

מאת מו"ה ברוך הירשפלד שליט"א  
ראש כולל עטרת חיים ברוך קליבלנד הייטס

who go to great lengths to blow *shofar* for elderly people in old age homes, sick people (and their caretakers) in hospitals, or people who are home-bound for whatever reason. It is quite possible that they might arrive and find a bad odor from waste, etc., in the room. If one can correct the problem by spraying a room freshener, or the like, it should be done. (Most *Poskim* rule that this is not considered a *melacha* on *Yom Tov* and is permitted.) If nothing can be done about the smell, one can blow the *shofar*, however, without making the *beracha*. This is quite relevant today as many *chashuva yidden* give of their precious time on the *Yom Hadin* to walk great lengths and assist others who are in need. This was also prevalent in the past when various *Gedolim* and righteous people were imprisoned by evil gentiles in dungeons, under terrible conditions that had no proper plumbing or bathroom facilities, and were unable to daven due to the smell, but had chances to do *mitzvos*. As we said, they were permitted to fulfill the *mitzvos*, although they were prohibited from making *berachos* on those *mitzvos*.

**A Passing Mitzvah.** One might ask: what was the "רוח אבימל" (initial assumption) that a person should not be allowed to do a *mitzvah* in a place like a bath house? If one is forbidden, then how can one Jew do a *chessed* for another in a *mikvah*, like passing a towel, assisting an old man or helping another get dressed? Is it conceivable that these things should be forbidden? Well, there are two important points to consider. First, a מצוה "a passing *mitzvah*," which if not done right now will be lost forever, is more lenient. Second, a *mitzvah* that is not performed as a special *mitzvah* action, but is something that people will do anyway, like *chessed*, etc., is also different. If not for these two reasons, one indeed might have been forbidden.

## הוא היה צמר ...

**R' Zalman Sorotzkin ZT"l (HaDaeh V'Hadibur)** would say:

"The reason why we say: 'שנהיה לראש ולא לזנב' - '*May we be a head and not a tail*' is based on the *mishna* in *Avos* (ד-כ): '*Rather be a tail to (mighty) lions than a head to (lowly) foxes.*' On *Rosh Hashana*, we ask *Hashem* to make us even greater than the '*tail of a lion*,' by, in fact, making us the '*head of a lion*.' If so, then why don't we just say it clearly: '*May we be the head of a mighty lion*'? Because this is already a measure of arrogance and on this holy Day of Judgment, we must remove ourselves from any vestige of haughtiness."

**R' Shlomo Zalman Lifshitz ZT"l (Chemdas Shlomo)** would say:

"*Chazal* tell us that on *Rosh Hashana*, 'ספרי חיים וספרי מתים פתוחים לפניו' - '*Books of the living and books of the dead are open before Him.*' Why is it necessary to open the '*books of the dead*' - those who have already passed on? Because when a person gets judged, everything is taken into account, including who his ancestors were and in what way did they affect him. Perhaps if the root of his sin comes from previous generations, his punishment will not be as severe."

**R' Menachem Mendel Morgenstern ZT"l (Kotzker Rebbe)** would say:

"We don't eat nuts because 'אנו' (nut) is *gematria* 'טטא' (sin). But 'טטא' is also *gematria* 'טטא'!"

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### טיב התבלין

רעינות ופירושים לעזר את האדם לעבודת  
הש"ת והתחזקות באמונה ובסתחון מאת

**אם כבנים אם כעבדים. אם כבנים רחמינו כרחם אב על בנים ...** (תפילה אחר התקיעות) - "בנים אתם לה' אלקיכם"  
להוסיף נחת רוח כלפי שמיא, ואף אם מקיים הוא את המצווה כתיקונה, מכל מקום מידי בחינת עבד לא יצא.  
ענין זה צריך חיזוק גדול בזמננו, כי כשנתבונן נראה כי רוב מעשינו הם כמצוות אנשים מלומדה, כי מן הדאזי היה, שישכים האדם בשמחה עצומה, על אשר זכה ויכול הוא לבוא ולדבר עם המלך, ויקדים לבוא לבית הכנסת, מתוך השתוקקות מתי כבר יהיה מוכן לפתוח פיו ולמלאותה תהילה אל השי"ת, ועצם התפילה היה ראוי שתהיה מתוך חיות עצומה, בבחינת כל עצמותי תאמרנה, שהרי עומד הוא כעת לפני מלכו של עולם ומשבחו, אך לדאבונו אצל רוב ההמון שונים פני הדברים, באים הם לבית הכנסת ברקה האחרונה טרם התחלת התפילה, ולעיתים נכנסים כבר באמצע פסוקי דמרה, ורק אז מניחים טלית ותפילין, ומתחילים הם לבדך ברכת השחר, וכיוון שצריכים הם להתפלל תפילת העמידה עם הציבור, ממהרים הם לומר את הקרבנות והפסוקי דמרה מתוך מיעוט כוונה, וגם לאחר התפילה, יכולים להבחין בבני אדם הממהרים כבר לצאת, ומיד אחר ובא לציון כתר מסידים הטלית ותפילין, ותוך כדי תפילות מקפלים אותן, וטרם אמירת עלינו כבר עוברים את בית הכנסת, ונחפזים הם לעיסוקיהם, ומובן מאילי שאין זה לכבוד שמים, וכל זה מורה על בחי' עבד, כי התפילה היא עליהם כמשא, ואינם מתבוננים בגודל זכיותם לעמוד ולדבר לפני המלך, ואילו היו מתבוננים בגודל זכיותם היו מאריכים בתפילתם מתוך אהבה וכיסופין.  
והשיב הגדיר **מין הקהילת יעקב [הסטיפלער] זצ"ל** את מצבו של הדור הזה, באמרו שההבדל בין הדור הזה לדורות הקודמים הוא שהם ידעו שישנם תרי"ג מצוות ויש לקיימם, ואילו בדור הזה יודעים שישנם תרי"ג בעיות, ועלינו להסתדר עמם איך לצאת ידי חובתם. כמה צריך לחשוב ולהתבונן בהתבטאות חרה ונוקבת זו. על כן בימים אלו שבו אנו חפצים להיות נידונים כבנים, מוטל עלינו לתור אחר הדרכים המביאות לאהבה ה', ולהתבונן בגדולתו ורוממותו ית' ובגודל האושר שזכינו להיות קרובים אליו, ולעשות לפניו נחת רוח, כי מתוך התבוננות באלו הדברים אכן יזכה האדם להשיג האהבה.  
ואל יחשוב האדם שמחמת מיעוט השגותיו, אין לו היכולת ליכות לזה, שהרי כל אחד מישראל מצווה לקיים מצוה זו כמו שכתוב בתורה 'ואהבת את ה' אלוךך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך' ואילו לא היה ביכולת אחד מישראל ליכות בה לא הטילו עלינו מצוה זו, אלא ודאי הדבר הוא ביכולת כאו"א ללא שום ספק.  
וכשיזכה האדם לאהבה, או מלבד מה שיהיה נידון כבן, יזכה גם לכמה וכמה מעלות התלויים באהבה ה', שהרי אמרו חז"ל, (יומא פא) כי אינו דומה השב

