nor is it across the sea, so that we should say, who will cross to the other side of the sea and fetch it for us and inform us so that we may do it.

14. For the matter is very close to you, it is in your mouth and heart so that you may do it...

20. To love Hashem your G-d to hearken to His voice and to cleave to Him for He is your life and the extent of your days **whilst you dwell on the Land which He swore to give to Avraham, to Yitzchak and to Yaakov.**

Eretz Yisrael and its blessings are imbedded and intertwined within the prophecy⁵ and *Mitzvah* of *Teshuva*. In fact, there is a play on the root word *shav*.

Devarim 30:2 - 30

2. You will return to Hashem [*V'shavta*] your L-rd and you will hearken to His voice... with all your heart and all your soul.

5. There is a difference of opinion between the Rambam and the Ramban as to whether or not there is a *Mitzvah* to do *Teshuva*. Is it one of the 613 *Mitzvot* of our Torah? According to the Rambam, *Teshuva* is subsumed in the *Mitzvah* of *Viduy*, the *Mitzvah* to confess our sins. One can hardly confess to wrongdoing while clinging to the sin. *Teshuva* is a prerequisite for proper *Viduy*. Hence, Rambam views our text, "And you will return to Hashem" as a prophecy of the future. Israel is destined to do *Teshuva*. *Teshuva* per se is not counted as a separate *Mitzvah*. The Ramban reads this text differently and understands that the words, "And you will return to Hashem" are an imperative, a positive command. There is a specific, separate *Mitzvah* of *Teshuva* and it is one of the 613 commandments.

3. And Hashem **will return** [*V'shav*] **your captivity** [*Shvusecha*], and He will have compassion upon you, **and He will return** [*V'shav*] and gather you from all the nations in which Hashem your G-d has scattered you there.

The Torah repeatedly emphasizes “return” in various word formations. *Return* to Hashem as in *Teshuva*, *return* from captivity, and *return* from exile to the Land of Israel. The implication is that the return of repentance and the return to the Land are interconnected and concomitant.

For Rav Kook, this opens vistas in the concept of *Teshuva*. He posits that the process of *Teshuva* one follows in Eretz Yisrael is vastly different than *Teshuva* in the diaspora. In the Holy Land, *Teshuva* is born of love of Hashem. One need but examine life here and consider daily existence in all its manifestations. Then, overwhelmed by this assessment of all the “good” that Hashem has bestowed on His people, a thoughtful person’s relationship with G-d is altered forever. He understands that the A-lmighty has turned His “face” towards Israel and is no longer “looking away”. We can sense His involvement in our national destiny. He protects and blesses this Land each moment out of love and concern, and as our needs and dependence grow, we learn to appreciate His beneficence and draw closer and closer to Him. Ultimately, we begin to reciprocate His love with our own. No longer do we want to hurt Him, pain Him, when we sin. For after all, we are always in His presence, which fills the world. He knows our miscues and suffers from them as they are committed. Wanting to please our beloved, we begin to appreciate the beauty of His mitzvot. They enhance the quality of life and inject meaning and joy into mundane existence. We learn to follow His commandments and rejoice in their performance.

This is a “return” out of love, a true and complete *Teshuva m'ahava*. In the Diaspora, we Jews do not feel that we are sheltered in G-d's house or Land. We are exposed, in some places almost daily, to the animosity of gentile neighbors and the antisemitism of the elite on and off the campus. BDS is advocated openly and without pause to consider its genesis - Jew Hatred. Israel is accused of being an apartheid state, notwithstanding that Arabs and other minorities live and move about freely in our society. Shooting, muggings, assaults, property damage and defacement are almost routine occurrences, and patrols, security guards and alarms are everywhere. While even the Diaspora Jew knows that G-d is the ultimate protector, there is a subtle if not open feeling of insecurity and anxiety.

Although there are many affluent communities where Jews live seemingly comfortable lifestyles, there is a sense of foreboding. Jews instinctively know the clock is ticking, and whether it be 10, 20 or more or less years from now, Jewish life, even in the US, has the potential to either end, or become extremely uncomfortable⁶. Europe is already at this stage, and many are relocating elsewhere for reasons of safety. Racist invective, spewing hatred of Jews and Israel, is the daily norm emanating from various popular social movements. Antisemitism is in vogue, is out in the open, and no longer is suppressed, or voiced just behind closed doors. It is manifested outright, without shame or denunciation, among politicians, in newspapers of mass circulation, in the social media, on college campuses and among intellectuals. Rappers frequently use the most vulgar language when referencing Jews, and none dare

6. There is one more solution, but it is too difficult to express and that is total assimilation. In great numbers our coreligionists are simply disappearing, melding into the general population, through intermarriage and indifference. They are lost to Judaism. Will they be able to escape persecution in this fashion remains to be seen? It did not help in the era of the Nazis.

challenge them. What was thought in the aftermath of WWII to be taboo, is once again rearing its ugly head with a vengeance.

In Israel, there may be Arab agitation, acts of terrorism and threats are common, but for the believing Jew, there is no doubt or question of survival⁷. There is a fundamental feeling of security; trust in the G-dly ordained strength of Tzahal, and a sense of Hashem's overriding protection. Even in Sderot and other southern, border communities, which suffer from frequent rocket attacks, the average person is satisfied with the quality of life and has no expectation of relocating. Its residents are defiant and demonstrate steadfastness and bravery in the face of the enemy, ensconced in Gaza. Truly, little in daily life is altered and all go around living a full and active life. There is a pervasive confidence and resolve that we are here to stay permanently, and nothing can shake us out of the firm belief in the future.

In light of this state, *Teshuva* of the Diaspora is a *Teshuva m'yira*, *Teshuva* out of fear of the consequences of sin. Not so the *Teshuva* of Eretz Yisrael. This distinction leads Rav Kook to note another two factors in the difference between the two paths to repentance.

7. There is a story that I heard from two separate sources. I first heard this from my late father, Rabbi Sholem B. Kowalsky of blessed memory, who was a student in Yeshivas Ner Yisrael when this story took place, and from Rav Binyamin Bak, Z"L, the Rav of Shomrei Emunah in Baltimore. They both related that in 1942, in the midst of the War, the Nazi General Rommel was threatening, to invade Palestine. Rav Yitzchak Halevi Herzog, ZT"L, then Chief Rabbi of Palestine, was visiting in Baltimore. Many urged him to remain in the safety of the US, but he refused. He stated with conviction, and risked his life on this belief, that there will never be a third exile from the Holy Land. Our Torah speaks of two times that we will be dispossessed, and that prophecy was fulfilled with the Babylonian exile and the Roman exile. However, there will never be a third exile, and he returned to Palestine with the firm belief that we are now possessed of the Land of Israel forever more.

There is a dispute recorded in the Talmud between Rav Yehuda ben Bava and Rabbi Akiva. Does a penitent have to articulate his sins when asking Hashem for forgiveness as part of the *Teshuva* process? According to Rav Yehuda ben Bava, the returnee must enumerate his sins, mentioning each one to the best of his recollection. Rabbi Akiva disagrees. He believes that it is sufficient for the returnee to declare, in general, yet sincere terms, "*Chatasi Avisi Pashati*." This debate transcends all the way down to practical Halacha. The Shulchan Aruch adopts Rabbi Akiva's opinion, while the Rema urges following Rav Yehuda ben Bava's opinion.

As noted above, when a person repents out of fear of punishment, the desire for the sin remains intact; the person just fears the punishment, and that fear is what propels him to repent. Therefore, the penitent needs to enunciate the sins and beg forgiveness for each one, the pull for which continues. It is true that we are incapable of total recall and cannot remember them all, but to the extent we do recollect transgressions, we need to confess each one individually and in detail. In fact, there are lists compiled, what are often referred to as "*Viduy* sheets", containing many pages, in which the author tries to set forth every conceivable sin to assist us in declaring our remorse over each one of them.

However, says Rav Kook, when doing *Teshuva* born out of love of Hashem, the penitent does not have to enumerate the sins or articulate them in detail. It is sufficient to declare remorse and a commitment not to repeat the sinning; and that is all. When drawing close to Hashem from a sense of love and adulation, the sinner, now a beloved, does not need to confess specific sins. This is, as Philip Roth, the noted American novelist, said in penning *Love Story*, "Love means you do not have to say I am sorry". When you love someone, the emotion is so powerful, so overwhelming, that

it dominates the relationship. All is subsumed within its broad embrace, and past offenses now seem petty and are brushed aside, they are simply washed away. They are of no consequence, cannot intrude on the relationship, and it is as if they never transpired. Love now governs the human - G-dly relationship. We are His children and, He loves us deeply.

In a famous dictum, the Talmud quotes Resh Lakish who makes two pronouncements that, at first blush, appear to be contradictory:

Yoma 86b

Resh Lakish said: Great is *teshuva* for if a person repents, all his intentional transgressions are converted into inadvertent transgressions; as it says in the verse: Return Israel unto Hashem your G-d, for you have stumbled [*Kashalta*] by virtue of your transgressions [*B'avonecha*]. But the word *Avon* [used in this context] means intentional sins, and yet the word *Kashalta*, stumbling, implies inadvertent transgressions? How does an intentional transgression convert to an inadvertent transgression? Answer, through *teshuva*.

But is this so? Resh Lakish also said: Great is *Teshuva* for if a person repents, all his intentional transgressions are converted into positive merits; as it says in the verse: "When a sinner repents from his transgressions and does justice and righteousness, this will lead him to life", through them [i.e., because of his sins], he achieves life."⁸ [The Talmud answers this inconsistency:] In one instance, the sinner did *Teshuva* out of fear, and, in the

8. This verse implies that he will achieve life as a result [on account] of his sins.

second instance, the sinner did *Teshuva* out of a sense of love. [In the latter case his sins are converted to positive merits, and in the former situation, the sins are converted into inadvertent sins.]

Query: How does this work? How do intentional sins convert either into inadvertent sins or to positive merits?

Perhaps we can understand this as follows: When a person repents out of fear of the consequences of sin, i.e., punishment, he regrets the transgression, but the underlying temptation is still intact. Therefore, Hashem, in his infinite mercy, elects not to punish the transgressor, and the stain of the sin is neutralized; it is deemed inadvertent. However, when a person repents out of a sense of love for Hashem, the underlying temptation dissipates, as the former sinner has no desire to harm or offend his beloved. Hence, what is left is the recognition that as he was sinning, Hashem gave him life and did not strike him down, causing him to suffer a heart attack or stroke. He did not regurgitate the non-kosher food he ate; he did not fall sick even as he was consuming what is prohibited. G-d gave him the strength and health to exercise his free choice, as, he, the sinner, was spitting G-d in the face, to borrow a metaphor. The former sinner now enmeshed in love with Hashem, appreciates this freedom and considers himself blessed to have a benevolent Master who not only tolerated him in the midst of sin, but enabled him to defy Him. He is thankful to Hashem for blessing him with the freedom to choose; he recognizes the trust and confidence Hashem placed in him. And that recognition and appreciation transforms the intentional sin, previously erased by love, into a positive merit.

Interestingly, it is Rabbi Akiva who eschews articulation of specific sins. He was one person who was drawn to a Torah life by love. His love for his wife, Rachel, brought him to the gates of the

study hall, which he entered for 24 years. He taught that the cardinal principle of the Torah is “Love your neighbor as you love yourself”. He was consumed by *Ahavas Yisrael*, and penned the prayer *Avinu Malkeinu*, prefacing recognition of G-d’s majesty with addressing Him as our father. A father who will truly respond with love and compassion to His children who call out to Him.

הקדוש ברוך הוא אנחנו אוהבים אותך
העושה תשובה מאהבה זדונות נעשין לו כזכיות

Postscript:

Since penning this essay, Israel has been wracked with internal strife. The Right is in a tug of war with the Left for the soul of the country. Is this what the prophet foresaw when, in the *Haftorah* for Sukkos, he stated that Yehudah will go up (wage war) against Yerushalayim?

It is quite disheartening, and we can only hope and pray that the animosity will abate. Hashem must surely be dismayed to see His children at war with each other, but perhaps this is the manner in which He is winnowing out those who have become disconnected from Torah, Jewish morals and national pride and loyalty.

Is the Messiah knocking at the door? For only he can lead us out of this morass.

V'Shaveha B'Tzedaka – Charity & Repentance

HaRav Chaim Schwartz *Shlit"á*

Ma'avirin es ro'ah ha'gezeirah

During the *Yomim Noraim*, our focus is upon *Teshuva*, *Tefillah*, & *Tzedaka*¹ as a guide for the renewal of our relationship with Hashem and commitment to His *Mitzvos*, our relationship with mankind, and as a primary atonement for our sins. This article will share perspectives on the *Mitzvah* of *Tzedaka* in the context of the custom of giving *Maaser Kesafim*² and *Chomesh*³. It is my hope that this article enhances our understanding, commitment, and practice of *Tzedaka*. This article will explore the historical origins of this practice, its *Halachic* sources, and related customs, as well as practical considerations. Please consult your Rabbi for their perspective, as opinions vary.

History

The first person in recorded history to have given *Maaser* from his profits was Avraham Avinu, in the context of his gift to Malkitzedek from the spoils of the war between the four and five kings.⁴ While Avraham was the first to give *Maaser*, Yitzchak Avinu is mentioned

1. As mentioned on Rosh Hashana & Yom Kippur in *Unesaneh Tokef*. The source for these words comes from the *Yerushalmi*:

(ירושלמי תענית ב:א) "א' רבי אלעזר שלשה דברים מבטלין את הגזירה קשה ואילו הן תפילה וצדקה ותשובה. ושלשתן בפסוק אחד ויכנעו עמי אשר נקרא שמי עליהם ויתפללו זו תפילה ויבקשו פני זו צדקה כמה דאץ אמר אני בצדק אחזה פניך וישונו מדרכיהם הרעים זו תשובה אם עשו כן מה כתוב תמן ואני אשמע מן השמים ואסלח לחטאתם וארפא את ארצם."

