

May G-d bless this year to be a year of peace and that people achieve success in all positive goals. Those who have struggled this past year, should have clarity and find the coming year easier - LeHatzlachat Elisheva Yehudit bat Daniella Behr



ROSH HASHANA
1st Tishrei 5776

Rosh Hashana Begins
Sunday 13th - 19:05

2nd Day Candle Lighting - 20:05

Rosh Hashana Ends
Tuesday 15th - 20:03

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A Message from the Chief Rabbi

Ephraim Mirvis

At the height of our High Holyday services we will declare: "Penitence, Prayer and Charity can avert the evil decree". We will recognise that prayer is a central, fundamental and transformative ingredient of our Jewish experience. According to the Talmud, prayer is "worship of the heart" and one of the pillars upon which the world stands.

During the past year I have enjoyed wonderful prayer services in numerous communities across Great Britain and the Commonwealth. In recent months I have begun engaging with our Rabbis and other community leaders to explore ways in which we can stimulate added enthusiasm for tefilla, including, for example, seeking to encourage Batmitzvah and Barmitzvah celebrants to have greater knowledge of and proficiency in our tefillot.

The Hebrew term *tefilla*, is, however, significantly different from the English "prayer", which is derived from the Latin *precari*, meaning to beg or entreat. The root of *tefilla* is the Hebrew word "pileil," meaning to judge. It is found in the Torah in situations in which action has been taken or an intervention has been made. For example, in recounting the famous Biblical story of Pinchas' intervention when he encountered a couple engaging in an adulterous relationship, the Book of Psalms states 'Vaya'amod Pinchas Vayefalel' – "Pinchas stood up and intervened".

From here we learn that tefilla is far more than words spoken in supplication to or in praise of God. The reflexive "lehitpaleil," means to judge or to analyse oneself. Through self-evaluation we engage in a constructive and healthy activity that can re-fashion our lives. Tefilla affords us the opportunity to take a long, hard and honest look at ourselves in the Divine shadow of God's presence, where nothing can

be denied or hidden; to differentiate between what we want and what we need; and to give voice to our deepest hopes and aspirations, resolving to work passionately to achieve them.

Sometimes, those for whom tefilla is second nature can pray as a matter of routine and can struggle to find genuine meaning in what they are saying. Conversely, those with less grasp of the liturgy sometimes find that a catchy melody or special atmosphere provides them with great inspiration. It is revealing that as we finish the 'Amidah' we say, "Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable before You." Neither the words nor the sentiment alone are sufficient – both are required together to be truly impactful. This is something that every one of us can achieve.

**"LET THE WORDS
OF MY MOUTH
AND THE
MEDITATION OF
MY HEART BE
ACCEPTABLE
BEFORE YOU."**

5775 has been a challenging year for Jewish communities at home and abroad. Murderous attacks on Jewish communities in Europe have left many feeling vulnerable and concerned. None of us can change the world overnight, but we can change ourselves, which, in turn, does indeed transform the world we live in. Tefilla provides us with the key to unlocking that potential if we can approach it with the requisite humility and vigour.

May we all merit to discover the great beauty and value of tefilla, so that we begin 5776 with renewed positivity and sense of determination. Valerie and I extend to you all our very best wishes for a happy, healthy, peaceful and fulfilling New Year.

Shana tova.



Thanks! Rabbi Jonathan Tawil

Director TAL

A Jewish mother is walking with her small son along the shore, enjoying the sounds and smells of the ocean. Suddenly, without warning, a huge wave comes in and washes the boy out to sea. The woman screams, but no one is nearby, and she can't swim. She sees her son's head bobbing up and down as he cries for help and moves farther and farther away from the shore.

Desperate, she sinks to her knees in the sand. Pleading with G-d for mercy, she swears she will devote herself to good causes and be

**WHAT DO THOSE
BLASTS MEAN TO
YOU? WHAT ARE
YOU THINKING
OF WHEN THE
SHOFAR
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THE FIRST TIME?**

faithful in attending synagogue if G-d will spare her only child.

Suddenly another huge wave crashes in, and deposits her son, wet but unhurt on the sand. She lifts her face to the heavens, extends both arms and cries, "He had a HAT!!!"

Some things never please. We can be approached by situations that imply blessing, yet within, if we ourselves are not content, we will find something to complain about.

On Rosh Hashanah, we have a special Mitzvah of blowing the shofar. What do those blasts mean to you? What are you thinking of when the shofar sounds for the first time?