was assemble one hundred men and line them up in front of the river. For no reason other than their intent to murder innocent human beings, the commandant then ordered the machine gun man to start shooting from right to left. Without a moment’s hesitation, the killer did as he was told and started shooting from the right side moving his gun in a row towards the left side, until he killed all one hundred men in cold blood.”

The man had tears in his eyes as he continued to recount the terrible story. “Now, when the shooting began, each and every man screamed out the words of *‘Shema Yisroel’* all together. However, the men on the right only had a chance to say the next words *‘Hashem Elokeinu’* (*Hashem*, our G-d) before they were cut down. They did not even manage to finish the entire *posuk*. These people were murdered *‘Al Sheim Kodshecha’* - as they said the Holy Name. The people on the left managed to stay alive for an extra few seconds and they were able to say the whole *posuk*, finishing with the words, *‘Hashem Echad.’* These people were slaughtered on *‘Yichudecha.’* *Hashem* should avenge both sets of people.”

When Reb Itzikel heard this *pshat*, emanating from a source so steeped in pain and torment, he could not stop crying for a long time afterwards.

**האינו השמים ואדברה ותשמע הארץ אמר פי וגו' (דברים לב-א)**

One year, the residents of Baranovitch in Poland, requested of the revered local *Rosh Yeshivah*, **R’ Elchanan Wasserman ZT”L HY”D**, to address them on *Shabbos Shuva*, and discuss the pathways to *Teshuvah* in anticipation of the upcoming holy day, *Yom Kippur*. Although he was reluctant to leave his *yeshivah* on this holy *Shabbos*, upon the insistence of the local townspeople, R’ Elchanan finally relented.

*Shabbos* afternoon, the entire synagogue was packed as R’ Elchanan walked to the podium, and began to speak: “We find in today’s *parsha* that *Moshe Rabbeinu* speaks to the heavens and earth and urges them to serve as witnesses to what he is about to say. *‘Listen, O’ heavens, and I will speak, and let the earth hear the words of my mouth.’* Doesn’t this seem somewhat arrogant,” asked R’ Elchanan, “that a human being, flesh and blood, orders around the heavens and earth? It certainly seems out of character for a person like *Moshe Rabbeinu*, who is known for his extreme humility.”

R’ Elchanan paused for a moment. “However, in his next words, *Moshe Rabbeinu* explains himself: *‘For the Name of Hashem I call, give honor to our G-d.’* Moshe here reminds us that he enlists the services of the heavens and earth not for his own purposes, not to further his own interests, but for the honor of the Almighty. And for *Hashem’s* honor one can make use of the entire creation, since every being and every creature is obligated to honor *Hashem!*”

Looking out at the assemblage of laymen, R’ Elchanan thundered, “Everyone wishes for all the best for the new year, that his fortune will see an abundance of blessing. But why? In what merit? For what purpose? If we wish for good for the sake of the honor of *Hashem* - a comfortable living to help us educate our children along the path of *Torah* and our marvelous tradition, good health to allow us to properly fulfill all the *mitzvos* and raise our children to *Torah* and *mitzvos* - if this is our perspective, then we can rightfully ask for all the goodness in the world, and we will receive it in plenty!”

With that, he stepped down and returned to the *Beis Medrash*. His *Shabbos Teshuvah derasha* was short and to the point, but enough to bring about a proper perspective on the Days of Judgment and our prayers during this time of year.

## משל למת הדבר דומה

**אדם יסודו מעפר וסופו לעפר משול כחרס הנשבר ... כרוח נושבת וכאבק פורח וכחלום יעוף (תפילת מוסף)**

**משל:** There was once a fellow who traveled to a faraway country to earn a living and support his family. It took quite some time, but he finally managed to make a nice *parnassa*, and he now prepared himself to return home to his anxious and grateful family. In honor of the glorious homecoming, he went out and bought himself a new suit so he can make a good impression when his family and friends see him. He realized, however, that the long train ride will surely crease his brand new suit, so he inquired if there is a tunnel that the train will go through so he can change into his suit while the train passes the dark tunnel before arriving at his destination.