2. *Maaser*, to tithe, means to give 10% of one's earnings/profits.

3. A *Chomesh* is one fifth, meaning, to give 20% of one's earnings/profits to charity.

4. "וברוך קל עליון אשר מגן צריך בידך ויתן לו מעשר מכל."

by the Rambam⁵ as the one who originally fulfilled the *Mitzvah* of *Maaser*, as he gave 1/10 of his profits from his crop harvest,⁶ which is the biblical command, “*You shall surely set aside every year a tenth part of all the yield of your sowing that is brought from the field.*”⁷ Yaakov Avinu went beyond his forefathers and pledged to give *Maaser* from all of his profits (*Maaser Kesafim*) and not just his produce.⁸

Command or custom?

Maaser is only mentioned biblically as a command to give 1/10 of the crop of one's field to the *Leviim*, as they do not own real estate and rely upon others for their sustenance. *Maaser* from other sources of income such as business or lending profits is not mentioned explicitly as a *Mitzvah* anywhere in *Tanach*. While there are those who are of the opinion that *Maaser* of any type of income or profit is a biblical command⁹, and there are others who say it is a rabbinic command¹⁰, most authorities agree that *Maaser Kesafim* is merely a custom, as it has no explicit reference in the Talmud. However, from a Jewish legal perspective, this makes *Maaser Kesafim* stricter, in that, an accepted or practiced custom could represent a personal

5. (רמב"ם משנה תורה הלכות מלכים ט:א) "על ששה דברים נצטוו אדם הראשון על עבודה זרה ועל. וברכת השם ועל שפיכות דמים ועל גלוי עריות ועל הגזל ועל הדינים...הוסיף לנח אבר מן החי...ונמצאו שבע מצוות. וכן היה הדבר בכל העולם עד אברהם בא אברהם ונצטוו יתר על אלו במילה והוא התפלל שחרית ויצחק הפריש מעשר והוסיף תפלה אחרת לפנות היום..."

6. (בראשית כו:יב) "ויזרע יצחק בארץ ההוא וימצא בשנה ההוא מאה שערים ויברכהו ד'."

7. (דברים יד:כב) "עשר תעשר את כל תבואת זרעך היוצא השדה שנה שנה."

8. (בראשית כ"ח, כ"ב) "והאבן הזאת אשר שמתי מצבה יהיה בית אלקים וכל אשר תתן לי עשר אעשרנו לך."

9. *Sifri* quoted by Tosafos *Taanis* 9a, *Taz Yoreh Deah* 331:2

10. *Nodeh B'Yehuda* Responsa *Yoreh Deah* Siman 73, *Birkei Yosef* Responsa *Yoreh Deah* Siman 249:3

Neder, which is more stringent than a *Mitzvah D'Rabbanan*.¹¹ While *Nedarim* have their own set of laws that are beyond the scope of this discussion, a very important point to consider is that the annulment of one's *Neder* to reset their custom can allow for greater flexibility in the practice of *Maaser Kesafim*. If you have practiced *Maaser Kesafim*, you should be *Matir Neder* (annul your vow) and state in your *Hataras Nedarim* that you wish to annul your past practices regarding *Maaser Kesafim* (and *Chomesh*) and to accept upon yourself the custom, *Bli-Neder*, with greater flexibility.

Tzedaka & Maaser

The biblical obligation of *Tzedaka* is to give a poor person what they need, or what you can afford to give, when they approach you as their *sole* supporter. In this regard, you are obligated to take care of all their needs, according to how they are accustomed to being treated. This is known as *Dei Mechsoro*. If they also ask others for support, you should give them a small donation¹². Should no one solicit you for charity, you are minimally responsible to give 1/3 of a biblical *Shekel* annually to one who is needy, which is approximately \$7 - \$9 USD¹³. There is an opinion that this minimum amount of *Tzedaka* should be given three-times a year around the *Regalim*, and, therefore, the minimal requirement for unsolicited *Tzedaka* would be approximately \$21 - \$27 USD annually. The Rema, in *Shulchan Aruch* 331:146, queries why *Maaser Kesafim* was excluded from the laws of *Tzedaka*. In doing so, he informs us that *Tzedaka* and

11. A vow (*Neder*) or an oath (*Shevuah*) in Jewish law creates an obligation or prohibition on a biblical level.

12. *Bava Basra* 9a

13. Based upon the weight of silver, whereas 5 *Halachic Shekel* is equal to 9.15-10.1 grams of silver, a 1/3 *Shekel* is equal to 3.05-3.37 grams of silver. Whereas silver on August 3, '23 (the date that this article was written) is \$.76, this is equal to \$6.95-7.68. See *Sefer Maaser Kesafim*, Albert p. 153.

Maaser Kesafim are inherently connected. Indeed, the Rambam, in *Hilchos Matnos Aniyim* 7:5, connects these laws when he says that the *Middah Beinonis* of *Tzedaka* is to give 10% of one's earnings to charity, and that it would be even more meritorious to give a up to a *Chomesh* (1/5, or 20%), if possible. There is a rabbinic decree that one is discouraged from giving away more than 20% of one's earnings, so as not to subject oneself to a potentially difficult financial situation.¹⁴ There are exceptions to this rule, such as one who has a steady source of income, one who can easily afford to do so, or one who does so prior to death, or to save a life, or to support Torah. Some also exclude one who seeks to achieve a *Kapara* for a sin.¹⁵

Partnership & preparation

The Chavos Yair (Rabbi Yair Chaim Bacharach, Worms, 1639-1702), in his responsa #224, uniquely describes *Maaser Kesafim* as an opportunity to partner with Hashem to care for others. Rabbi Yisrael Meir Kagan (more commonly known as the Chofetz Chaim), in his book *Ahavas Chesed*, explains that one should implement the custom of *Maaser Kesafim* by designating a separate account into which one will separate their *Maaser* in preparation of giving *Tzedaka*. As such, money will be readily available when someone in need makes a request and/or one becomes aware of a need. Also, this way, it is psychologically easier to give *Tzedaka*, as the money is already set aside for this purpose. This act of separation of one's *Maaser* could be the greatest enabler of the fulfillment of one's charity.

14. (כתובות נ.) "א' ר' אילעא באושא התקינו אל יבזבז יותר מחומש תניא נמי הכי המבזבז אל יבזבז. יותר מחומש שמא יצטרך לבריות."

15. *Ahavas Chesed* p.252

Calculation, use, and exclusions

The Rema states that *Maaser Kesafim*, beyond the *Tzedaka* minimum, is only applicable to one who can afford their own basic living expenses.¹⁶ If one cannot afford to give *Maaser*, especially according to the many authorities that *Maaser Kesafim* is only a custom, it is permissible for one to use their *Maaser* for their own necessities.¹⁷ The actual separation into a *Maaser Kesafim* account itself can be considered a *Mitzvah* and a source of blessing regardless of one's personal financial situation and whether they need to use those funds for their personal expenses.

To calculate *Maaser*, Chavos Yair explains that, just as partners reconcile profits and expenses, one can subtract expenses from profits, even from different businesses, before calculating a tithe. Additionally, just as partners keep a tally on a quarterly or semiannual basis, one should do the same with their *Maaser Kesafim*. Therefore, *Maaser Kesafim* can be calculated on realized gains offset by losses from different business ventures within the same accounting period.¹⁸ Within the same business venture, losses may offset gains even if they occurred in a different accounting period.¹⁹ Chavos Yair (224) recommends separating *Maaser Kesafim* quarterly or semiannually, or, at the very least, once a year. He suggests doing so before Rosh Hashana, based on the *Pasuk* in *Devarim* 14:22 “*Aser t'aser es kol tevuas zarecha hayotzei hasadeh shana shana.*”

16. Rema *Yoreh Deah* 251:3

17. See *Ahavas Chesed* about setting up a loan fund and borrowing from your own fund.

18. *Pischei Teshuva* YD 249:1

19. See Rav Shimon Taub, *The Laws of Tzedakah and Maaser* p. 143-144 and *Kol Hatorah* 39:89

What is an acceptable and appropriate use of your *Maaser*? As *Maaser Kesafim* and *Tzedaka* are linked, the laws of priority in *Tzedaka* are relevant to this discussion. *Tzedaka*, in Jewish law, places a priority on *Pikuach Nefesh* (saving lives) first, followed by the support of *Limud HaTorah*, then *Cholei aniyim* (those who are impoverished and sick), then the construction of a *Shul*, and then poor people. In the context of poor people, one's family takes priority; parents, then children, then siblings, then the broader family members, then the needy of one's immediate city, then the needy of Eretz Yisrael. In short, helping those in need is a primary purpose of one's *Maaser*. Therefore, it can be appropriate to use one's *Maaser* to help your newly married children that are starting out or who are gathering money for a down payment on their first home.

While the Rema in *Yoreh Deah*, 249:1, says that one's *Maaser* should be given solely to poor people, there are many *Acharonim* who say that, as *Maaser Kesafim* is a *Minhag*, one can also use the *Maaser* for other *Mitzvos* as well.²⁰ The Chofetz Chaim is *Machriya* and recommends that one should set aside 2/3 of their *Maaser* for *Aniyim* and the other 1/3, and all of one's *Chomesh*, can be used for other *Mitzvos*.²¹ Examples of such can include donating to a religious institution or nonprofit organization, enabling a mission to help the public, donating books to a library, and other similar endeavors.

Regarding exclusions, when attending a *Tzedaka* dinner, it is recommended for one to deduct the real value of a personal benefit derived from the donation such as the cost of a meal. Obligatory commandments, such as a debt or support or tuition for young children until they become self-sufficient (age 6-7 is mentioned in

20. *Shach Yoreh Deah* 249:3

21. *Shita Mekubetzes Kesubos* 50a

the *Poskim* but nowadays it is likely closer to post-high school ages 17-22), should also be excluded from one's *Maaser*.²²

Two accounts – how to Maaser and Chomesh

As mentioned above, the act of separating *Maaser* and *Chomesh* is core to the *Mitzvah*. Therefore, in addition to your general checking account, by setting up two additional bank accounts, one for *Maaser* and one for *Chomesh*, you will be able to transfer funds upon receipt of income/profits to these accounts and distribute your charity according to the parameters listed above to satisfy the variety of halachic opinions.

A new year of blessing

*“And Yitzchak sowed in the land, and he found in that year one hundred-fold.”*²³ The Torah mentions Yitzchak's *Beracha*. Rabbi Yochanan, in the *Gemara*, says that the repeated word “*Aseir T’Aseir*” informs us that one who fulfills this commandment will “*TisAsher*,” will be blessed by G-d with wealth and success (The words *Aseir*, to tithe, and *Osher*, wealth, are homographs in Hebrew).²⁴ Moreover, Rabbi Yochanan tells us that, while one is forbidden to test G-d, when it comes to *Maaser*, one is allowed to do so. This is derived from the *Navi*, *Malachi*, who said, “*Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, and let there be food in My house (for the Leviim), and thus put Me to test,’ said the Lord, ‘and I will surely open the floodgates of heaven and pour down blessings for you.’*”²⁵

22. *Be'er Hagolah* 249:5, *Igros Moshe*, *YD* 1:143, 2:113

23. *Genesis* 26:12

24. *Taanis* 9a

25. *Malachi* 3:10

Summary

The custom of *Maaser* has existed since the ancient time of Avraham. While *Maaser* on crop-yield in the Land of Israel is a *Mitzvah D'Oraysa*, many authorities hold that *Maaser Kesafim* is a *Minhag* and not a *Mitzvah*. As *Minhagim* can be considered *Nedarim*, annulling your vow and resetting your custom of *Maaser Kesafim* will provide you with greater flexibility in the fulfillment and practice of the custom. *Maaser Kesafim* and *Tzedaka* are linked, and the laws of priority of *Tzedaka* apply to *Maaser Kesafim* as well. Appropriate use of your *Maaser* is a healthy debate and, while gifting or lending to the neediest is of course appropriate, *Maaser Kesafim's* status as a *Minhag* affords it a wide array of uses. Make sure to ask your Rabbi, as legal opinions can vary greatly.

Maaser represents a heavenly partnership with Hashem to enable greater philanthropic giving. It is a great source of *Beracha*, and Hashem allows us to test Him regarding such *Beracha*. The act of separation of *Maaser* into a separate *Tzedaka* account itself can be a source of blessing regardless of one's personal financial situation.

May our *Tzedaka* and *Teshuva* be elevated. May Hashem see our commitment and open the floodgates of heaven for a year of good health, happiness, and success. May we become true partners in His will and may we all be *Zocheh* to be inscribed in the Book of Life.

Preparation for the Yomim Noraim: the Maharal's Perspective on the Nature of Man

R' Tzvi Schwartz

“Rebbi Meir would say, the dirt that was used to form Adam HaRishon was gathered from the entire world...” (*Sanhedrin* 38).

Hashem created the first man on Rosh Hashana, and named him, Adam (*Bereishis* 1:26). It's what we are called to this day; Man is “*Adam*.” The *Medrash* (*B”R* 17:4) provides the reason that HKB”H called Man *Adam* it's because HKB”H formed Man from dirt, *Adoma*. “What do you want to be called?” HKBH asks the first man. He responds, “Adam is fine, after all, I was created from *Adoma*.”

Okay, that is certainly a reason to call Man *Adam*; we name things after their origins all the time. A “painting” comes from “paint.” But, if you're going to name Man after what he was made from, why not pick the other thing he was made from; his *Neshoma*. After all, man was created by HKB”H from two things. When coming up with a name for Man, why emphasize the dirt?