For some it's a time of introspection, an awakening call; a time for acting on the past to



R J Tawil



R A Saccous



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R M Borger



R D Levy



R J Dweck



Chief R E Mirvis

INSIDE>>>

Enjoy!

improve the future. For others, it's a time of fear, realising that one year has passed and not much has changed.

The Torah relates to the sound of the shofar in the famous prophecy of Bilam: "Uteruat Melech Bo" the blast for the King is among them (Bamidbar 23:21).

The shofar represents an announcement that the King of Kings is amongst us.

The shofar heralds in the presence of the King and we are excited that we are close to such a powerful King.

We celebrate this day as a Yom Tov with sumptuous meals and festive dress.

Yet on the same day, He will be judging us and our past record might not have been the best.

We experience the "dread of Judgement" as we pray for long hours on this Judgement day.

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 16) relates that the angels asked G-d why Bnei Yisrael don't say Hallel on Rosh Hashanah. To which the response was that on a day of awe, where the books of life and death are open, how can we sing Hallel?

So, is Rosh Hashanah a day of joy or a day of awe?

R Paysach Krohn relates a story that occurred at the Kotel a few years ago. Two men went to the Kotel together to pray Arvit. One was a very

wealthy individual who was a noted Baal Tzedakah; the other was R' Chania Chollek, founder of Ezer Mizion, a prominent medical and social support organization in Eretz Yisrael. They saw an older man praying fervently and sobbing. Moved by the man's obvious pain, R' Chania turned to his companion and suggested, "Let's offer to help this man with whatever he needs. If he needs medical help, I can be of service. If he needs financial assistance, you can lend a hand." His companion agreed.

After the older man finished praying, the two men approached him with their offer. But the man insisted that he did not need anything — nothing was wrong. When the two men persisted, the older man explained: "I just returned from the Chatuna of my youngest child. I have ten children, and now Baruch Hashem, they are all married. I'm so filled with gratitude to Hashem Yitbarach that I felt I must come to the Kotel after the Chatuna to express my thanks to Him. What you saw were tears of joy, not tears of sorrow."

It's easy to complain, but it takes a special person to always remember to thank after a great occasion.

We are happy today because we *know* that today is a day of awe and judgement. The knowledge that we are getting judged today

has enabled us to prepare and beseech G-d. At the same time, we know that our G-d is not just a King, He is also our loving Father. The shofar blasts send a shiver down our spine, yet at the same time herald the presence of our King that we are so proud of thankful for.

King David expressed his thanks to Hashem by saying, "Ashirah laHashem b'chayai, azamrah leiLokai b'odi." R Shmuel Levine, a maggid shiur in Telshe Chicago, explained the Pasuk as follows: I will sing to Hashem b'chayai — for the regular kindnesses He does for me in life.

I will make music to Hashem b'odi — for the "Od", for the additional Chasadim that He has done for me, above and beyond all my expectations.

Rosh Hashanah, is a time of awe, yet a time of happiness. The King has arrived, he is here with us and we appreciate all that He has done and will do for us.

As we look back on our eventful year, let us remember we are still standing. We look back at a year full of events, and in awe, trepidation, and confidence we beseech our Creator for a year of happiness, health and success.

Tizku Leshanim Rabot Tovot VeNeimot!



A Message From Rabbi Dr Abraham Levy

OBE PhD

"Vetaher Libenu LeAvdecha BeEmet, Ki Ata Hashem Elokim Emet".

Cleanse our hearts O G-d that we should serve you in truth, for you G-d are a G-d of Truth.

We shall be repeating this verse in the Amidah throughout Rosh Hashanah. In Jewish thinking, truth is an essential ingredient of all human relationships. Who is a truthful man? What is a truthful relationship? Truth involves keeping promises, saying with your lips what you feel in your heart. Truth requires fidelity and loyalty. Truth is the bond of trust between individuals and between G-d and man.

Truth is at the very centre of life and of religion; and yet it is a rare quality, difficult to acquire. It is for this very reason that we recite the following in our daily prayers.

"Leolam Yehe Adam Yireh Shamayim Baseter Ubegaluy Umodeh Al HaEmet Vedover Emet".

Man should at all times fear G-d in private and in public, confess the truth and speak the truth in his heart.

In private and in public – Truth between man and G-d

Confess the truth – Truth between you and your fellow man

And speak the truth in your heart – Truth between you and your inner self.