Upon hearing that indeed there is a tunnel right before he has to get off, he decided to ride the entire trip in the train with his ripped and worn clothing and make a quick change in the darkness of the tunnel so no one should see him.

When the tunnel came, he removed his torn clothing and

lo and behold, before he had a chance to put on his new suit, the train pulled in to his destination and the man was left standing there totally undressed, full of shame and disgrace, much to the horror of his family who came to welcome him.

**גמטל:** The holy **Chofetz Chaim, R’ Yisroel Meir Hakohen Kagan ZT”L**, explains that this man made one grave mistake: he forgot to find out how long the tunnel was! Many times we become inspired to better ourselves, especially in the days before *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*. But we let it cool down and delude ourselves that we can always wait a little longer maybe a few days more before we truly need to repent and become better. Says the Chofetz Chaim, this is a tragic mistake. It’s just one of the strategies of the *yetzer hara*. *Rabbosai*, we never know! A person’s life and his years are in the hands of the *Ribono Shel Olam*. Who knows how much time he really has left?

בשמחה יש לו שכר אלף ידות יותר ממי שהמצוות עליו למשא, ומובא **מהא”י הקדוש** (ריש שער הכוונות) שזכה לכל מדרגותיו ע”י שקיים כל המצוות בשמחה עצומה, ומזבן מאליו שהדברים תלויים באהבת ה', כי מבלי שיזכה האדם לכך, לא יהיה ביכולתו לקיים המצוות מתוך שמחה. יעזור השי”ת שנוכה להמליכו עלינו מתוך אהבה, ובזכות זה נזכה להיות נידונים כבנים, ונזכה להכתב בספרן של צדיקים, לחיים טובים ולשנת גאולה וישועה.

**מאת הרב שלום פערל שליט”א מגיד משרים בק”ס בית שמש**

**תקעו בחודש שופר בכסה ליום חגנו כי חק לישראל הוא משפט לאלקי יעקב וגו' (תהלים פא) -תקיעת שופר'-/ביטול הדעת'**

ומבואר, שעניין 'תקיעת שופר' הוא 'ביטול הדעת אל ה'.

ויש להוסיף, שזה גם נרמז במה דאיתא בגמרא שם (כ”ט): “תנא דבי שמואל, כ’ל מלאכת עבודה לא תעשו’, יצתה תקיעת שופר ורדיית הפת שהיא חכמה ואינה מלאכה’, והרי עיקר החכמה הוא הביטול אל השורש - ה’, שהרי 'חכמה' היינו (קבלת) כח (וחיות) מה', ע”י אמוית) **מה'** (אנן, וביטול עצמו אליו) וכו'” (**שפת אמת**) [ראש השנה, שנת תר”ס, ריש ד”ה איתא תקיעת שופר וכו'].

וכיון ש’תקיעת שופר היא חכמה, כתב ה'**ערוך לנר'** (שם ד”ה שם בתוס' ד”ה אבל וכו'), שמה שכתבו התוס' (שם ד”ה רדיית הפת) “וכן תקיעת שופר אסור מדרבנן”, הוא משום ש’שהיא מעשה חכמה’ ובעי מחשבה, ודמי למלאכה שיש בה משום 'מלאכת מחשבת' (ע' ביצה [ג:] - 'זאילו גבי שבת וכו' מלאכת מחשבת אסרה תורה וכו'), ועפ”ז גם ביאר את מה שכתבו התוס' (שם ד”ה אבל וכו'), וא”ת, ומאי שנא שופר מלולב שהיה ניטל בשבת אפילו בגבולין בזמן שבהמ”ק קיים, כדמשמע בפרק לולב וערבה, שהיו מוליכין לולביהן לבית הכנסת, וי”ל, דשאני לולב שאינו אלא טלטול בעלמא, הואיל ואשתרי במקדש לא החמירו במדינה, אבל תקיעת שופר מעשה חכמה’, והיינו, ד”לכן אית ביה ב' איסורי דרבנן, גזירה ד’שמא יעבידנו וכו', וגם שהוא מעשה חכמה שאף שאין זה נחשב מלאכה מכל מקום איסור שבות איכא ביה, דהא מהאי טעמא אפילו ביו”ט אין תוקעין יותר מן הצורך וכו'”, וב' איסורי דרבנן לא התיירו בגבולין, (אולם יעויין ביום תרועה) שביאר את דבריו אחרת, 'קשה, דמאי טעמא לחילוק זה, והלא טעמא דשופר וטעמא דלולב אינו אלא משום גזירה ד’שמא יעבידנו וכו', ולפי זה מאי שנא לולב משופר. וי”ל, דכוונתם היא, דלעולם טעמא הוי משום ד’שמא יעבידנו וכו', מיהו בלולב, כיון דאין חכמה בנענוע הלולב, דלטלטל בעלמא הוא, לא שייך למגור ביה כולי האי 'שמא יעבידנו ללכת אצל בקי ללמוד דיני הנענוע', אבל תקיעת שופר דהיא מעשה חכמה, ולא כולי עלמא תקיעות גמרי, שייך למגור ביה טפי ד’שמא יעבידנו וכו', ולכן לא התיירו לתקוע אלא במקדש”, והוסיף ב'**זכרון סופרים'** [על מסכת סוכה, מ”ב: אות ו], שכוונת התוס' היא אל דברי **הסמ”ג** [חלק מצוות עשה, ריש מצוה מ”ד ד”ה בתחילת וכו']. “בתחילת פרק לולב וערבה מוכיח שבזמן שבית המקדש קיים היה לולב ניטל בכל מקום בגבולין יום ראשון אפילו בשבת, מפני שהיו ישראל עולים לרגל ושוהין בירושלים לאכול מעשר שני ולומדים תורה, כדאמרין 'גדול מעשר שני שמביא האדם לידי תלמוד, שנאמר ואכלת וגו' שם מעשר וגו' למען תלמד ליראה וגו' [ללקוט שמעוני פרשת ראה ריש רמז תתצ”ז - למען תלמד וכו', וע' בתוס' ב”ב כא. ד”ה כי מציון וכו' שביאר את דבריו], ואין לחוש לגזירה דרבה ד’שמא יעבידנו ללכת אצל בקי ללמוד דיני הנענוע', שהרי כולי עלמא דיני נענוע גמרי, אבל בשופר שהיא חכמה ולא כולי עלמא חכמת התקיעות גמרי, חשו לגזירה דרבה בגבולין אף בזמן הבית”.