Let's ask a better question. The Torah tells us that HKB”H created both animals and Man from the ground. But only Man's name, *Adam*, derives from *Adoma*, earth, not animals, which are called *Beheima*. Yet, animals lack a *Neshoma*, as they were formed only from dirt. So, animals would seem to be a better candidate than man to be called “Adam”; after all, they are only dirt, nothing mixed in, no *Neshoma*.

So, why did HKB”H choose man over animals to be named after the dirt? And, if it is important to name man after his original

components, why did HKB”H choose dirt to be the source of Man’s name when He could have chosen to name Man after the other component, his *Neshoma*?

The Maharal asks this question in the beginning of his work, *Drosh al HaTorah*, one of the two *Derashos* printed in the back of his *Sefer, Be’er HaGola*. His answer is particularly appropriate in the context of Rosh Hashana, the day that we reflect on our creation and purpose.

The Maharal answers that Man is like *Adama*; in fact, man’s defining characteristic is that he is like dirt, and no other living creature, not animals, not *Melachim*, are comparable to dirt like man is. Man is so akin to dirt, that it is his defining characteristic. We can actually think about dirt and learn about Man and his purpose. How so?

Dirt is the medium for growth; it brings forth plants, trees, and fruit. As a *Mashal*, *Adoma* represents and demonstrates, what the Maharal calls, “*Koach*,” by which he means, potential. Man has potential. Specifically, through his will and actions he has the potential to bring into the world many things. For this reason, Man’s actions, whether good or bad, are referred to in *Tanach* as his “*Peiros*,” his fruit (e.g., *Yeshaya* 3:10, for *Maasim tovim*; *Mishlei* 1:31, for *Maasim raim*). *Chazal* tell us, *Ikar toldoseihem shel tzadikim ma’asim tovim*, our most important creations are the good things we do, to put it simply. And, by the way, if a man fails to cultivate his *Neshoma* through growth and bringing his potential to fruition, *Chazal* have a nickname for such a person. Like land that is not cultivated, he is a *Bor* (*Avos* 2:5).

But it’s not like this for animals; they don’t have potential that they express in the world. In fact, the Maharal points out that an

animal is called *Beheima*, spelled, *Bais Hei Mem Hei*, which can be broken into two words and understood, *Bah Mah*. Meaning, "In it is what it is". An animal does not change or grow, it does not have potential waiting to be brought out. Instead, that which it will become is already part of the animal from the beginning. A *Shor* is born to plow, a *Chamor* is born to carry loads, a baby bear becomes a big bear, a baby cow becomes a big cow; it is what it is. But not Man. Man is born with potential to bring to action, to grow and develop, to become.

Further, just as seeds are placed in dirt to grow plants and trees, so too HKB"H plants in man a *Neshama*. From this part of the *Mashal* we can begin to answer our question; why not name Man after his *Neshama*, one of the two constituent components used by HKB"H to form Man? The *Neshama* is essential to Man, but it's not Man's defining characteristic. Man's defining characteristic is what he does with his *Adoma*, his efforts to use what has been given to him and to develop it, to bring forth his potential, just as the earth nurtures seeds and grows plants and trees.

Adam was formed by HKB"H from the dirt. Man was named *Adam* after *Adama*, the dirt, because, just like the dirt, he has the potential to grow new things, and to create beautiful *Peiros* from his efforts. May we be *Zoche* to appreciate and act on our potential throughout 5784, to bring forth *Peiros tovot* for the benefit of our family, community, and *Klal Yisrael*.

The Perfect Shofar Blast

Rabbi Ori Strum

Imagine the following: It's Elul, you are standing in shul at the end of davening, and the guy who blows the *Shofar* before *L'Dovid* muffs the sound, so instead of a quality sounding *Shofar* blast, it sounds more like a struggling cat. You think to yourself, "If only they would have asked me to blow the *Shofar*; I would have blown it so nicely, *Moshiach* would have come running!"

Let's admit it, we often judge the *Baal tokea* and roll our eyes whenever he blows and does not make the perfect sound. I recently had the *Zechus* of blowing the *Shofar* in *Shul* before *L'Dovid*, thinking it was going to be perfect, thinking I would put all the other *Shofar* blowers to shame, thinking *Moshiach* would come running. And guess what happened? That's right. I got the sound out eventually, but for the first few seconds (to me, it felt like hours) my *Shofar* blasts sounded more like a struggling cat than anything else.

My friends, we are not perfect. We don't always "blow the perfect sounds." We are not always at our best. We struggle, we fall, and we mess up. But let us never forget, THIS IS NORMAL. It is a human condition to be imperfect, so let us embrace this reality.

The holy Aleksander Rebbe, Rabbi Yerachmiel Yisrael Yitzchak of Aleksander (1853-1910), authored a fantastic work called *Yismach Yisroel*. In his discussion about the *Mitzvah* of *Bikkurim*, the *Rebbe* explains that even a small *Mitzvah* that a person does - like simply setting aside in his mind some fruits for Hashem - is extremely valuable and special in the eyes of Hashem.

The Rebbe points out that just as there is a concept of a healthy body and a sick body, so too there is a concept of a healthy soul and an “unhealthy” soul. Obviously, the best health diet for the soul is to keep the Torah and do good deeds. But if someone becomes spiritually unwell due to sin, the cure for this is what we call *Teshuva* - repentance.

The *Rebbe* explains that the order of *Shofar* blasts that we blow - *Tekia*, *Shevarim*, *Terua*, and *Tekia* - correspond to the spiritual life cycle of a Jew. *Tekia* is straight, and, indeed, that is how we start off. Hashem made us such that we start off in the realm of *Yashar*. But then, over the course of our lives, we sin and falter. We become, so-to-speak, broken, as indicated by the different types of broken blasts, the *Shevarim* and *Teruah*. But then, through *Teshuva*, we have the ability to go back to a state of wholeness, of holiness, of *Yashrus*; a state of *Tekia*.

If I can humbly add, the *Tekia* at the end is often called *Tekia Gedola*, the *Great Tekia*. Hashem, in His mercy, made it so that when we return from our sinful ways and repent, we don't just go back to the same state of holiness and straightness as before, but rather, we enter a new state of *Yashrus*, and become even greater - hence, *Gedola!* - than we were before.

Kol Teruah

Rabbi Chananya Jacobson

Rosh Hashana is described in the Torah (*Vayikra* 25:9) as a “*Yom Teruah*,” a day of sounding the *Shofar*. The *Gemara* (*Rosh Hashana* 33b-34a) explains that we are obligated to sound a “*Teruah*” three times, and each *Teruah* must be bracketed with a *Tekiah* both before it and after it.

The *Gemara* is definitive in its description of the *Tekiah* as a straight, unbroken blast.¹ However, the sound of the *Teruah* is disputed in the *Gemara*. It cites the *Targum* of *Teruah* as “*Yevava*,” and finds a parallel term used to describe the reaction of Sisera’s mother when her son did not return: “*Vateyavev eim Sisera* [and Sisera’s mother wailed].” The Sages disagree as to the meaning of this term. One opinion translates it as a broken-hearted groan, and the other defines it as a series of staccato wails. According to the first opinion a *Teruah* sounds like a groan - our *Shevarim*. According to the second opinion, a *Teruah* sounds like a staccato wail - the sound we call *Teruah* today. There is also a third opinion, which describes the proper sound of *Teruah* as a combination of the two sounds, a groan followed by a wail - *Shevarim-teruah*.

Rav Hai Gaon writes that the various opinions were followed by different communities. Some locations fulfilled the *Mitzvah* of *Tekias shofar* with *Tekiah-Shevarim- Tekiah*, some with *Tekiah-Teruah-Tekiah*. Rabbi Avahu was concerned about their being

1. Although some opinions hold that any variation in the tone invalidates the *Tekiah*, the general consensus of the *Poskim* is that a change in note is still valid. See “*Minhag Ashkenaz*” below.

differing *Minhagim* in the performance of this *Mitzvah*, and so he instituted our current custom of blowing all three variations of the *Teruah*. This practice is followed to this day and is codified in *Shulchan Aruch* (490:1-2).

Rabbi Avahu's *Takanah* was intended to create one unified practice of *Shofar* blowing throughout *Klal Yisrael*, accounting for all opinions. And yet, there are still a wide variety of opinions and customs as to the proper performance of this *Mitzvah*.

The Length of the Sounds

The *Gemara* (ibid.) says that the length of the *Tekiah* must equal the length of the *Teruah*, and that the length of the *Teruah* is three “*Yevavos*”. Thus, both the *Tekiah* and the *Teruah* must have the same duration of three *Yevavos*.

How long, then, is a “*Yevava*”? Rashi writes that a *Yevava* is, “Just a sound, of minimal length,” i.e., the shortest length a person can blow, which we can call a “beat.”¹ Accordingly, a *Teruah* is three consecutive one-beat sounds in a row, and a *Tekiah* is a three-beat blast.

Rashi defines *Shevarim* as “longer than *Yevavos*,” so each *Shever* must last longer than a beat, but Rashi does not provide an upper limit. Tosafos point out that according to Rashi’s definition of *Yevava* above, the length of a *Tekiah* is three beats. Therefore, one must take care that a single *Shever* does not last for three beats, because at that point it would become a *Tekiah* and not a *Shevarim*!

1. In the *Halachic* literature, the terms ‘*Kochos*’ or ‘*Trumitin*’ are used. The actual length differs from *Baal tokeiah* to *Baal tokeiah*, and may be as short as 1/8 of a second. *Rabbonim* of yore used to measure the beats by tapping their fingers for as many beats as were required.

Bearing that in mind, according to Rashi, *Teruah* is a group of three one-beat sounds, *Shevarim* is a set of three slightly longer sounds (longer than one beat but less than three), and *Tekiah* is three beats or longer.

In contrast, the Riva and the Rivam hold that a *Yevava* is three beats long. Since a *Teruah* is three *Yevavos*, according to their opinion, a *Teruah* is a series of nine one-beat sounds, and *Tekiah* is nine beats long. With the length of *Tekiah* extended, *Shevarim* need not be limited to less than three beats. The Mishna Berura writes that ideally, this opinion should be followed in practice, and the common custom is to blow nine (or more) one-beat sounds for *Teruah*, three three-beat blasts for *Shevarim*, and a *Tekiah* lasting for at least nine beats.

It would seem that the opinions of the Riva and Rashi regarding the length of *Shevarim* are mutually exclusive. According to the Riva, it can be assumed that the total length of the combined *Shevarim* must be at least nine beats. Rashi, however, cannot have *Shevarim* that last for three beats, so it is impossible to satisfy all opinions at the same time.

Since we follow the Riva's opinion, some people blow additional sets of *Tekiah-Shevarim-Teruah-Tekiah* and *Tekiah-Shevarim-Tekiah* after *Mussaf* with very short *Shevarim*² to satisfy Rashi's opinion.

A creative way to satisfy both opinions was suggested by Rav Yosef Ber Soloveitchik in his youth. He noted that, although Tosafos give an upper limit to the length of *Shevarim*, there is no upper limit on the number of *Shevarim*. Thus, if one blows several two-note

2. And only three *Teruos*!

Shevarim, the minimal length of nine beats can be met, without any one *Shever* being as long as a *Tekiah!* His grandfather, Rav Chaim Soloveitchik, was very taken by this solution, and to this day this is the custom followed in Brisker Yeshivos.³

The Sound of Shevarim

Another significant difference can be found in the sound of the *Shevarim*. The most common custom in America is that the *Shevarim* is a group of three straight sounds (too-too-too), indistinguishable from a *Tekiah* other than by length, as described above. (A *Tekiah* would be “toooooo”.)

The custom in some areas of Russia and Lithuania was to blow a “broken” *Shevarim*, so that each note has two or three parts: “too-ooh, too-ooh, too-ooh”, or “ooh-too, ooh-too, ooh-too”, or “too-ooh-too, too-ooh-too, too-ooh-too”. This custom is still followed in many places in Eretz Yisroel, including Brisk, and in some *Yeshivos* in America as well, such as Beth Medrash Govoha in Lakewood, NJ.

A source for this custom is related to the earlier discussion of the length of *Shevarim*. The Ramban questions Tosafos’ premise that the length of the *Shevarim* must be kept short to avoid confusion with *Tekios*. Even if the *Shevarim* last longer, they sound intrinsically different, after all, it is called *Shevarim* because the sound is “broken” into two notes!

Other *Rishonim* reject this, either outright or by implication, and it is not clear that the Ramban himself felt that this was sufficient to address Tosafos’ concern. Rav Elyakim Shlezinger of London writes

3. Perhaps the reason why this solution has not gained more popular traction is that it fails to satisfy both the Taz, who rules, based on the Hagahos Ashri, that the *Shevarim* should not be very short, and the Magen Avraham, who writes that only three *Shevarim* should be sounded.

in his memoirs that he once blew *Shofar* for the Brisker Rav, and the Rav required (five) short *Shevarim* to satisfy Rashi's opinion. Rav Shlezinger asked why this was necessary, since the sound of the *Shevarim* is "too-ooh", and easily distinguishable from a *Tekiah*. The Rav responded that Tosafos felt that the length was a concern. Rav Shlezinger responded, if so, perhaps the *Shevarim* is a straight sound, as is the common custom, and not a broken one? The Rav responded that a straight sound is not called a "*Shever*." (However, he did say that there is no difference between a "too-ooh", and an "ooh-too".⁴)

The Sound of Teruah

Although *Teruah* is clearly a shorter sound than a *Shevarim*, the exact structure of the *Teruah* is also not universal. The familiar custom is to blow a series of nine short staccato blasts. (According to Rashi only three are necessary, but according to all opinions there is no harm in blowing additional *Teruos*, which allows us to fulfill the mitzva according to the Riva as well.) However, the Yemenite Jews, blow a trilling "trrrrrrrrrrrr" sound for *Teruah*, and the German blow a ululating "toOoOoOoOoOoOoOoO."