But sadly we live in a world when expediency and diplomacy make a sham of the truth. For, you see, expediency does not *confess the truth* and certainly does not *speak the truth in one's heart*. And as for diplomacy, is a diplomat not a person hired to lie for his country?

Rav, the great Babylonian Scholar who founded the Academy of Sura in the 3rd century, seemed to have had an unhappy marriage. The relationship between husband and wife was tense. If he asked his wife to cook peas for lunch she would make lentils. And if he asked for lentils she would give him peas. When their son Hiyya grew up he said: *Leave this to me*. So if he knew that his father wanted peas he said:



1. Rosh Hashana is a day of judgment. Why do we not say on it vidui and ask for forgiveness for our sins? Why do we not have Yom Kippur before it so that we can already have forgiveness before we enter judgment?

2. You judge someone at the end of a period. Why then is Rosh Hashana at the beginning of the year?

3. What is the judgment on - this world or the next?

4. Why pick the date of the first of the month of Tishrei for Rosh Hashana more than any other day in the year?

5. What lies behind the name "Rosh Hashana", the "head of the year"?

Answers on Page 7

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Mum, dad wants lentils. And so his father got what he wanted. *Your mother is being nicer to me,* said the sage. Not really replied Hiyya: *I just ask mother to cook the opposite of what you want.* *Don't do that* said father to son, *for you are teaching your tongue to tell lies and that will pollute your inner self.*

As Sir Walter Scott wrote, *O what a tangled web we weave when first we practise to deceive.* And that my friends is the problem with expediency and diplomacy.

According to the Rabbis, there are many types of theft. One is stealing another person's mind (Genevat Da'at) by making him believe what is not true. Sadly, this is a symptom of the society in which we live. We see it in politics, in life and even in religion. And that is the problem we have to tackle, both as individuals and as a community, on Rosh Hashanah.

"Vetaher Libenu LeAvdecha Ki Ata Hashem Elokim Emet".

Cleanse our heart to serve you in truth for you, O G-d, are a G-d of truth.

Come on, we say, *it is only a white lie.* Sadly, we are all guilty of this. Not only do we kid others but, what is worse, we kid ourselves. It is all too easy to justify a white lie. After all, you get the lentils you want and not the peas you do not want!

**"O WHAT A
TANGLED WEB
WE WEAVE
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PRACTICE TO
DECEIVE."**

white lie that does not affect others. We always refer to the 'beautiful bride', for example. The trouble with a white lie is that, like white paint, it can often turn grey if not black. The lie can seep into the soul; it can destroy truthful relationships between us, when mutual trust disappears. In Thailand, the 'land of smiles', they are urged always to be nice and never to say what they feel so as not to upset anybody. Thailand has one of the highest murder rates in the world!

Let us strive to develop truthful relationships between each other, to enable G-d to have a truthful relationship with each of us. Let us live as the Torah commands us - to live a life doing that which is good and straight in the eyes of G-d and of our fellow men.

*Ki Taaseh Hatov Vehayashar.
Tachel Shanah Ubirchoteha*

May the New Year with all its blessings now commence

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Rosh Hashana 5776
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Rosh Hashanah is the most primal of our holy days. It takes us back, year after year, to the world's first day and speaks to us of the essence of our existence. On this day, the Creator takes account of all He has created and judges its progress. Only one of His many creations is privy to this judgement, only one is invited to participate. That creation is Israel.

While it is an invitation we accept humbly and with profound gratitude, it is accompanied with a sense of ease. There is an urgency with which the day hits us. It tells us that our actions are not negligible and that the day to day moments of our lives are not trivial. We know in our deepest hearts that God evaluates our life choices. It is a day of consequence.

But if Rosh HaShanah is a day of God's judgement, why the invitation to participate? What is our role meant to be in all of it? The

Hakhamim tell us (Rosh HaShanah, 34b) that by coming together to speak to Him of memories (zikhronot), His sovereignty over the universe (malkhiyot), and the power of the shofar (shofarot), we have a hand in the process.

Rosh HaShanah is also called Yom HaZikaron – The Day of Memory. It is so named because our identities are examined and defined on this day, both as individuals and the world as a whole. Memory is the sine qua non of identity. It is through the memory of our events and experiences that we have a consistent self to speak of. Memory here does not mean to simply recall – it is the element of our minds that creates coherence and brings together life's details into a grand consciousness.