**EDITORIAL AND INSIGHTS ON THE WEEKLY MIDDO**

This period of time is called the “Days of Awe.” Some people take this to mean AWESOME, while others see the days of *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur* as AWFUL! They feel such tension and pressure, and they cannot wait for

מידאה להשב מאהבה, כי השב מיראה וזדונות נהפכים לו לשגגות, הגם שזה דבר גדול, מ”מ סוף סוף הרי השוגג צריך כפרה, אבל השב מאהבה, וזדונות נהפכים לו ליכויות, ובימים אלו שכ”א עוסק בתשובה, אם תהיה התשובה מתוך אהבה, אז הרי בודאי **יצא זכאי** בדינו, כי יתבטלו מעליו כל המקטרגים ויהיה מלא זכיות. ומלבד זאת עלינו לדעת, כי אינו דומה קיום מצוה מאהבה לקיום מצוה מתוך הכרח, וכמו שכתב האורחות צדיקים בשער השמחה, שכל העושה המצוות

**לקחי חיים ודברי התצוררות נסדרו עפ”י פרשיות השבוע**

**אֵתָא בגמרא (ר”ה ט”ז), “אמרו לפני בראש השנה מלכיות וכו', כדי שתמליכוני עליכם וכו', ובמה בשופר.”** וכתב ה'**ריטב”א** (ר”ה ובמה בשופר), “במה ראוי להמליכו וכו', בשופר, שכן כתיב ויתקעו העם בשופרות וימליכו את שאול עליהם למלך”, ומלכותא דארעא כעין מלכותא דרקיע, והיינו דעבדינן נמי תרועה במלכיות”, ויש להבין, מדוע ראוי להמליך בשופר.

ויישב **בשם משמואל'** (חלק המועדים, ראש השנה, ריש שנת תרע”ד), ע”פ דברי הירושלמי (תענית פרק ב' ריש הלכה א') לגבי סיבת תקיעת שופר בתעניות - א”ר יעקב דרומאי, למה תוקעין בקרנות (של בהמה, ולא בחצוצרות של מתכת), לומר, חשבינו (-תחשיב אותנו) כאילו גועים כבהמה לפניך, והיינו 'שורוי נאמר אדם כבהמה תושעי ה' (תהילים ל”ו ז), ובחולין (ה): ביאר 'אלו בני אדם שהם ערומים בדעת (כאדם הראשון [רש”י שם]) ומשימים עצמם (דכאי רוח [שם]) כבהמה, ועיקר ההכנעה היא לעשות אף כשאינו יודע טעמו של דבר, והרבותא, שבני אדם שהם ערומים בדעתם ומבינים בטיב שורש כל מצוה ומצוה שכך צריך להיות ובלתי אפשר באופן אחר, מ”מ 'משימים עצמם כבהמה, והיינו, שעשייתם היא רק מחמת ציווי השם יתברך, ואחת היא להם אם מבינים או לא, וכמאמרם ז”ל (קידושין כ”ב): 'בהמה ארעא דמרה אולא', כן צריך להיות נמשך אחר מאמר השם יתברך בלי שום התחכמות, ולזה מורה ענין שופר, וזה מאמר הש”ס (ר”ה ט”ז), 'למה תוקעין, רחמנא אמר תקעו', ואין לך דבר שימשוך השפעה מלמעלה כמו מידה זו, שהרי המתנהג במידה זו נחשב כבהמה שמוזנותיה על בעליה וכו', וזהו טעם הירושלמי לתקיעת שופר בתעניות”.

ולפ”ז יישב מדוע ראוי להמליך בשופר, שזאת משום "שוהו עיקר קבלת מלכות שמים על עצמנו להיות נמשכים אחר הקב”ה כבהמה ומבטלים את דעתנו אליו, שעל זה מורה ענין שופר, וכתבאבאר”.