The source for this custom can be found in Rabbeinu Chananel's definitions of *Shevarim* and *Teruah*: "*Yevavos (i.e., Teruos)* are blown one after another; *Shevarim* are blown with a rest and a break between them." In other words, *Shevarim* and *Teruah* are not distinguished by their sounds, or their lengths. Instead, they differ in whether there is a break in the sounds. The *Shevarim* is broken by

4. Rav Aryeh Pomeranchik, in his *Emek Beracha*, opines that the proper broken *Shevarim* cannot be "too-ooh-too" because the second "too" is effectively a *Teruah*, and interrupts the order of *Shevarim*. Apparently, the Brisker Rav did not feel that a "too" following an "ooh" is considered *Teruah*; perhaps Rav Pomeranchik only has this concern when it follows a full, two-part, "broken" sound.

the pause between the notes,⁵ whereas the *Teruah* is a continuous unbroken wail.

Shevarim-Teruah

The Shulchan Aruch (ibid, 3) records another dispute: According to Rabbeinu Tam, the *Shevarim-Teruah* should be blown in two separate breaths, whereas according to the Rosh they should be blown in one breath. The Mechaber and the Rema disagree as to which opinion is primary; however, the common custom follows the Mechaber's suggestion to blow the first set immediately following the *Beracha*, with one breath, and the later set, during *Mussaf*, with two breaths. The pause of a breath may be indistinguishable to the listener, but some modern *Machzorim* indicate it by placing a period between *Shevarim* and *Teruah* where they are to be blown with two breaths.

Minhag Ashkenaz

As explained above, the German custom is to blow an unbroken sound for *Teruah*. According to some German *Minhagim*, even *Shevarim* is a continuous sound (tooOOOoooOOOoooOOO). A source for this can be found In the Ramban (Rosh Hashanah 34a), who quotes Rabbi Yitzchak ben Gaiyus: "*Shevarim* does not mean to break the sound entirely and interrupt it, rather like a person who groans from heartbreak, like long *Yevavos*. Those who blow an interrupted sound are mistaken." (The Meiri, in his *Magen Avos*, records his disputes with the students of the Ramban when they encountered separate *Shevarim* in Provence, which ran counter

5. This explains the term *Shevarim* being applied to straight sounds, unlike the Ramban and Brisker Rav quoted who require a change in note. Perhaps this is also the reason why the term *Shevarim* is plural – there is no such thing as a single *Shever*, the sound is defined by the silence in between.

to their Catalan custom of continuous *Shevarim*. He asked them, “Is this *Aseres bnei Haman*?”) However, for *Shevarim-teruah*, even according to the opinion that they should be blown in one breath, there is a brief pause to distinguish the two.

There is yet another difference according to *Minhag Ashkenaz*: The *Tekiah* is not a straight unbroken sound. Rather it has, in the words of the *Terumas Hadeshen* (quoted in *Leket Yosher*), “a small *Shever* in the beginning.” In other words, the pitch of the *Teruah* dips and rises as it is sounded.

Although there is a wide spectrum of variations in the performance of the *Mitzvah* of *Teruah*, and it is proper to hear the *Shofar* according to one’s tradition, according to most authorities, one can discharge his obligation with any of them. As the *Piyut* states, “*Meivin u’maazin mabit u’makshiv l’kol tekioseinu* [Hashem understands and gives ear, perceives and listens to the sound of our *Tekios*]” – our *Tekios*, however they may sound.

אשרי העם יודעי תרועה - ה' באור פניך יהלכון!

Praised are the people who know Teruah. Hashem, they walk in the light of Your countenance!

(*Tehillim* 89:16)

Unesaneh Tokef

R' Yehoshua Zev Winchell

One of the highlights of the *Yomim Noraim* liturgy is the *Piyut* of *Unesaneh Tokef*. From its legendary origin with the tragedy of R' Amnon of Mainz⁶ to its haunting words, the *Piyut* elicits many feelings; it is awe-inspiring yet uplifting, terrifying yet inspirational. Its solemn words encapsulate the awesomeness of the day. However, besides its poeticism, arousing message and moving tune, its words may also aid in understanding the judgement that takes place on Rosh Hashana.

This essay will focus on one specific passage of the *Piyut*. “*B’Rosh Hashana yikaseivun* (On Rosh Hashana it is written) *Uv’Yom Tzom Kippur yechaseimun* (and on Yom Kippur it is sealed) *kama yaavrun* (How many will pass) *v’kama yibareiun* (and how many will be created) *mi yichye* (who will live) *u’mi yamus* (and who will die etc.).”

“B’Rosh Hashana Yikaseivun”

It is interesting to note that the first line, “On Rosh Hashana it is written and on Yom Kippur it is sealed,” is not entirely of R' Amnon's own invention, rather it is derived from the words of the *Gemara* in *Rosh Hashana* 16a. As an introduction to the words of the *Gemara*, we will begin by citing the words of the *Mishna* on *Daf* 16a. The

6. In recent years, there has been speculation as to whether R' Amnon of Mainz could have been the author of *Unesaneh Tokef*, or whether he simply introduced the *Piyut* to the Ashkenazi world. Nevertheless, historically, the story of R' Amnon has often been published preceding the *Piyut*, and it has offered meaning and context to its holy words throughout the ages. Therefore, for the purposes of this article, we refer to R' Amnon as the author.

Mishna states, “The world is judged at four periods in each year; on Pesach in respect to grain; on *Atzeret* (Shavuos) concerning the fruit of trees; on Rosh Hashana all creatures pass like sheep before Him, as it is said (*Tehillim* 33:15), “He who has fashioned all their hearts, who understands all their works;” and on Sukkos, they are judged on water.”

After some discussion, the *Gemara* establishes that the words of the *Mishna* are in accordance with the view of Tanna D’vei R’ Yishmael, who’s opinion is that humans are judged on Rosh Hashana but their *G’zar din* (their verdict) is not sealed until Yom Kippur. However, grain is still judged on Pesach, fruits are still judged on Shavuos, and rain is still judged on Sukkos. This contrasts with R’ Yehuda who says that while everything is judged on Rosh Hashana, each individual item’s *G’zar din* (i.e., grain, rain, fruit) is not sealed until its appropriate time. This also contrasts with R’ Meir who says that everything is judged and sealed on Yom Kippur (including grain, rain, and fruit). When the author of *Unesaneh Tokef* writes, “On Rosh Hashana it is written and on Yom Kippur it is sealed,” he seems to be paraphrasing the words of Tanna D’vei R’ Yishmael, the author of our *Mishna*.

Yet, the *Gemara* just a half page later, on *Daf* 16b, seems to contradict the *Mishna* that we just mentioned. The *Gemara* states, “R’ Kruspedai says in the name of R’ Yochanan, ‘On Rosh Hashana three books are open; one for *Tzadikim gamurim* (I.e., the completely righteous) one of *Rashaim gamurim* (I.e., the completely wicked) and one for the *Beinonim* (i.e., individuals who are somewhere in between). *Tzadikim gamurim* are immediately inscribed and sealed for life, *Rashaim gamurim* are immediately inscribed and sealed for death, and the judgement of *Beinonim* is deferred until Yom Kippur.

If they are worthy, they are written for life, and if they are not worthy, they are written for death.”

This statement is at odds with our *Mishna*. R' Yochanan implies that both the *K'siva* (inscribing) and the *Chasima* (sealing) of *Tzadikim* and *Rashaim* take place on Rosh Hashana, unlike our *Mishna* which states that the *Din* on humanity is not sealed until Yom Kippur.¹ Which is correct? Should the author of *Unesaneh Tokef* be quoting the Tanna D'vei R' Yishmael, or are the words of R' Yochanan more accurate?

Before we resolve this dilemma, we must define the terms “*Tzadikim gamurim*” and “*Rashaim gamurim*.” This is, in fact, a matter of dispute among the *Rishonim*. We will begin with the opinion of the Ramban². The Ramban asks a simple question: How can R' Yochanan say that *Tzadikim gamurim* are automatically sealed for life? Experience proves that many *Tzadikim* have their lives cut short, *R”L*, or experience tremendous hardships throughout their lives, and vice versa, many wicked people live long and prosperous lives! The Ramban answers this question with an astonishing idea. Contrary to widespread belief, the term “*Tzadikim gamurim*” does not refer to individuals who are righteous, and similarly the term “*Rashaim gamurim*” does not refer to individuals who are wicked. Rather, *Tzadikim gamurim* are individuals who are “righteous in judgement” and *Rashaim gamurim* are individuals who are “not righteous in judgement.” In other words, Hashem does not base his verdict about whether a person will live or die on virtuous deeds or wicked deeds alone. Perhaps Hashem wishes to reward a *Rasha*

1. Note, our *Mishna* cannot be referring only to *Beinonim* because they are not even judged until Yom Kippur, whereas our *Mishna* states that humanity is judged on Rosh Hashana.

2. Ramban in his *Derasha L'Rosh Hashana*. This is printed as a commentary on *Meseches Rosh Hashana* in many editions of *Chidushei HaRamban al HaShas*.

in this world for the single *Mitzvah* that he performed to deprive him of *Olam Haboh*. Perhaps Hashem wishes to punish a *Tzadik* in this world for the single *Aveira* that he committed so that he can reap his entire reward in the World to Come. Multiple factors are considered, and Hashem may have ulterior reasons to keep a *Rasha* alive or to inflict a *Tzadik* with hardships, *Lo aleinu*.

Thus, according to the Ramban, in reference to the *Din* on Rosh Hashana, even a completely wicked person can have the title *Tzadik gamur*, and even a completely righteous person can be titled a *Rasha gamur*.³ Accordingly, R' Yochanan is stating that, for whatever reason it may be, there are individuals that Hashem will automatically seal for life, individuals that Hashem will automatically seal for death, and individuals who Hashem does not have a special consideration

3. As an aside, the Ramban's explanation of the term "*Tzadik*" may aid in answering a different question posed by the *Achronim*. The *Gemara* in *Kiddushin* 49b states that if a man betroths a woman on condition that he is a *Tzadik*, even if he is a *Rasha gamur* she is *Mekudeshes*, because he may have had thoughts of *Teshuva*. The *Minchas Chinuch* asks that in order for *Teshuva* to be effective, there are requirements such as reciting *Viduy*, or returning stolen objects to their rightful owners, etc. If the *Gemara* in *Kiddushin* is dealing with a *Rasha gamur*, it is logical to believe that he committed all sorts of horrible atrocities including theft. Yet, we do not find that this person ever returned any stolen objects, and we do not find that he recited *Viduy*. Nevertheless, the *Gemara* states that he is considered a *Tzadik* by merely having thoughts of *Teshuva*. How can he be considered a *Tzadik* if his *Teshuva* was not effective? However, according to the Ramban, a completely wicked person with even just one *Zechus* can be titled a *Tzadik*. Perhaps the mere thought of repentance, albeit ineffective, provides the *Zechus* necessary to be considered a *Tzadik b'din*. This actually fits in well with the overall theme of that *Gemara*. The *Gemara* lists a number of cases in which a person is *Mekadesh* a woman conditionally. In each case, the *Gemara* rules that she is *Mekudeshes* despite the fact that the man did not fulfill his condition to its fullest extent. For example, the *Gemara* states, "A man who betroths a woman on condition that he is a *Chacham*, we do not say that he must be like one of the *Chachmei Yavneh*, rather anyone who is able to recite a piece of wisdom when asked [can still be considered a *Chacham* for the purpose of betrothal]." Here to, when the *Rasha* says that he is a *Tzadik*, so long as he can be considered a *Tzadik* in some way, she is *Mekudeshes*.

for one way or the other, and who must, therefore, prove themselves worthy between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur to be inscribed for life.

Tosafos⁴ disagrees with the Ramban's definition of "Tzadik" and "Rasha." According to Tosafos, the terms "Tzadik" and "Rasha" are meant to be taken literally. However, the reason we see wicked people prosper and righteous people suffer is because R' Yochanan is not referring to the *Din* on *Olam Hazeih*, their physical and material wellbeing, but rather on *Chayei Olam Haboh*, their share in the World to Come. According to Tosafos, R' Yochanan states that on Rosh Hashana the righteous are judged on their share in the World to Come and sealed for eternal life, the wicked are judged and sealed for *Gehinom*, and *Beinonim* are given the opportunity to repent and be inscribed in the Book of Eternal Life.

With that introduction, let us return to our original dilemma; the statement of R' Yochanan implies that the *Din* on *Tzadikim* and *Rashaim* is sealed on Rosh Hashana contrary to the *Mishna* on *Daf* 16a which says that the *Din* is not sealed until Yom Kippur. According to the Ramban, both statements refer to a person's *Din* on *Olam Hazeih*, yet they contradict one another. Thus, it seems there is no way to rectify the two statements. In fact, the Ritva⁵, who agrees with the Ramban's understanding of R' Yochanan's statement, states clearly that in practice we do not follow the *Mishna* on 16a, but rather, we follow the opinion of Rav⁶ that the *Din* on humanity is both written and sealed on Rosh Hashana. The statement of R'

4. *Rosh Hashana* 16b, D"H "V'nechtamim"

5. *Chiddushi HaRitva al Meseches Rosh Hashana*, 16a, D"H "Meivin kol Maaseihem"

6. *Talmud Yerushalmi, Rosh Hashana Perek Aleph, Halacha Gimmel*

Yochanan works in tandem with the statement of Rav, (i.e., Rav is referring specifically to *Tzadikim* and *Rashaim*) but not our *Mishna*.