On the Yom HaZikaron, we use the power of memory to broaden our awareness to its furthest reaches and mutually engage in judgement with God. And while we do not profess to see things as God does, we attempt to get as close to Him as humanly possible. God not only invites us to participate in the judgement but also gives us a tool in assistance with Rosh HaShanah's only mitsva; He charges us to listen to the sound of the shofar.

The shofar is an ancient and powerful instrument that awakens us and beckons our hearts and minds to follow its call across millennia. Mingled within the sound of the shofar are the sounds of our victories and defeats, trials and triumphs, festivals and failures. And as we let the shofar take us there we see ourselves in all of it.

We stand in this transcendent perspective of self and world, at once, fragile and splendid before God, and we judge with Him. From this place we mutually determine and acknowledge what our lives should and could be. God finally asks us if we wish to claim it; if we wish to have our life in all its glory. We respond with a bursting heart saying: *Zichrono Lechaim!* - Record us for life!

On Rosh HaShanah, we come together with our fellow Jews and recognise that God scrutinises our choices because they are the raw material of true identity. We commit to living memorably, recognising that our days are like the threads of a tapestry. We acknowledge that our days are new opportunities to further create and define ourselves. On Rosh HaShanah, we commit to consciously live our lives as memories in the making rather than afterthoughts.

This is why the Jew never looks at history as a dead thing of the past but as a living, extended identity.

"What is a Jew? Sum, synthesis, vessel. Someone who feels every blow that ever struck his ancestors. He is crushed by their mourning and buoyed by their triumphs...the Jew remembers them and sees them as they were at the crossroads of their own lives: troubled, exalted, marked...their quest rejoins his own and weighs on his decisions. Jacob's ladder rends his nights. Israel's despair burdens his solitude. He knows that to speak of Moses is to follow him to Egypt and out of Egypt. To refuse to speak of him is to refuse to follow him."

Elie Wiesel, Messengers of God: Biblical Portraits and Legends

We do all of this because in doing so we become true partners with God in Creation. We acknowledge that our moments matter, our choices matter and our actions matter for they are the threads from which our lives are woven.



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'Sweetening' The Judgement

Rabbi A Bassous

Bet Knesset Yehezkel

The main Avodat Hayom – service of the day – of Rosh Hashanah is to sweeten the judgment and arouse mercy. That Hashem should stand down from His Throne of Judgment and sit on His Throne of Mercy and Kindness. This is primarily achieved through the blowing of the Shofar.

"The Holy One said, 'On Rosh Hashanah recite before Me [verses of] Sovereignty, Remembrance, and Shofar blasts (Malchuyot, Zichronot, Shofrot): Sovereignty so that you should make Me your King; Remembrance so that your remembrance should rise up before Me. And through what? Through the Shofar.' "(Rosh Hashanah 16a). Hence, the best way that our merit comes before Hashem is through the Shofar.

There are three ways that we can sweeten our judgement through the Shofar.

The first is through beseeching G-d's mercy. We are taught (Tehillim 89:16): Fortunate are those who know the power of Terua, the

they know how to beseech G-d through the sound of the Shofar, and He so to speak stands down from his Throne of Judgment and moves to His Throne of Mercy, changing His attribute of Judgment to an attribute of Mercy.

The understanding here is not just that we are hearing sounds, rather Am Yisrael know how to appease G-d via the crying voice of the Shofar. Through the voice of the Shofar, we are awakened to cry out and it is through this crying that Hashem moves towards Mercy.

The Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 16b) states: "Rabbi Yitzchak said: a year that is impoverished in the beginning will be wealthy at the end, as it is said (Devarim 11:12) Mereishit Hashanah, from the beginning of the year." The word Mereishit is written without an Aleph; thus the root of this word is from the word Rash, meaning poor. It is said further in that verse V'ad Achaharit,

Shofar blast. The Ramchal quotes R Yeshaya as asking: Don't the other nations of the world know how to make the sound of the Teruah? Why are Bnei Yisrael considered unique in this respect? He answers that Am Yisrael are special in that

and until the end, and this denotes that there is an end. Rashi and Tosafot explain that the Gemara means to say that when the Jewish people make themselves like poor people on Rosh Hashanah, supplicating before HaShem, then HaShem has compassion on them and favours them.

Thus, the Shofar arouses us to pray and beseech the Almighty enhancing His mercy. The second way in which the Shofar sweetens the judgment is through causing us to repent.