ועפ”ז יש לבאר את המשך דברי הגמרא, “אמר רבי אבהו, למה תוקעין בשופר של איל, אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא, תקעו לפני בשופר של איל כדי שאזכור לכם עקידת יצחק בן אברהם (שנשחט תמורדו איל, וזכירה זו היא מכוח שאתם ממשיכים בדרכו [ע' בריטב”א שם ד”ה א”ר אבהו - 'זוהא דמהדרינן וכו']. שהרי, ומעלה אני עליכם כאילו עקדתם עצמכם לפני”, ריש להבין, הכיצד ע”י תקיעה בשופר של איל 'מעלה אני עליכם כאילו עקדתם את עצמכם לפני', אלא, שכיון שזוהו עיקר קבלת מלכות שמים על עצמנו להיות נמשכים אחר הקב”ה כבהמה ומבטלים את דעתנו אליו, שעל זה מורה ענין שופר, שפדי יש להחשיב תקיעת שופר 'כאילו עקדתם עצמכם לפני', שהרי גם עניין 'עקידת יצחק בן אברהם' הוא מצד שיש בה משום 'ביטול הדעת אל השם יתברך למעלה מכל טעם, שהרי לפי הטעם אין אדם ראוי לקרבן, ובוודאי ידע סוד הקרבן, ומכל מקום לא השגיח על הטעם, ותפס פקודת מלך המלכים הקב”ה בפשיטות” (שם משמואל שם ד”ה בחצוצרות וכו').

**FROM THE WELLSPRINGS OF R’ GUTTMAN - RAMAT SHILOMO**

it to be over so that they can “breathe again”!

Well, these High Holy Days are the furthest thing from awful; in fact they are glorious opportunities to experience real clarity and joy. In fact, *Rosh Hashana* is called "אורר" -

5 explained the reason for his decision, citing several points in favor of becoming a *Rosh Yeshivah*, which would allow him to advance in *Torah* scholarship, rather than being a community rabbi, which would stifle his growth in *Torah*.

R’ Chaim listened attentively, nodding at every point. Finally, he said, “Each of your reasons is grounds enough for vacating the position as community rabbi, and when you add them up, the logic is overwhelmingly in favor of your decision. But there is one point that outweighs them all:

## מעשה אבות ... סימן לבנים

In the late 1800’s, the Jewish community of Jerusalem lived under near-impossible conditions. Many families had been destroyed by persecution and disease, and poverty was the normal way of life. When **R’ Yehoshua Leib Diskin ZT”L** arrived in Jerusalem, he encountered countless young orphans and unfortunate youths whose physical, emotional and spiritual well-being were greatly at risk. Recognizing the urgency of their plight, the *Rav* began gathering these needy children, one by one, into his humble home. In time, as their numbers grew, he established the “Great Institution for Orphans,” which came to be known as the Diskin Orphanage of Jerusalem, or simply *Beis Diskin*. When passed away in 5658 (1898), his lifework was taken up by his only son, **R’ Yitzchok Yerucham Diskin ZT”L** and his father’s beloved student **R’ Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld ZT”L**, successor as Chief Rabbi of the old *yishuv* of Jerusalem. For over fifty years, R’ Yosef Chaim worked day and night for the sake of the orphans and their families, laboring unceasingly to help these unfortunate souls, doing anything that was necessary to provide them with a home and all their basic needs. A major aspect of this was finding mates for the orphans and seeing them through till their marriage. As Chief Rabbi, R’ Yosef Chaim was an extremely busy man, seeing to the ever-demanding needs of the community. However, his *kehillah* notwithstanding, nothing was ever deemed too significant or too important to overshadow his extreme devotion to marrying off “his” orphans and starting them out on their new paths of life.

Although there was no apparent “*shidduch* crisis” in his days (at least none that was ever documented), the holy *Tzaddik* R’ Yosef Chaim, was a great advocate of early marriage. He was very careful to instruct his family to seek marriage for their children at a young age and it became an accepted family custom to do so. In fact, almost each and every one of his children and grandchildren would not only be proposed matches to consider when they were still in their teens, but indeed married and started families of their own under the age of twenty years old.

We say “almost each and every one” because of one notable exception. R’ Yosef Chaim had a grandson who did not enter into marriage until after his twentieth birthday, but not due to any fault of his own. It wasn’t that he was being picky or the “right one” hadn’t come sooner. Had it been up to him, he would have been no different than the rest of his family. No. The lone anomaly in the entire Sonnenfeld family was a result of a clear directive from the family patriarch, R’ Yosef Chaim himself. The details of how and why this came about became clear after the great *Rav*’s passing. Unlike all the rest of his grandchildren, when this grandson reached the age of nineteen and people would mention possible *shidduch* prospects for the young man, R’ Yosef Chaim would not even consider listening. At first, the boy’s parents believed that the venerable *Tzaddik* was waiting for someone specific and that person had not yet been proposed. However, as the year progressed and the boy was soon approaching his twentieth birthday, they became concerned. They were fully aware of the family’s “*kabbalah*” to marry before the age of twenty and could not think of any conceivable reason why their son was being made to wait.

Finally, they took the initiative and went to speak to R’ Yosef Chaim. “We understand that getting married before twenty is an accepted practice in the family. Is there something wrong with our son that he is soon to be twenty and not ready for marriage? Is there something we should be concerned about?”

R’ Yosef Chaim shuddered for a moment before answering the question. “Should you be concerned? I would think so. You see, every year on *Rosh Hashana*, I spend hours davening for the welfare of not only our family in general, amongst the entire *Klal Yisroel*, but also for each individual child and grandchild. My prayers focus on their personal needs and necessities, including success in *Torah* and *Yiras Shamayim*, and I therefore plead with *Hashem* that He grant them the wishes of their heart for the coming year. Unfortunately, last year on *Rosh Hashana*, while I was praying for your son, my grandson, I somehow forgot to include a request that *Hashem* send him his “*basherter*” - the marriage partner that is rightfully his, in this coming year. I had him in mind for every other thing, but marriage seemingly slipped my mind!”

such an act is simply not done! Never has a rabbi relinquished community duties in favor of an academic position! It is simply not done! And as far as having adequate time for study, you will just have to make time!”