However, according to Tosafos, R' Yochanan is referring to a *Din* on *Chayei Olam Haboh*. Thus, the Gra⁷ finds a way to reconcile the statement of R' Yochanan with our *Mishna*. He explains that, in actuality, two judgements occur on Rosh Hashana; one on *Olam Hazeih* and one on *Olam Haboh*. Our *Mishna*, which states that the *Din* is not sealed until Yom Kippur, is talking about the *Din* on *Olam Hazeih*. Contrarily, R' Yochanan, when he said that the *Din* of *Tzadikim* and *Rashaim* are immediately sealed, was referring to the judgement on *Olam Haboh*.

This brings us back to the words of *Unesaneh Tokef*, “On Rosh Hashana it is written and on Yom Kippur it is sealed.” As we said before, R' Amnon seems to be quoting the words of Tanna D'vei R' Yishmael, the author of our *Mishna*. This puts him at odds with the Ramban who says that we do not act in accordance with the *Mishna*, but rather Rav and R' Yochanan. However, Tosafos (according to the Gra) upholds the words of our *Mishna* since R' Yochanan was not speaking about *Olam Hazeih*, rather *Olam Haboh*. *Unesaneh Tokef* makes no mention of *Olam Haboh*, so it is safe to assume that R' Amnon's words are referring to the judgment on *Olam Hazeih*. Yet, R' Amnon states that a person's *Din* is not sealed until Yom Kippur. Consequently, R' Amnon must agree with Tosafos' opinion that there are, in fact, two judgements that take place on Rosh Hashana. The *Din* on *Olam Haboh* is sealed on Rosh Hashana itself, whereas the *Din* on *Olam Hazeih* is written on Rosh Hashana but not sealed until Yom Kippur. This is, in fact, the conclusion drawn by R' Dovid

7. *Beur HaGra al Shulchan Aruch O"C*, 582:9

Kronglas Z"l in *Sichos Chochma Umussar*.⁸ Amazingly, R' Amnon hints to this entire discussion in just a few short words!

“Kama Yaavrun”

The *Piyut of Unesaneh Tokef* continues, “*Kama yaavrun* (How many will pass) *v'kama yibareiun* (and how many will be created), *mi yichyeh* (who will live) *u'mi yamus* (and who will die).” At first glance, it seems that R' Amnon is referencing two separate judgements: one on the general population and one on individuals. The judgement on the general population determines the quota for how many people will be born during the year and how many people will die (or, in the author’s language, will pass) during the year. After that, every individual is judged whether they will live or die. We are familiar with the idea of a judgement on individuals; that is the theme of the *Mishna* on 16a and the statement of R' Yochanan on 16b. However, the concept of a universal judgement on all of humanity seems to be a novel one. What is the source for this idea?

Let us return to the *Mishna* on 16a. “The world is judged at four periods in each year.” The Ran⁹ asks the following question: It can be assumed that on Rosh Hashana man is judged on all things relating to his physical and material wellbeing, including rain, grain, and produce. If so, what is the purpose of having four days of judgment? Why is rain judged on Sukkos, grain on Pesach, and produce on Shavuos, in addition to being judged on Rosh Hashana?

The Ran answers that on Pesach, Shavuos, and Sukkos, the world is judged collectively. The judgements of Pesach, Shavuos, and Sukkos determine, on a global level, how much rain will fall and how much grain and produce will grow. The judgement on Rosh Hashana, on

8. *Chelek Aleph*, in the essay titled “*Shlosha Seforim Niftachim*”

9. *Rosh Hashana* 3a B'Dafei HaRif, D”H “B’Arba Perakim”

the other hand, is an individual one. On Rosh Hashana every person is allotted a portion of the overall total that is determined on the other days of judgment.

If that is the case, the *Mishna* which states that there are four days of judgement must be specifically referring to global judgements. This would include the judgement of Rosh Hashana. What kind of global judgement occurs on Rosh Hashana? The Ran appears to understand, like R' Amnon, that on Rosh Hashana there is not only a judgement on individuals of who will live and who will die, but there is also a global judgement regarding how many people will live and how many people will die. According to the Ran, the source for this idea is none other than the *Mishna* on 16a.

However, Rav Nota Greenblatt Z"l, the late *Av Bais Din* of Memphis, suggested a novel approach to explaining the words "*Kama yaavrun v'kama yibareiun* (how many will pass and how many will be created)" in *Unesaneh Tokef*¹⁰. He found the common understanding of these words difficult. If the intention of R' Amnon was to reference a general judgement of how many people will be born or die in the coming year, he should have used the terms "*Kama yamusu v'kama yivaldu* (how many will die and how many will be born)."

Consequently, Rav Nota Z"l suggested that these words reference an idea that is alluded to in an earlier verse in *Unesaneh Tokef*. "Angels will be frenzied, trembling and terror will seize them, and they will say, 'Behold, it is the Day of Judgment, to muster the heavenly host for judgment!' for even they are not worthy in Your eyes in judgment." As outlandish as it may seem, this verse implies that *Malachim* are also judged on Rosh Hashana. Unlike humans,

10. Related to the author by R' Nota Z"l, Rosh Hashana 5776

angels do not have *Bechira*, so it is not possible to judge them on an individual level. If so, what are they judged on?

This, said R' Nota, is what the author of *Unesaneh Tokef* is alluding to. It is true, *Malachim* cannot be judged individually since they do not have free will. However, every Rosh Hashana there is a collective judgement on how many angels will be *created* and how many will *pass from service* that year. The words "*Kama yaavrun v'kama yibareiu*" are referring to the *Din* on *Malachim*, whereas "*Mi yichye umi yamus*" is referring to the *Din* on humans. This also explains why the author did not use the terms "*Yamusu* (die)" and "*Yivaldu* (be born)", but rather "*Yaavrun* (pass)" and "*Yibareiu* (be created)." *Malachim* are not born, they are created, and they do not die, they simply pass on.

Yet, one can still ask, what is the purpose of mentioning the *Din* on *Malachim* in our *Tefillos*? What does it have to do with our *Avodah* of *Teshuva*? Every other verse in *Unesaneh Tokef*, "Who will live and who will die, who in his time and who before his time, who by water, who by fire, etc.," is meant to inspire us to repent. Does the knowledge that Hashem judges *Malachim* motivate us to do *Teshuva*?

Perhaps we can expand on R' Nota's interpretation, and, in doing so, demonstrate that the judgement on *Malachim* and the judgement on individuals are interconnected. The *Mishna* in *Avos* 4:11 states, "Rabbi Eliezer ben Yaakov said: he who performs one commandment acquires for himself one advocate, and he who commits one transgression acquires for himself one accuser." In other words, every time a person does a *Mitzvah* he creates a good angel that will advocate on his behalf, and every time a person commits an *Aveira* he creates a destructive angel that will prosecute him.

However, these prosecuting angels do not have infinite lives. The *Sefer Tomer Devorah*¹¹ explains that when a person does *Teshuva* or suffers *Yisurim* as an atonement for his sin, he nullifies the prosecuting angel that was created when he committed the transgression. Thus, we see humans, through their actions, are directly involved in the creation and removal of *Malachim*.

Thus, when we mention the *Din* of *Malachim* in *Unesaneh Tokef* we are conveying a multifold message. First, on Rosh Hashana every action is scrutinized and accounted for. On Rosh Hashana it is written: How many *Malachim*, whether good or destructive, will be created due to man's actions the prior year? How many *Malachim* will pass on due to people's repentance or having atoned for their sins through *Yisurim*, *R"l*? Second, we impress upon ourselves the realization that we are not aware of the effects of our actions. We perform *Mitzvos* and do *Aveiros* oblivious of the fact that there are tremendous spiritual and physical consequences for everything that we do. If we were more cognizant of this fact, perhaps we would refrain from doing this *Aveira* or run a little faster to do that *Mitzvah*.

Finally, these words remind us of the important role that we play in this world. The *Piyut* of *Unesaneh Tokef* introduces *Kedusha*. From talking about the lowliness of man, "*Adam yisodo meafar* (man's origin is from the dust)," we flow straight into *Kedusha*, where we mimic the *Malachim* praising Hashem. Are these not two diametrically opposed statuses? How can we be the lowly man, frail and mortal, and at the same time stand with angels in praise of Hakadosh Baruch Hu? Not only that, but through our actions we, who originated from dust, are even able to create angels, the most pristine and perfect of all creations!

11. *Perek Aleph, Midda Beis "Nosei Avon"*

Yet, it is precisely because of man's humble beginnings that Hashem prefers his praise over the praise of *Malachim*. Angels are perfect by design. Man, on the other hand, must overcome his animalistic tendencies and actively strive for *Ruchniyus*. Thus, his service is so much greater in the eyes of the *Borei Olam*. Man can create angels, and not the other way around, because only he can bring an imperfect world to perfection.

As we read *Unesaneh Tokef* we remind ourselves that Hashem does not want us to fail. If we did *Aveiros* during the prior year, all hope is not lost. As the *Piyut* later states, "*Ki lo sachpotz b'mos hameis* (for You do not desire the wicked to die) *ki im b'shuvo m'darko v'chaya* (rather that he repent and live)." Mankind is feeble, and it is expected that we will make mistakes. But it is at those moments of weakness that Hashem tests us. Do we return to Him, or do we continue on our downward path? When we choose the path of *Teshuva*, we rise to the level of angels, and beyond. May we all take advantage of this tremendous opportunity and may we all be sealed in the Book of Life, both in this world and the World to Come.

Creating Connection

R' Scott Klein

The *Mishna* in *Meseches Yoma* says that for sins between man and G-d Yom Kippur atones; but for sins between one person and another, Yom Kippur does not atone until he appeases the other person. “*Ain Yom Hakipurim mechapair ad sheyeratzeh es chavairo.*” A Rav once told me that “*Sheyeratzeh es chavairo*” could be interpreted as “Make the other person want you.” How can you make someone else want you? Rav Shlomo Wolbe provides an answer based on the *Mishna* (*Avos* 3:15) where Rabbi Yishmael says to receive every person “*B’simcha,*” which most interpret as “cheerfully” or “with happiness.” Rav Wolbe says in *Alei Shor II* p. 325 that *Simcha* is *connection*, and, more specifically, any time that there is a connection between complimentary pairs such as the heavens and the earth, man and woman, soul and body, *Simcha* is created. This *Simcha*, which is created by a connection with another, makes one party “want” the other one. By extending these relationships to ourselves and our fellow Jews, we can promote *Achdus* among our people. Here are some suggestions.

When a new person comes to shul, take the initiative to make him feel welcome by saying “*Shalom aleichem*” and introducing yourself. It is always touching to see how favorably people react to the warmth of the *Rav* and fellow congregants who do this, and to see how much welcoming visitors contributes to *Ahavas Yisrael*. The students at the famed Talmud Torah of Kelm were known for taking the initiative to warmly greet newcomers.

And how about the person that sits in the back row in the corner? Do you know him? Have you introduced yourself to him? He is a gem of a fellow Jew, and you should try to get to know him. On *Shabbos* evening, it is quite enjoyable to wish “Good *Shabbos*” to different people entering and leaving the shul. One can get immense pleasure connecting to new people and strengthening Jewish brotherhood.

Kiddushim, *Simchas*, and public gatherings are other excellent venues to connect with new people. While waiting for the *Chuppah* or at a table in the wedding hall, we often find ourselves sitting near people we do not know. Instead of just sitting there or talking to someone you already know, take the initiative to introduce yourself and connect with a new person or someone you may not know so well. There was someone in our community who used to specifically ask the wedding host to seat him at a table with people he did not know. He appreciated the opportunity to connect with new people and learn from them.

Another way to strengthen connection is to greet people warmly by name. At the start of *Parshas Vayikra*, the *Pasuk* says that Hashem “...called to Moshe.” Rashi says that the call consisted of a loving pronouncement of Moshe’s name. Someone once approached Rav Aharon Feldman, the *Rosh Yeshiva* of Ner Yisroel, with a question. Before answering the person’s question, the Rosh Yeshiva asked, “What’s your name?” After receiving an answer to his question, and prior to departing, the Rosh Yeshiva asked once more, “What’s your name again?” By asking for his name, Rav Feldman was creating a connection with the person, and not just answering his question.

In his book *How to Win Friends and Influence People*, Dale Carnegie writes, “We should be aware of the magic contained in a name and realize that this single item is wholly and completely owned by the person with whom we are dealing...and nobody else.

The name sets the individual apart; it makes him or her unique among all others. The information that we are imparting takes on special importance when we approach the situation with the name of the individual. The name will work magic as we deal with others.” He adds, “If you remember my name, you pay me a subtle compliment; you indicate that I have made an impression on you. Remember my name, and you add to my feeling of importance.”

When *Meshulachim* come to your door or you see them in shul, take a few extra seconds to look at the name on his card and say “Reb Chaim, *Hatzlacha* with your *Parnassa*,” or “Rabbi Rabin, *Mazal tov* on the *Chasuna* of your daughter,” or “Reb Shmuel, *Refuah sheleima*.” Once, a *Meshulach* approached a person for a second consecutive day and the person remembered the *Meshulach*’s name from the first time he met him. As he was giving money, he said “Reb Moshe, nice to see you again.” Reb Moshe responded, “Thank you for the money and thank you for remembering my name. That makes me feel respected.”

Once, when someone was checking out at a local drugstore, he looked at the name tag pinned to the front of the cashier’s shirt and said, “Thank you, Joseph; have a nice day.” Joseph appeared stunned, then looked at his name tag, smiled, and said “Wow, thank you for noticing my name. You made my day.”