The Midrash relates that we should review our actions through the Shofar as the Pasuk states Tiku Bachodesh Shofar. (rather than Tiku Bachodesh Hashevii).

The Rambam (Hilchot Teshuvah 3:4) explains that the Shofar arouses one to repent: "Although the sounding of the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah is a Divine decree [which is accepted without our having to understand its reason] nevertheless, we can discern a purpose in doing so. It is as if it tells us: Sleepers, arise from your slumber, and those who are dozing, awake from your lethargy. Review your actions, repent your sins, and remember your Creator! Those who forget the truth with the passing of time and who waste their years pursuing vanity and

folly that is purposeless and cannot save you - look into your souls and improve your ways and your deeds. Let all abandon the ways of evil and thoughts that offer no benefit." Similarly, the Sefer HaChinuch (Mitsvah 405) states "And the voice of the Shofar awakens a great deal the hearts of those that are listening and all the more so the voice of the Teruah which is a broken sound." The Ran writes regarding the Pasuk (Amos 3:6) "If a Shofar is blown in the city will the people not be afraid?" Through the blowing of the Shofar, a person is able to think about repentance which confuses the accusing angels, not allowing them to accuse and hence causing G-d's Mercy to be aroused. The Shaar HaKavanot (90:1) writes that it is good to confess one's sins quietly in the Tekiot Dimyushav (first set of blasts) which is a time when the accusers are confused and thus allows the confession to penetrate the heavens together with the Shofar blasts. The third way is through reminding us of the merit of our forefathers. As the Midrash states, "G-d said to Israel, 'My son! If you want to merit before me in Judgment on this day, recall the merits of your fathers, and you will gain a good judgment.'" Avraham Avinu also prayed in front of G-d saying that just as he had conquered his inclination and ignored his desires, so too

should HaShem remember this and have mercy on his children. Another Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 16a) states that we blow a ram's horn in order to remember the ram of Akedat Yitzchak. "Hashem said: 'Blow before me with a Shofar from a ram so that I will remember the Akedah, and it will be as if you will have bound yourselves in front of me.'"

SLEEPERS,
ARISE FROM
YOUR SLUMBER,
AND THOSE
WHO ARE
DOZING, AWAKE
FROM YOUR
LETHARGY.

Our Rabbis instituted that we should read the portion of the Akedah on the second day of Rosh Hashanah specifically for this reason.

The Minhag of the Sephardim is to say "Et Shaarei Ratson LeHipateach" which reminds us of the Akedah, just before we are going to blow the shofar. Following this, it is customary for the Sheliach Tsibur to read a special prayer just before blowing. In this prayer the Sheliach Tsibur relates how the congregation have appointed him to be their mouthpiece to blow the Shofar in order that G-d remembers the merit of Avraham and his prayer at Har Hamoriah and the merit of Yakov who followed G-d with truth and belief and the merit of Yitschak who was bound on the altar.

In his awesome Piyut, R Amnon states that Repentance, Prayer, and Tsedaka (Justice, or Charity) can push away bad decrees.

We can suggest that these three things can be connected to the three above mentioned lessons from the Shofar.

The Shofar blasts will cause us to repent; they represent our prayers and cause us to go in the ways of our forefathers.

May we merit that through the blowing of the Shofar, G-d moves from His Throne of Judgment to His Throne of Mercy. Amen.

בס"ד



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1. The focus of Rosh Hashana is not atonement. The time for that is on Yom Kippur. Rather, the day of Rosh Hashana is a time to commit ourselves as servants submissive to the will of Hashem - Malchus Shomayim. A servant does not list his faults but what counts from now on is his commitments to carry out the will of his master. Mention of sins through vidui and the like goes against showing that this person can be loyal. Therefore first comes Rosh Hashana with the commitment to be submissive servants and then this is followed by Yom Kippur when we put this into practice by saying vidui and showing remorse for having sinned in the past.
2. The judgment on Rosh Hashana is not simply about the past. This will be done after a person dies and then his whole life is reviewed and judged Above. Rather it is about the future. How the next year will be depends on a commitment by a person to show how he can be a loyal servant to Hashem.
3. There is a big argument amongst the commentaries as to what the judgment of Rosh Hashana goes on. Tosfas (Rosh Hashana 16b) learns that it goes on judgment of the next world. The Ran learns that it is going on the din of this world.
4. The Ran (to Rosh Hashana 16a) brings that it was on this day, the first of Tishrei according to R' Eliezer, that Odom was created. On this day he sinned and was judged and was forgiven. This shows that this is a good day for man to be judged on.
5. A root and seed contains in it all what will be in the future. A head contains in it the main part of man that instructs the rest of the body of how to act. Rosh Hashana, the "head of the year" is where it is determined how the whole of the rest of the year will pan out.