R’ Isser Zalman’s reasons for his decision were indeed validated by R’ Chaim, but the ruling was that he must remain as rabbi. Against his own judgment, R’ Isser Zalman did not leave his position because R’ Chaim had ruled otherwise. That is deference to authority.

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*testify for the sake of Yaakov’s offspring regarding (their observance of Your) decrees and ordinances, and declare us righteous in judgment, O’ King of judgment.*” How do we understand this unusual petition to the Almighty? Because we have no advocates to defend us, we ask *Hashem* to vindicate us! Why would a Judge do that?

The following insightful interpretation was suggested by **Rabbi Bernard Maza Z”L**: Our sages have taught us that if a Jew intends to perform a *mitzvah*, but is prevented from doing so by circumstances beyond his control, *Hashem* still reckons it as if he had actually performed it (ברכות ו), ascribing the *mitzvah* to his credit. If, on the other hand, he intends to sin, but is similarly prevented from carrying out his intentions, then *Hashem* ignores his intentions, and the sin is not recorded in his name. Since in his heart of hearts, he really did not want to transgress (but was temporarily overcome by his *Yetzer Hara*), there is no reason for him to receive punishment for his evil intention.

Thus, on the Day of Judgment we declare to the Supreme Judge, “It is true we have no one to defend us, no one who can account for our greater number of good deeds over evil deeds. However, You, *Hashem*, know that our innermost thoughts desire to do good. Therefore, we ask You to judge our good intentions combined with our good deeds and rule in our favor, for our good intentions are combined with our good deeds.”

From the first day of *Rosh Hashana* and on, we now begin the *Aseres Yimei Teshuva* (Ten Days of Repentance). These are days of supreme importance, and one must use them wisely. *Yom Kippur* does not atone for sins committed against one’s fellow until he asks him forgiveness. One does not earn atonement unless he asks forgiveness, and these days must be utilized for the purpose of requesting and receiving forgiveness. Verbal abuse is considered worse than monetary abuse (בבא מציעא נח) and one must ask forgiveness even from one whom he simply berated verbally, as he thereby violated a *Torah* prohibition against verbal abuse and as we know, if one embarrassed or humiliated another, it is considered akin to murder.

Similarly, says **Chacham Ovadia Yosef ZT”L**, one should not be cruel and unwilling to forgive those who have wronged him; if one does not forgive, he will not be forgiven for his sins. *Chazal* comment (שבת קנא) that whoever has compassion on others will earn divine compassion. No one can feel confident that he will earn a favorable judgment in the heavens; but if one treats others kindly beyond the strict letter of the law, then he is similarly judged with compassion beyond the strict letter of the law.

These days are particularly suited for *teshuvah*, as the *Navi Yeshayahu* declares: “*Seek Hashem when He is found,*

*call to Him when He is close.*” (ישעיהו נה-ו). *Chazal* explain that *Hashem* is “close” to individuals during this period from *Rosh Hashana* to *Yom Kippur* and one who repents during this period is forgiven, whereas one who does not, cannot earn forgiveness even if he would bring all the choicest animals in the world as sacrifices (ראש השנה ו:).

The *Mishna* in *Avos* (ד-יא) describes repentance and good deeds as a “תריס בפני הפרענות” - “*shield against calamity.*” The *Gemara* (שבת לב) compares *teshuvah* and good deeds to “defense attorneys” - the only means by which one can escape punishment when standing trial.

שאל אבד וינדד זקנד ויאמרו לך ... (דברים לב-ו)

One of the most prevalent problems within families in our time is the refusal of children to accept the authority of their parents. There appears to have been a general erosion of authority. This and other factors have had an impact on the Jewish family, and parental authority is very often ignored, ר”ל. If we wish our children to respect our authority, we must show them how this is done. Children do not learn much from lecturing; they learn a great deal from example. If they do not see their parents deferring to authority, they are unlikely to defer to their parents.

This, explains **Rabbi Dr. Abraham J. Twerski Shlit’a**, may be the message of the *posuk*: “*Ask your father and he will relate it to you; your elders and they will tell you.*” A child will accept guidance from his parents if he sees his parents accepting guidance from their elders. Deference does not mean asking the rabbi for a decision on a question of *halachah*. Deference is when you have an opinion that you believe is right, but the halachic authority disagrees with you. If you accept an opinion that is contrary to yours, then you have modeled deference to authority. Too often, if a rabbi disagrees with our opinion, we may seek out another rabbi who agrees with us. This is modeling rejection of authority, and if we act in this way, we cannot expect our children to be different. Youngsters are certain they are right. We must show them that even when we firmly believe we are right, we yield to authority. Children are more likely to listen to their parents when parents listen to their elders.

It is told, that after he became the *Rov* of Slutsk, **R’ Isser Zalman Meltzer ZT”L** found that his involvement in community matters encroached severely on his *Torah* study. Worst of all were Thursdays and Fridays. In preparation for *Shabbos*, many chickens were brought to him for a decision on their kosher status, and on these two days he had virtually no time to learn. He agonized over this and concluded that he must vacate his position as rabbi of the community and seek an academic position as head of a *yeshivah*. Before acting on this decision, he sought the counsel of his mentor, **R’ Chaim Soloveitchik (Brisker) ZT”L**. R’ Isser Zalman

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“*My Light*,” and *Yom Kippur* is “ישערי” - “*My Salvation*.” Okay, but what does *Rosh Hashana* have to do with light? And what does *Yom Kippur* have to do with salvation?