By now you should see how taking initiative to greet someone by name strengthens connection and Jewish brotherhood. But, you may be thinking, “I am just not very good at names. I forget them.” Most people do not forget a name, but rather, they do not make the small effort to remember the name in the first place. Here is a simple way to help you remember names. When you introduce yourself to someone, include your first and last name, make eye contact, give a warm smile, a firm handshake, and ask him for his name. Then repeat

the person's name, "Nice to meet you, Reuven." The person will feel even more respected if you repeat his name both at the beginning of the conversation and at the end, just as the Rosh Yeshiva did.

You will be surprised by how your ability to remember names improves just by taking a few seconds to concentrate and repeat the person's name. In addition, show a genuine interest in the person, and try to associate some facts about him with his name. This will help you fix names indelibly in your mind.

There is an additional reason to take the initiative to connect with your fellow Jew. When you do so, you honor Hashem Himself. The *Pasuk* (*Shmuel* 1 2:30) quoted in the *Mishna* (*Avos* 4:1) says "... *Kee mechabdyde achabaid, uvozai yaikalu* (Those who honor Me, Hashem, I shall honor, and those who scorn Me shall be degraded)." Is Hashem so focused on His honor that He only honors those who honor Him? The *Tiferes Yisroel* explains that just as everyone is created *B'tzelem Elokim* (in the image of Hashem), so too, Hashem is found in all of His creations. Therefore, Hashem says that giving honor to a person is like giving honor to Him. Furthermore, the word in the *Pasuk* is not "*Mechabdee*" with a *Chirik*, which would mean the one who honors Me alone, but rather, the word is "*Mehabdyde*" with a *Patach*, which is plural and includes all His creations. Therefore, those who recognize the value of all of Hashem's creations regardless of authority or status and connect with them by taking the initiative to greet them by name, those are the ones Hashem honors. And by doing so, Hashem will be *Merutzeh* and pleased with our deeds.

The Power of Speech

R' Yehuda Schoemann

Why does Yom Kippur davening start with *Kol Nidrei*? What is the connection between *Nedarim*, vows, and the holiest day of the year? In order to understand the reasoning for this arrangement we must first explore the significance of a *Neder*.

A *Neder* is when someone declares something to be forbidden to benefit from it. Should the maker of the *Neder* derive benefit from the thing which he or she declared forbidden, they have committed an *Issur d'oraisa*, they have transgressed a prohibition from the Torah itself. For example, if one declares "Apples are forbidden to me", then apples are considered *Assur d'oraisa* to him.

How did this happen? Where did this ability come from to create *Issurim*? The answer is that it come from a person's own power of speech. A simple utterance has an incredible binding power.

It is for this very concept that our Sages deemed it vital to start Yom Kippur davening with *Kol Nidrei*. The message could not be clearer; we may not have the *Bais Hamikdash*, or the *Kohanim*, or *Korbanos* through which we can achieve atonement, but we do have *Tefilla*. Our *Tefillos* may seem like mere words, but they are so much more. Our words even have the awesome power to create *Issurim d'orisa*. Our Sages are reminding us that it is with this *Koach hadibur*, this power of speech, that we are about to pour out our hearts to *Shamayim* and ask for forgiveness and a year of health and prosperity. May we be *Zocheh* to have our *Tefillos* answered and merit *Yeshuos* and a *Gmar Chasima Tova*.

A Sukkah at Har Sinai

R' Heshy Roskes

The first *Mishnah* in *Sukkah* gives the maximum height of a *Sukkah* as 20 *Amos*. The *Amoraim* (*Sukkah* 2a-b) give three explanations for this ruling:

1. Rabbah derives it from the *Pasuk* that gives the reason we are commanded to live in *Sukkos*: "So that we know that Hashem gave our ancestors *Sukkos* in which to live in the desert (*Vayikra* 23:43)." If the *Sukkah* is too tall, you cannot see the *S'chach*, so you do not know that you're living in a *Sukkah*.

2. Rabbi Zeira says it is because of a different prophetic verse which says that in the times of Mashiach, "[Hashem will give us] a *Sukkah* to provide shade from the sun and shelter and protection from rain (*Yeshayahu* 4:7)." This verse implies that part of the definition of a *Sukkah* is that it produces shade beneath it. If the *Sukkah* is too tall, the shade is produced by the walls, not the *S'chach*.

3. Rava says it is because a *Sukkah* is supposed to be a temporary residence. A *Sukkah* that is too tall is by its nature a more permanent structure, which is not temporary enough to be used for the *Mitzvah*.

The *Gemara* then tries to correlate laws given by various other *Amoraim* with the reasons given by the three aforementioned *Amoraim*:

1. Rabbi Yoshiya says in the name of Rav that if the walls extend all the way up to (and touch) the *S'chach*, the *Sukkah* may be taller than 20 *Amos*. This follows Rabbah's opinion. Because your eyes

follow the walls up to where the walls meet the *S'chach*, it enables you to see the *S'chach* even if it is higher than 20 *Amos*.

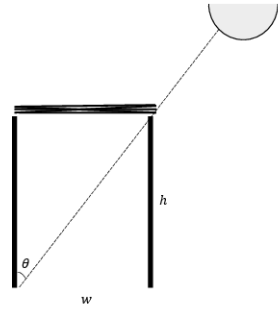
2. Rav Huna says in the name of Rav that if the length of the *Sukkah* walls is more than 4 *Amos*, the *S'chach* may be taller than 20 *Amos*. This follows Rabbi Zeira's opinion because in a wider *Sukkah*, the *S'chach* provides shade without interference from the walls.

3. Rav Chanan bar Rabbah says in the name of Rav that if the length of the *Sukkah* walls is more than the minimum 7 *Tefachim*, the *S'chach* may be higher than 20 *Amos*. The *Gemara* says that this opinion doesn't follow any of the three explanations. Tosfos suggest that Rav Chanan bar Rabbah's reasoning is because a very tall and narrow *Sukkah* looks like a chicken coop rather than a *Sukkah*. The Meiri, on the other hand, says that his reason for the 20 *Amos* cutoff is because of shade, like Rabbi Zeira, but he disagrees with Rav Huna on how large a *Sukkah* must be to ensure that its shade is provided by the *S'chach* and not the walls.

I would like to explore Rabbi Zeira's reason, as explained by Rashi, in more depth. Rashi says that the reason there is no shade when the *Sukkah* is too tall is because the shade of one wall overlaps the shade from the other wall, so there is no need for *S'chach*. (See also the Ritva who explains differently.)

The *Gemara* seems to imply that if a *Sukkah* is any wider than 4 *Amos*, there is no longer any limitation on its height. Tosfos, in their first explanation, suggest that what the *Gemara* really means is that the height/length ratio cannot be greater than 5.

The existence of shade also depends on the angle of the sun, as shown in the figure on the right, which depends on the time of day, time of year, and latitude. It is worthwhile figuring out the time and location where Rashi's explanation of the Talmud works out exactly. Can we find a significant location where the cutoff is $h=20$ Amos

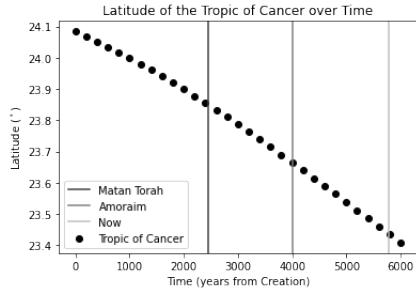


for a *Sukkah* of width $w=4$ Amos, as the *Mishnah* says? I would like to propose that the answer is yes and, in the process, shed some light on the mysterious *Halachah* of Rav Chanan bar Rabbah, which the Talmud leaves unexplained.

At the equinox, which falls out around *Sukkos*, the location where Rav Huna's *Halachah* corresponds to the actual angle of the sun is $\theta = \tan^{-1} \frac{4 \text{ amos}}{20 \text{ amos}} = 11.3^\circ$. This is the latitude of northern Ethiopia, further south than almost any Jewish community at the time of the Talmud. If we turn the *Sukkah* so that its diagonal faces north to south, the effective width is a factor of $\sqrt{2}$ larger, and Rav Huna's angle is $\theta = \tan^{-1} \frac{4\sqrt{2} \text{ amos}}{20 \text{ amos}} = 15.8^\circ$. This line of latitude intersects Yemen, but despite the importance of the Yemenite Jewish community in preserving ancient traditions, their remoteness makes it difficult to imagine that the *Amoraim* in Babylon would have written the *Halachah* based on Yemen. The equinox is, therefore, not going to be relevant for our calculations.

How about the summer solstice? Using the solstice as our reference point is, in fact, logical. We can define a *Sukkah* (a temporary dwelling) as something that provides shade during a specific point in time, and that one time during the year would be the summer solstice. (The Ritva makes a similar point as part of his explanation.)

At the summer solstice, the sun is directly overhead at the Tropic of Cancer, latitude θ_{TC} , which currently is at 23.44° N, but changes over time, as the plot on the right¹ shows. At the time of Rav Huna (approximately 250 CE), it was at 23.66° N, and the location where a 4 *Amah* wide by 20 *Amah* tall *Sukkah* provided shade was at $\theta_{TC} + \tan^{-1} \frac{4 \text{ amos}}{20 \text{ amos}} = 34.97^\circ$ N. This line of latitude intersects Iraq, but somewhat north of the Jewish population centers at the time. The *Yeshivos* of Pumbedisa and Nehardaa were both near 33.4° N, while the *Yeshiva* of Sura was even further south at 31.9° N² At these locations, a 3.4 *Amah* wide by 20 *Amah* tall *Sukkah* was enough to give shade.



Let's step away from Rav Huna for the moment and move to the *Halachah* of Rav Chanan bar Rabbah, who says that the 20 *Amah* height limit is for a *Sukkah* with a width of 7 *Tefachim*. As explained by the Meiri, Rav Chanan also follows Rabbi Zeira who correlates the height limit to shade, but he disagrees with Rav Huna regarding the size of a *Sukkah* needed so that the *S'chach* provides shade as opposed to the walls.

Let's travel a little further back in time. At the time of *Matan Torah*, θ_{TC} was 23.85° . At the summer solstice, a minimum-length 20-*Amah*-tall *Sukkah* whose diagonal was on the north-south axis

1. Created based on Table 8 from J. Laskar, *Secular Terms of Classical Planetary Theories Using the Results of General Theory*, 1986
 2. <http://archive.diarna.org/site/detail/public/396/>; <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nehardea>; https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sura_Academy

would have provided shade at $23.85^\circ + \tan^{-1} \frac{7\sqrt{2} \text{ tefachim}}{4 \text{ amos}} = 28.56^\circ \text{ N}$. This is almost exactly the latitude of the mountain known in Arabic as *Jebel Musa*, which is commonly identified as *Har Sinai*.³

Based on this, we can propose the following development of the *Halachah* according to Rabbi Zeira, Rav Huna, and Rav Chanan bar Rabbah:

Hashem first taught the laws of *Sukkos* to *Moshe Rabbeinu* at *Har Sinai* and told him that the *Sukkah* must be able to provide shade. At that time and place, the tallest, minimally-sized *Sukkah* that could theoretically provide shade was 20 *Amos* tall. At some later point in time, a *Machlokes* developed: must the *Sukkah* be able to provide shade at the particular place where it is standing and in its current orientation, or do we use *Har Sinai* as our reference point? Rav Huna ruled that it depends on the current location and orientation of the *Sukkah*, and in *Bavel*, the length cutoff was a little under 4 *Amos*. Since this is not a fundamental *Halachah*, but rather comes from a calculation based on the time and place, he rounded up 4 *Amos* to be *Machmir*. As an additional *Chumra*, he also required that the *Sukkah* be valid however you turn it, and he therefore required the length of the sides, not just the diagonal, to be 4 *Amos* long, even if the diagonal faces the sun. Rav Chanan bar Rabbah, on the other hand, ruled that the calculations valid at *Har Sinai* may be used everywhere and that we can imagine rotating the *Sukkah* so that the sun is on its diagonal. Consequently, the smallest possible *Sukkah* is our permanent reference point.

If we were to follow Rav Huna's opinion, it would have relevant *Halachic* implications for people living in places like Alaska, northern Canada, Scandinavia, or Russia. For instance, in Anchorage, Alaska,

3. <https://www.google.com/maps/place/Jabal+Mousa/@28.5395242,33.9709379,16z/>

the length to height ratio of the *Sukkah* would need to be 0.78, which would invalidate tall and narrow pop up *Sukkos*. In practice, we follow Rava.⁴ This mostly has strict applications because none of the leniencies of Rabbi Yoshiya, Rav Huna, or Rav Chanan apply, but it also results in leniencies, as it would allow a tall and narrow *Sukkah*, even at northern latitudes.

My friend Rabbi Don Cantor pointed out a beautiful hint to this from the *Gemara*. Rabbi Zeira's explanation is based, as referenced above, on *Yeshayahu* 4:7, "V'Sukkah tihyeh l'tzeil yomam meichoreiv, (A *Sukkah* will provide shade by day from the sun [and a refuge from rain])." The *Sukkah* is described as a protection from sun, *Meichoreiv*, but we can also explain the word as *MeiChoreiv*, from "Choreiv," another name for *Har Sinai*, where the *Halachah* applied as originally stated according to R' Chanan bar Rabbah.

4. See *Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim* 633:1

The Seven Sukkos of Olam Haboh

Rabbi Yaakov and R' Rafi Lipsky

The *Gemara* in *Bava Basra* 75a speaks about *Olam Haboh*:

ואמר רבה אמר ר' יוחנן עתיד הקב"ה לעשות שבע חופות לכל צדיק וצדיק שנא' וברא ד' על כל מכון הר ציון ועל מקראה ענן יומם ועשן ונגה אש להבה לילה כי על כל כבוד חפה...[וסכה תהיה לצל]...מלמד שכל אחד ואחד עושה לו הקב"ה חופה לפי כבודו (בבא בתרא עה).

Rebbi Yochanan learns from a mysterious passage in *Yeshaya* (4:5) that in the future, seven separate canopies will be fashioned for every *Tzaddik*. "And Hashem will create over the whole habitation of Har Tzion, and over those who are invited to it, (1)a cloud and (2) smoke by day, and (3) shine of a (4) fire (5) flaming by night; for over all the glory shall be a (6) canopy,...[a (7) *Sukkah* for shade ...]"

From this we learn that every *Tzaddik* will receive the *Chuppah* he or she deserves.

We would not be wrong to quickly acknowledge that these are among the hidden secrets of the future that we cannot pretend to comprehend. However, the Maharsha makes a brief comment that may offer at least some level of understanding for even us simple folk. He comments, "The *Chuppah*s in the future will be in the merit of the *Mitzvah* of *Sukkah* which was fulfilled in this world. And because it is a seven-day *Mitzvah*, there will be seven of them."

Sounds simple enough, perhaps too simple. It raises its own new set of questions:

1) We have 612 other *Mitzvos*. Why is *Sukkah* the *Mitzvah* that determines one's eternal situation?

2) True, the *Mitzvah* of *Sukkah* lasts for seven days, but isn't it all one *Mitzvah*? And if it is a separate fulfillment each time one goes in and makes a *Beracha*, then the sum could far exceed seven! Why is the number of days significant?

3) And why seven *Chuppos* and not seven *Sukkos*? *Chuppah* has a very specific connotation which relates to the *Mitzvah* of marriage. It seems that *Chuppah* and *Sukkah* seem to be treated as if they are interchangeable.

When the *Mishna* (*Sukkah* 28b) describes the *Mitzvah* of dwelling in a *Sukkah*, it is not content with merely saying what to do. It also says what to **undo**:

“For seven days, establish yourself in your *Sukkah* and **disestablish your home.**” The *Gemara* explains how to accomplish this, “Nice furnishings should be removed from the home and brought up to the *Sukkah*.”

The Rambam (*Hilchos Sukkah* 6:5), in codifying these two statements, makes two subtle changes. First, he reverses the order to reflect the chronology; exiting from the home actually precedes entering into the *Sukkah*. He writes, “For all seven days a person makes his home unsubstantial and his *Sukkah* substantial.” Second, he omits the relocation concept. He simply states that the *Sukkah* requires nice things to be able to live there comfortably. It is inconsequential whether this comes at the expense of denuding the home. Go to Sukkah Depot and buy nice *Sukkah* stuff. Leave the home out of this.

Whereas the Rambam is providing the logical and chronological steps for what to **do**, the *Gemara*, through its non-chronological order and its instruction to reduce the home, is giving guidance in how to **undo**. It is not uncommon that, for practical reasons, the performance of a *Mitzvah* necessitates an “undoing”. To put on *Tefillin*, the jacket may have to be removed and the sleeve rolled up. But that is not a part of *Mitzvas Tefillin*. To answer the door and greet a guest, one may have to put down his book. But that is not part of *Hachnasas orchim*. In contrast, leaving the home is clearly not just a necessary preparation. According to the order in which the *Gemara* presents this *Halacha*, it implies that even after already sitting in the *Sukkah*, an integral goal and accomplishment of the *Sukkah* is the de-emphasis of the home. “For seven days, establish yourself in your *Sukkah* **and disestablish your home.**”

To fully appreciate this, we must digress. There is another *Mitzvah* where *Chazal* have seemingly flouted chronology. Marriage is a two-step process. First there is *Kiddushin*, accomplished by the *Chosson* giving the *Kallah* a ring. Then comes *Nisuin*, when the *Chosson* shelters the *Kallah* under his roof, whether that means the *Chuppah*, the seclusion room, or his *Tallis*. *Kiddushin* first and then *Chuppah*. Yet, in the *Beracha* made under the *Chuppah*, the order is reversed: “He has forbidden to us those who are betrothed (through *Kiddushin*) and permitted to us those wed (through *Nisuin*) by means of **Chupah v’kiddushin.**” Note that it does not say “*Kiddushin v’chuppah.*”

The beginning of the *Beracha* clarifies that *Kiddushin* actually accomplishes nothing in the way of bringing the young couple any closer to one another. “He has **forbidden to us** those who are betrothed.” At this step, all that is accomplished is prohibition and limitation. In the language of the Rabbis, it is called *Kiddushin*

because the wearer of this ring is henceforth forbidden to the whole world, like *Hekdesh*, something which is sanctified and off limits. A minute ago, there were over three billion possibilities (if one takes the potential of *Geirus* into account), and now, with this ring, there is only one.

It is only in step two that they join to form a unit: "*Chosson* with the *Kallah*." So why not skip right to the chase? Why do we need *Kiddushin*? The Torah has augmented the Jewish marriage so that it can be fully optimized. This union, to be all it can be, has a necessary prerequisite- the exclusion of all others. And the couple is to sit with that for a while. Only afterwards are they ready for union. The Torah actually further ordains a post-requisite. It is not sufficient to spend a few minutes under the *Chuppah* and then go back to one's busy life. As the Rambam expresses it (*Hilchos Ishus* 10:12), "They should rejoice together for seven days, avoiding any work or business in the market." Seven days of exclusive time with each other, guarded from any peripheral diversion. We see that both the prerequisite (*kiddushin*) and the post-requisite (the seven days of rejoicing) have the same goal. *For this to be a most perfect union, it requires the disengagement of all outside distractions.* With this, we answer all of our questions.

The *Beracha* of marriage is not interested in chronology. It clarifies that although the goal is union, a union is only fully achievable insofar as there is an accompanying *Kiddushin*. *Kiddushin* is thus a modifier to the *Chuppah*, a union achieved through exclusivity. "*Chuppah* [enhanced by] *Kiddushin*."

Our eternal future is appropriately described as a *Chuppah*, wherein we will be forever united with our Creator. But in this world, we are, out of necessity, quite busy with our earthly adobe,

our homes, our possessions. How can we, in such a state, lay the cornerstone of our eternal *Chuppah*?

The *Mitzvah* of *Sukkah* gives us a taste of “*Chupah v'kiddushin*” (union achieved through exclusivity). For seven days, we disengage from our home, and fully establish our *Chuppah*. The undoing of our home is what enables the re-orientation away from our worldly focus and towards uniting with our Creator. Going into the *Sukkah* cannot just be a quick visit to snatch a meal. As with the seven days of *Chosson* and *Kallah*, to transform our orientation takes a full week. Then, even though we return to our home, we have experienced a bond that we can carry with us all the way to the next world.

Not everyone is equally successful at this transformation. The degree to which one progresses in this task for the seven days of *Sukkos* will determine the corresponding increase in one's eternal habitation, the *Chuppos* of *Olam Haboh*. Then each *Tzaddik* will get the *Chuppah* that he achieved with his *Sukkah*.

כדי לערבב את השטן

ר' דוד איגל

מצינו כמה מנהגים השייכים לראש השנה שמטרתם "לערבב השטן", ומהם:

(א) מה שתוקעים בשופר בימי חודש אלול, הוא כדי לערבב את השטן, שלא יבין מתי יהיה ראש השנה.

(ב) מטעם זה נמי אין תוקעין בערב ראש השנה - כי אז יסבור השטן שכבר עבר יום הדין.

(ג) הא דמתחילין לקרות פרשת בראשית בשמחת תורה ולא בראש השנה הוא כדי שלא יבין השטן אם הוא ראשית שנה או אחרית שנה.

(ד) אין מזכירים ראש חודש בתפילות ראש השנה כדי שלא ידע שהיום הוא ראש חודש תשרי ולא יבא לקטרג.

וקשה, הלא ה"שטן" הוא מלאך, והוא עצמו בא לבי"ד של מעלה בראש השנה, כמפורש בספר איוב (א', ו'), שהשטן בא ביום הדין (בראש השנה) בתוך בני האלוקים "להתייצב על ה'". ולכן צ"ע, איך אפשר "לערבבו" ולהטעותו כדי שלא יידע איזה יום ראש השנה? והלא הוא בעצמו בא לבי"ד באותו היום? ועוד דבר פשוט ומפורסם הוא, וגם נדפס בלוח, איזה יום הוא ראש השנה?

ועי' בספר אוצרות המועדים שתירץ ע"פ הגמ' ראש השנה דף טז. וז"ל הגמ' "א"ר יצחק ... למה תוקעין ומריעין כשהן יושבין ותוקעין ומריעין כשהן עומדים, כדי לערבב השטן". ופי' רש"י שם ד"ה כדי לערבב וז"ל "שלא ישטין כשישמע שישראל מחזיבין את המצוות מסתמין דבריו" עכ"ל. היינו, כששומע השטן שישראל אינם מסתפקים ב"תוקעין ומריעין" פעם אחת, אלא לאחר דתוקעין תקיעות דמיושב חוזרים ותוקעים פעם שנית תקיעות דמעומד, הרי זה מראה על חיבתם היתירה למצוות ה', ובזה סותם דברי השטן המקטרג.

ובזה רוצה ה"אוצרות המועדים" לפרש הב' מנהגים הראשונים הנ"ל - דאין מטרת ה'ערבוב' כדי שאינו ניכר איזה יום הוא ראש השנה, אלא הוא 'ערבוב' במה שהוא סותם דברי הקטרוג של השטן וכמו שנבאר בסמוך.

עניין התקיעות דחודש אלול הוא, כידוע, "כדי להזהיר ישראל שיעשו תשובה". וכמו שכתוב "אם יתקע שופר בעיר ועם לא יחרדו", דהשופר מעורר חרדה ויראה, ומביא לידי התעוררות תשובה. ולכן, ע"י פעולה זו גופא, שישראל תוקעים בשופר ומתעוררים בתשובה, נעשה השטן מעורבב בחשבו שע"י התשובה דחודש אלול כבר זכו ישראל בדין (באלול) ובזה "מסתמין דבריו" דאין שום תועלת עוד בקטרוגו.

וזהו פירוש המילים "לא יבין מתי יהיה ראש השנה", לאו שהשטן אינו יודע מה שכתוב מפורש בלוח, מתי הזמן דראש השנה, אלא שאינו יודע מתי נעשית העניין והתוכן המיוחד דראש השנה - הדין ומשפט (וכמפורש בלשון מהרי"ל: "ואין יודע מתי הדין ויקטרג"). דכיון שישראל כבר עשו תשובה בחודש אלול, קודם שבא ראש השנה, הרי דינם נחתם לטובה כבר בחודש אלול, ובודאי כבר נכתבו ונחתמו בספרן של צדיקים. ולכן נעשה השטן מעורבב בחשבו שע"י התעוררות התשובה דחודש אלול כבר זכו ישראל בדין, עד כדי כך שקטרוגו בראש השנה אינו לתועלת.

ובזה מבואר גם מה שאין תוקעין בערב ראש השנה, שאז יסבור השטן שכבר עבר יום הדין. והיינו, דכדי לערבב את השטן עוד יותר, גם מבטלים בערב ראש השנה את מנהג התקיעות. וכאילו שאנחנו אומרים, "כבר אין אנו צריכים להתעוררות התשובה ע"י תקיעות אלו, מאחר שכבר זכינו בדין!"

אלא דלכאורה, אין ביאור זה מספיק לפרש הב' מנהגים האחרונים הנ"ל (מה שאין מזכירין ראש חודש בתפילות ראש השנה ומה שאין מתחילין מסיימים התורה בר"ה) שהלשון "שלא ידע שהיום ראש חודש ולא יבא לקטרג" משמע שמה שלא יבא לקטרג משום שאינו יודע שהיום ר"ח כיון שאין מזכירין ר"ח בתפילתנו, ולא משום שהוא סובר שכבר זכו ישראל בדין באופן כ"כ מושלם עד שאינם צריכים לעוד זכויות כראש חודש. וגם מה שאין מסיימים ומתחילין התורה בר"ה הוא כדי שלא יבין אם הוא ראשית השנה או אחרית השנה, ולא משום שאינם צריכים לאותו זכות.

ולבאר הב' מנהגים אחרונים הנ"ל, כ' ה"אוצרות המועדים" דע"י שכלל ישראל חסרים בעבודתם ע"י ה"אי זכירת" ר"ח וע"י מה שאין מסיימים ומתחילין התורה בר"ה, חושב השטן, שיש חסרון בעבודת ישראל וא"כ בודאי לא יזכו בדין, ואין צורך להתאמץ עוד ולחפש חסרונות נוספים שלהם.

והשטן אינו מבין שיש באמת תועלת להא דנמנעים מהני ב' דברים, זכירת ר"ח והתחלת התורה (מלבד התועלת דערבוב השטן). וזה מבואר ע"פ מה שכ' רבינו הזקן, בעל התניא, בספרו לקוטי תורה, דהתעוררות התשובה דראש השנה צריכה להיות באופן "קול היוצא מפנימיות הלב". והדרך לבוא לזה היא "על ידי המרירות שבנפשו על ריחוקו מה' אשר רחוק ממנו בתכלית". וזה ה"ריחוק מה'" מורגש אצל האדם באופן חזק ביותר ע"י התבוננותו במה שמונעים ממנו את העניינים טובים הנ"ל, הזכות דר"ח והזכות דהתחלת התורה, כדי "לערבב השטן". דבזה נרגש אצלו גודל ירידתו - שלשטן יש כלפיו כוח כה חזק, עד שמוכרחים משום כך ליטול ממנו את הזכרת ראש חודש והתחלת התורה! עד כאן תמצית דברי ה"אוצרות המועדים".