**Rabbi A. Jacobowitz Shlit’a** explains that on *Rosh Hashana* it is as if we are preparing for a family portrait - the family called *Am Yisroel*. We cover all our blemishes, don our finest garments, and stand all together (נצבים) with big proud smiles. Then comes the flash of the camera, and the picture that results is a beautiful reflection of what we WANT to look like! Of course, we don’t always look like this, but because *Rosh Hashana* is a day of LIGHT, a time of clarity when we see who we really are and what our potential can be as members of the Royal Kingdom of *Hashem*, the snapshot comes out looking great. But then we have 10 days to actualize that potential through *teshuva*. On *Yom Kippur*, it is as if we go the doctor and tell him to uncover our blemishes so that he can treat our wounds and completely cure us of any illness. We beg him to HEAL us and leave no stone unturned until we are completely healthy.

**R’ Tzadok ZT”L (M’Lublin)** explains that the light of *Rosh Hashana* is the *neshama*, the soul, that *Hashem* blew into *Adam Harishon* on that first *Rosh Hashana* of the world. “נר ה’ נשמת אדם” - “*The LIGHT of Hashem is the soul*

## בראש השנה יכתבון

מלוך על כל העולם כולו בכבודך ... (תפילת ימים נוראים)  
A famous question is asked: With the *minhag* of the *simanim* that we do on the night of *Rosh Hashana*, we only allude to our personal needs (e.g. good health, wealth, happy interpersonal relations, etc.) בדרך רמז - in a secretive manner; with signs and customs. Why don’t we make things explicit and daven for precisely what we need?

The **Gerrer Rebbe, R’ Yehudah Leib Alter ZT”L (Sefas Emes)** explains that this practice is in line with the *Zohar’s* perspective that on *Rosh Hashana*, the thrust of our prayer should be that all mankind accept *Hashem* as the King of all Kings. Thus, we say “על כל מעשיך” - “*Place Your fear ... on all Your works*” - on the entire world. Why the focus on fear? Because if a person allows himself a bit of reflection on life, he cannot avoid recognizing how vulnerable he is. This vulnerability comes in multiple dimensions; *Parnassa* (livelihood), health, *nachas* from one’s children; a happy, secure marriage. Recognizing one’s vulnerability means recognizing one’s total dependence on the Almighty. Thus, in fact, fear can be the first step in developing a relationship with *Hashem*. Fear can start a process that ultimately leads to *Ahavas Hashem*, true love of *Hashem*. Since the main theme of *Rosh Hashana* is accepting *Hashem* as our King, we address our personal, mortal concerns only indirectly, by the “hints” of the *simanim*. In

*of man*” - the *neshama* that is inside each one of us allows us to be a holy nation that is connected to *Hashem*. Adam was given his soul on *Rosh Hashana* and he also sinned on this day. Adam brought darkness into the world through his sin, and thus each year, this day is a *Yom Hadin*, a Day of Judgment, to see if we are tapping into the light of our souls and repairing the damage that was caused on this day or if we are falling prey to the influences that are causing us to sin.

Says R’ Tzadok, it was on this day that Adam sinned but it was also on this great day that Adam declared *Hashem* as King. The goal and purpose of this day is to MAKE *Hashem* King by being the nation that He will be proud to be King over. It is not honorable for a King to rule over a nation who does not appreciate, accept, nor acknowledge his rule. It is equally shameful to rule over a people who cannot get along with one another. Thus, the double role of *Rosh Hashana* is to bring light into the world by making *Hashem* King. On an individual level, our job is to be in tune with our *neshama* and accept *Hashem’s* will and command. On a collective level, our role is to be a LIGHT unto the nations and truly become the the people that *Hashem* is proud to rule over.

May this *Rosh Hashana* be filled with light and joy and may we all be inscribed for a happy, sweet new year.

doing so, we are making an important statement - not to the world, but to ourselves. We are relegating our personal needs to the status of mere auxiliaries or helpers in our primary *avodah*. Why? Because the main item on the *Rosh Hashana* agenda is accepting *Hashem’s* Kingship.

**R’ Nossan Chaim Leff Shlit’a** elucidates the words of the Sefas Emes in clear fashion. The *simanim* are conventionally viewed as simply another venue for placing our personal requests before *Hashem*. Moreover, the usual perception is that these “hints” are directed to *Hashem*. By contrast, the Sefas Emes shows us that *Rosh Hashana* is not about presenting our wish list to *Hashem*, but about enthroning Him as the Almighty King. In fact, the *simanim* are actually tools for demoting our personal concerns and therefore the message of the *simanim* is addressed not to *Hashem*, but rather to ourselves. We must recognize that on *Rosh Hashana*, *Hashem* metes out a new measure of life to each of us. But He does so according to our desires. We must prepare ourselves to receive this new infusion of life for the purpose that *Hashem* intends - to accept and promote His Kingship in the world, for this will give new life and joy to our *avodah*. (**Emes Ve’emunah**)

באין מליץ יושר מול מנגד פשע ... (תפילת מוסף)

In our *Musaf tefillos*, we recite the following puzzling statement: “*When there is no advocate (angel) to defend us against the one who reports our sins, may You (Hashem)*