ואנחנו צריכים להכיר את זה. זאת ההכרה, כמה שאנחנו רחוקים מה', והמרירות הלב הבא ממנו, צריכים למעורר אותנו לשוב לה' בתשובה שלמה ולשפוך שיחנו לפניו מעומק לבנו בזה יום הדין. ובזה יש לבאר נמי מה שאומרים הקאפיטל "שיר המעלות ממעמקים" בין ישתבח לברכו. ולכאור' צ"ע, דהדין הוא שאסור להפסיק בין "ישתבח" ל"יוצר אור", וא"כ איך אנו מפסיקים לומר "שיר המעלות"? ובאמת, המג"א הניח מנהג זה בצ"ע. ואף שהערוך השלחן (אור"ח סי' נ"ד ס"ב) מתרץ שלא מקרי הפסק אלא בדברי חול, מ"מ למה אנחנו מוכרחים לומר אותו דווקא הכא, בין ישתבח ליוצר אור? למה לא אמרינן אותו בסוף התפילה, וכמו שאנו עושים ב"ברכי נפשי" ו"לדוד" וכדומה?

ועל פי מה שכתבנו אתי שפיר. כשאנחנו קוראים בקול רם את המילים "המלך יושב על כסא רם ונשא", וכשאנחנו אומרים "גדול בתשבות קל ההודאות אדון הנפלאות", מיד נזדעזנו מהכרת גדלותו ורוממותו, ולהיפך, מהכרת שפלותינו והריחוק בינינו ובין מלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה. ולכן באותו שעה דווקא, כשאנחנו מכירים את גדול ריחוקנו מה', אנחנו מוכרחים

לקראות לה' מעומק לבנו, ב"קול היוצא מפנימיות הלב", שבאותו שעה התשובת הוא חזק ומושלם ביותר.

אולם, זאת המרירות אינו סתירה לשמחה. עבודתנו צריך להיות גם בשמחה ובטוב לבב ולא מתוך יאוש ועצבות. יאוש הוא "שלא מדעת", הוא ההיפך מעבודת ה'. המרירות בא מחמת ההכרה שאנחנו צריכים לעשות עוד יותר כדי להתקרב לבוראנו. השמחה בא מחמת הערכת עד כמה כבר התקרבנו אליו. אינם סותרים זה את זה, אדרבה שניהם משלימים עבודת האדם. יה"ר שע"י שאנחנו חוזרים בתשובה ומתפללים להקב"ה מתוך פנימיות לבנו, שנתערבב השטן ונסתתמו קטרוגו, ושיוצאנו כולנו לחיים טובים ולשלום.

תוספת חול על הקודש

ר' יוני שומן

יש מצוה להוסיף מחול על הקודש כמו שנמצא בגמרא ראש השנה דף ט. שנחלקו ר' עקיבא ור' ישמעאל מנין לתוספת קדושה (בשביעית) מן התורה. לפי ר' עקיבא המקור מ"חריש ובקציר", שאינו נצרך לשביעית עצמו, ולכן נלמד ממנו לחריש של ערב שביעית הנכנס לשביעית וקציר של שביעית היוצא למוצאי שביעית. תוס' ד"ה "ור' עקיבא" כתבו דר' עקיבא יליף משביעית שיש דין תוספת קדושה גם לשבת, לשאר ימים טובים, וליום כפור. וגם פסקו התוס' כר' עקיבא.

ולפי ר' ישמעאל המקור מ"ועניתם את נפשותיכם בתשעה" שיש מצוה להתחיל להתענות ערב יוהכ"פ משום תוספת קדושה. ור' ישמעאל ממשיך ללמוד מצות תוספת גם ביציאת יום כפור, שבת, וימים טובים על ידי עוד דרשות, והדרשה שבסוף מ"תשבתו שבתכם": 'כל מקום שיש בו שבות מוסיפין מחול על הקודש'.

יש סוגיא אחרת נוגע למצוה זו בגמרא יומא דף פא. הסוגיא שם עוסק בענין אזהרה לעינוי של יום כפור. יש מ"ד הובא בברייתא שם שממעט עונש ואזהרה של תוספת מלאכה ותוספת עינוי (מבעוד יום בתשעה לחודש) מפסוק של "בעצם היום הזה" (שממעט עדווקא באותו יום עצמו, בעשרה בחדש, יש אזהרה ועונש) שכתוב בין גבי איסור מלאכה ובין גבי עינוי. האזהרה ועונש של יוהכ"פ עצמו (דהיינו בעשירי לחודש) למד מג"ש "עצם" "עצם": מה מלאכה באזהרה אף עינוי באזהרה.

רש"י שם עמוד ב' ד"ה "ותנא דעצם עצם" כתב שממה שצריך מיעוט גבי תוספת עינוי, משמע שיש מצוות תוספת ליום כפור בתשעה בו (בין לענין מלאכה בין לענין עינוי), רק שנתמעט מעונש ואזהרה, דאל"כ מהיכא תיתי לרבות תוספת עינוי לעונש ואזהרה?

ויש גם מחלוקת אמוראים שם בענין אזהרה לעינוי. רב אחא בר יעקב למד מגז"ש "שבת שבתון" (שכתוב גבי עינוי) מאת שבת בראשית. ורב פפא

למד, בלי גז"ש, מהפסוק "תשבתו שבתכם" שיוהכ"פ גופיה נקרא שבת, ולכן אזהרת שבת עצמה שייך גם לעינוי יוהכ"פ בלי שום לימוד אחר. והגמ' מפרש דרב אחא יליף מהקרא ד"ועניתם את נפשותיכם" שיש מצוה של תוספת עינוי ביוה"כ, והקרא ד"תשבתו שבתכם" מלמד שיש מצוות תוספת אף גבי יום כפור ושבת וימים טובים, וכמו שס' ר' ישמעאל במסכת ראש השנה.

ופסק הרמב"ם בהלכות שביתת עשור פרק א' הלכה ו' וז"ל "וצריך להוסיף מחול על הקודש בכניסתו וביציאתו שנא' ועניתם את נפשותיכם בתשעה לחדש בערב כלומר התחיל לצום ולהתענות מערב תשעה הסמוך לעשירי וכן ביציאה שוהה מעט מליל אחד עשד סמוך לעשירי שנא' מערב ועד ערב תשבתו שבתכם" עכ"ל.

ומשמע מהרמב"ם כאן וכן ממה שלא נזכר מצות תוספת קדושה בדבריו גבי שבת ושאר ימים טובים, שאין מצוה תוספת קדושה מן התורה אלא בתוספת עינוי של יום כפור ולא באיסור מלאכה בין ביוכ"פ בין בשבתות. וצ"ע.

והמגיד משנה שם כ' שהרמב"ם פסק כר"ע מחבירו (ודלא כר' ישמעאל), ולא למד תוספת קדושה של יום כפורים אלא לענין יום כפורים עצמו (ולא כתוס' שס' דאף ר"ע למד לשאר מועדים בהיקש משביעית).

וכתב הב"ח (או"ח סימן תר"ד סעיף ג') שהרמב"ם פסק כרב פפא ביומא שגם הוא למד תוספת קדושה של עינוי יום כפור מ"ועניתם את נפשותיכם בתשעה", כמו רב אחא, (ומטעם זה הגמ' אינו הק' עליו האי' ועניתם את נפשותיכם מאי עביד ליה), רק שלפי ר' פפא לא נפק דין תוספת משם לשאר המועדים משום דלשיטתו כבר נצרך הקרא ד"תשבתו שבתכם" ללמוד ממנו האזהרה לעינוי של עצם יוה"כ.

ויש לעיין, שיש שכתבו בשיטת הרמב"ם (עיין ספר הררי קדם חלק א' סימן ס') שהאיסור מלאכה והחיוב עינוי של יוהכ"פ שניהם באים מחמת קדושת היום של יוהכ"פ. אם כן איך יכול הרמב"ם ללמוד מצות תוספת קדושה רק לענין עינוי ולא לענין מלאכה, אע"פ ששניהם שווין, ששניהם באים מחמת קדושת היום? וע"כ צריך לומר שיש ב' קדושות ליוהכ"פ,

והתוספת קדושה היא קדושה אחרת מקדושת היום דיוהכ"פ, ומחמתו בא רק תוספת עינוי. ועיין בהררי קדם סימן נ"ח שכתב כעין זה בפירוש הרמב"ם שיש קדושה של עצם היום, והוא כולל האיסור מלאכה, ויש עוד קדושה של "ערב" שבא רק לענין עינוי, ולכאורה תוספת עינוי הוא תולדה מסוג השני של קדושת היום דיוכ"פ.

מנהג נשיכת הפיטום בהוש"ר ומיתת משה רבינו ע"ה

יהושע זאב ווינטשל

בריש פ' ואתחנן כ' הרשב"ם וז"ל "בילמדנו פרשת שלח לך ואל תשאל לו בשעת נדרו מניין ממשה כשאמר לישראל שמעו נא המורים נשבע הקב"ה שלא יכנס לארץ שנא' לכן לא תביאו וגו' אמר משה שעת כעס ושעת שבועה היא איני מדבר עכשיו המתין שנה ואח"כ התחיל להתחנן לפניו שנא' ואתחנן אל ד' אמר הקב"ה בשביל שהמתנת שאר המתים יורדים לשאול ואתה תעלה שנא' עלה ראש הפסגה ותראה משם" עכ"ל הרשב"ם. ולכאור' צ"ע מה המדה כנגד מדה בזה?

ונראה לומר ע"פ מה שראיתי במטה אפרים סי' תר"ס סעיף ו' "נוהגת הנשים מעוברות ביום הוש"ר ליטול הפיטם של אתרוג ביום הוש"ר והטעם דאיכא מ"ד דעץ הדעת שאכל אדה"ר אתרוג היה ונותנים מעות לעניים שהקב"ה יציל אותה ולעוברת ממות ואומרת כך רבש"ע בשביל חוה שהיתה אוכלת מעץ הדעת גרם אותו חטא מיתה בעולם ואם הייתי באותו זמן לא הייתי אוכלת ולא הייתי נהנית ממנו כמו שלא רציתי לפסול אתרוג זה בז' ימי החג שעברו והיום שפסלתי אין בו מצוה וכשם שיש לי הנאה בפיטם זה כך הייתי נהנה לראות עץ הדעת שא' הקב"ה לאדם וחווה לא תאכל ולא הייתי עובר את צויו ותקבלני ברצון את תפלתי ואת תחינתי שלא אמות מלידה זו ותושיעני לילך בנחת ובלי צער ולא יהיה לי ולא לולדי שום נזק כי אתה הקל המושיע...". עכ"ל המטה אפרים.¹

וראיתי בשם הגרי"ד סולובייצ'יק זצ"ל² לבאר ענין זה דלפי המדרש העץ הדעת היה אסור רק קודם שבת ואילו היו אדם וחווה ממתינים עד השבת היה מותר להם לאכול ממנו (עי' באור החיים בראשית א, כ"ט שהביא כן מב"ר פכ"א). ולכן, המעוברת אומרת "ראה הקב"ה שהיה אתרוג בידי כל חג הסוכות ולא אכלתי ממנו עד לאחר החג שהותר במוצאי החג, כמו כן

1. וכן הוא בלקוטי מהרי"ח ח"ג, ועי' מה שכ' המנחת אלעזר ממונקאטש בנוגע למנהג זו בס' דרך. חיים ושלום.

2. Rabbi Aharon Ziegler, *Halakhic Positions of Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, Vol. I*

אילו הייתי שם בזמן החטא לא הייתי אוכלת ממנו עד לאחר השבת ובזכות זה הצל אותי ואת ולדי ממות..."

אלמא דחטא עץ הדעת היה מחמת שלא המתינו אדם וחוה לאכול ממנו עד לאחר השבת וזה היה מה שגרם מיתה בעולם דכ' "בזעת אפיך תאכל לחם עד שובך אל האדמה כי ממנה לקחת כי עפר אתה ואל עפר תשוב." ובוזה מובן המדה כנגד מדה בהמדרש הנ"ל, דמשה רבינו שהמתין להתפלל עד שעה רצויה, מה שלא היו אדם וחוה יכולים לעשות, ראוי שאותו קללה של "ואל עפר תשוב" לא קאי עליו, אלא "שאר מתים יורדים לשאול ואתה תעלה..." ויש אף מ"ד בסוטה יג: משה רבינו לא מת אלא עומד ומשרת לפני הקב"ה, ושמא המדרש ילמדנו הנ"ל ס' כוותיה.

ואנחנו שרויים בגלות כאלפיים שנה ובמשך הזמן היינו נרדפים ועשוקים נדרסים ונדחפים, ויש עילה ופתח להתייאש מהגאולה ולומר דאינו אלא תוחלת ממושכה שלבסוף מחלה לב, ח"ו, עם כל זה, אפי' בתוך האפילה, על סף המוות ממש, רבי רבבות מעמנו הקדושים, הי"ד, היו שרים בלב שלם ובמסירות נפשם את המילים "אני מאמין באמונה שלמה בביאת המשיח ואע"פ שיתמהמה עכ"ז אחכה לו בכל יום שיבא." וגם אנחנו, שארית הפליטה, לא פסק מפינו אותו אמונה עיקרית, וגם אנו אומרים בכל שנה בהושענות לשבת חוה"מ "כהושעת מודים ומיחילם ולא משנים כלנו אנו לקה ועינינו לקה שונים כן הושענא..." ושנה אחר שנה כלל ישראל יושבים בסוכות שלהם ואומרים "הרחמן הוא יקים לנו את סוכת דוד הנופלת" ומתפללים בכל שמיני עצרת ביציאתם מן הסוכה "כשם שקימתי וישבתי בסוכה זו כן אזכה לשנה הבאה לישב בסכת עורו של לויתן..." ועוד רבות כהנה, ובזכות זה שאנו ממתינים ומקווים להתגלות כבודו ולביאת משיחו יהי רצון שיבא יום שיבלע המות לנצח, יום שינחם ד' כל חרבות ציון וישם מדברה כעדן וערבתה כגן ד' במהרה בימינו. אכ"ר.

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