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With a spirit of holiness, imbued with the wisdom of his age, he looked at the boy’s parents and concluded, “Of course, I know how important it is to get married at an early age, especially in our family. However, without having properly prayed on the previous *Rosh Hashanah*, the Day of Judgment, when the destiny of all living creatures is determined for the coming year, can I take a chance on allowing him to get married this year, a decision that will weigh on him for the rest of his life? Would you take such a chance?” The following year, immediately after *Rosh Hashanah*, the now twenty-year-old grandson of R’ Yosef Chaim Sonnenfeld became a *chosson*! (Heard from **R’ Aharon D. Goldberg Shlit’a, R”Y Telz**)

Unlike most *Rebbes* who stand before the *Amud* and lead the congregation on the *Yamim Noraim*, in the Rizhiner dynasty such a concept was unheard of. Beginning with the first **Rizhiner Rebbe, R’ Yisroel Friedman ZT”L**, there was always a *chazzan* who would lead the *tefillos*, while the *Rebbe* himself would follow along. In addition, the Rizhiner, and all the subsequent *Rebbes* of Rizhin, Sadiger, Boyan and Chortkov, did not even daven in the same room as their *chassidim*; they would daven in solitude in an adjoining room, unseen and unheard. The reason for this was because the holy *Rebbe* is akin to the *Kohen Gadol* on *Yom Kippur*, about whom is written: “*No one may be in the Ohel Moed (tent of assembly) when he comes to provide atonement in the holy place.*” For this reason, the *Rebbe* always davened in a private room, where he was unseen by his *chassidim*, although he was able to hear the *chazzan* and follow along with his every word.

Additionally, the Rizhiner placed great emphasis on sanctifying his thoughts. He regarded this as one of the most important factors in a person’s spiritual level and he constantly exhorted his *chassidim* to strive toward the goal of sanctifying their thoughts. Often, from his great *dveikus* in *Hashem*, he would go into a deep trance and remain so for hours at a time. Often, his knees would knock together with fright at the thought that he was standing in *Hashem’s* presence.

One year, on *Rosh Hashanah*, no signal was received from the *Rebbe’s* private room that he had finished davening *Shemona Esrai*. The *Rebbe’s* oldest son, R’ Sholom Yosef, went into the room and saw that his father was still on the first page of *Shemona Esrai*. R’ Sholom Yosef turned the pages of the *machzor* for his father until the end of davening.

Later the Rizhiner explained what had happened. When he realized that he was standing in front of *Hashem*, he suddenly became so overcome with fear that he was unable to move even his arm - as if he had become paralyzed - and therefore he was unable to turn the pages of his *machzor* to continue davening.

אבינו מלכנו עשה למען הרוגים על שם קדשך ... עשה למען מבוחרים על יחודך ... (תפילות ימים נוראים)

The Chassidic court of Pshevorsk was not counted among the larger courts of pre-war Europe. When **R’ Moshe Yitzchok Gevirtzman ZT”L (“Reb Itzikel”)** arrived in the little hamlet of Pshevorsk in the early 1920’s, he found only a handful of followers in the town. However, after surviving the horrors of the second world war, and being from the few remaining *Chassidic Rebbes* who chose to stay in Europe - first in Paris and later relocating to Antwerp - he was uniquely qualified to befriend and console the spirit of the broken holocaust survivors who turned to him for physical and emotional reprieve. Antwerp’s Mercator Straat where the *Rebbe* lived, featured a mixture of survivors. The majority were Jews who had thrown off the yoke of traditional Judaism. The rest hung tenuously to the pre-war spirit of Chassidic Jewry, that was so torn asunder and decimated. All were very much broken and pained by their experiences during the war.

When R’ Moshe Yitzchok arrived, he brought with him the fire of prewar *chassidus* and the survivors were drawn to the warmth of his *chassidus*, basking in its fires. What began as a small trickle of visitors eventually grew over the years into a stream of *Yidden* who would come, from as far as London and the United States, to see the *Rebbe*. In time, traveling to Antwerp to be with Reb Itzikel during the *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah* - Ten Days of Repentance, was part and parcel of the *Yamim Noraim* for so many people, as much a part of those days as doing *kaparos*.

The *Rebbe* would see many individual Jews privately during the High Holy Days, and they would unburden themselves to him. The *Rebbe*, in turn, would pick up the pieces of their broken hearts and attempt to make them whole once again. It was quite a difficult task. Once, a broken and derelict holocaust survivor entered the *Rebbe’s* inner chamber and asked him the following question: “Every year on *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*, we say the *tefillah* of ‘*Avinu Malkeinu*,’ which lists many of the beseeching requests that we ask of *Hashem*. In two successive lines, we say, ‘*Our Father, our King, do this (avenge us) on behalf of those murdered in Your holy Name.*’ This line is immediately followed by: ‘*אבינו מלכנו, עשה למען טבוחים על יחודך*’ - ‘*Our Father, our King, do this (avenge us) on behalf of those slaughtered for Your Oneness.*’ Why are there two different expressions of this idea: ‘*Harugim al sheim kodshecha*’ and ‘*T’vuchim al Yichudecha.*’”?

Reb Itzikel could see the pain in this man’s eyes and knew that the question was rhetorical; the man was leading up to an answer of his own. Indeed, he was correct. “Let me give the *Rebbe* my answer,” said the holocaust survivor with a great sigh, and Reb Itzikel waited in anticipation. “When the Nazis YM”S marched into my town, the first thing they did