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Halachot - Blowing The Shofar

Rabbi Dov Levy

Kollel Netzach Yisrael

The Torah commands us to listen to the sound of the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah. We fulfil this Mitzvah by blowing 100 distinct sounds, during the morning service. 30 before Musaf, 30 during the silent Amidah of Musaf, 30 during the repetition of Musaf and 10 after Musaf.

Do I need to stand up during the blowing of the Shofar?

The first set of 30 is known as 'The seated tekiet' because the congregation is not obligated to stand during them. Some

communities sit from before the beracha, whilst others stand during the beracha and then sit. Others stand for the whole set of 30. Each should follow the custom of the Shul they are praying in. One must stand up for the tekiet of Musaf if seated during the repetition.

Does it matter if I don't hear the part of the later tekiet, if I heard the first 30 properly?

Yes it does matter. According to many poskim, the second or third set are the main set in which the mitzvah is fulfilled Rabbinically. Because of this one must listen to all the tekiet. You must be careful not to speak between the beracha of the Shofar until the last tekiet since the beracha goes on them.

What if I spoke in between?

You still fulfilled the Mitzvah.

Why do we blow so many times?

In its basic form the Torah commands us to blow the Teruah sound 3 times, each preceded and followed by a Tekia. That's 9 sounds in all. However the word Teruah in the Torah can be interpreted as what we refer to as a Shevarim or a Teruah or a Shevarim Teruah combination. This means to blow one Tekiah-Teruah-Tekiah we have to blow 12 sounds. Since we have to blow 3 Teruah combinations we end up with 30 sounds. The Rabbis instituted a set of Shofar blowing during Musaf to accompany the pesukim of Musaf. The set after Musaf are to bring the number of sounds to 100. Sisera's mother cried out 100 wails to bring judgement upon Israel so we sound 100 sounds to invoke mercy upon us.



Rosh Hashana - A Time For Change

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Once a man came to his Rabbi and asked him an important question; "How many Rabbis does it take to change a light bulb?" The Rabbis reply was swift, "We don't change anything!" Interestingly the word for "year" in Hebrew is "Shana" rooted in the word "Shinui" which means to change. Surprise, surprise, on Rosh Hashana we ARE supposed to think about making some kind of change and improvement in ourselves and our lives. How are we supposed to approach this and what kind of change are we looking for? I mean... change is a hard thing.

There is a fundamental discussion about when the world was actually created. Rabbi Eliezer believes it was in Tishrei (when we celebrate Rosh Hashana) and Rabbi Yehoshua is of the opinion that it actually happened in Nissan (March/April). Surprisingly many opinions follow Rabbi Yehoshua's suggestion that creation was in Nissan. If so why are we celebrating at the wrong time of year? Rabbi Yisrael Reisman shlit'a explains that really the Rabbis are not arguing about when the event happened. All agree that the world was created in potential in Tishrei and in reality in Nissan. It's just a philosophical discussion as to what is more important: potential or reality.

Based on our celebrating next week in Tishrei it seems we believe potential is better. Why are we celebrating the potential and not the hard facts of a real

world. The answer is; that Hashem is in some ways more interested in what we WANT to be than in what we actually become. The Talmud in Menachot 100a declares that 'whether a person does a little or a lot (is not important as long as they focus their heart towards heaven'. Whether you can only give a small amount or a large amount to charity in spiritual terms provides the same 'pleasant aroma' to Hashem. The world was created in potential in Tishrei (actually the 25th of Elul and Mankind on the 1st of Tishrei). God had originally wanted a world based on strict justice but in reality created a world of mercy. Mercy is good but justice is more correct. Often we want to become so much better but by next year we feel we haven't really changed. So we think to ourselves, "What's the point?" God tells us there's a fundamental point. I value what you want to be. I value what you strive to be. Even if you don't get there, I still value the dream of what you want to be for me.

King David had a great desire to build the Beit Hamikdash. In fact in Chronicles I (Chapter 29) he gathered the people. He amassed all the materials needed. Everything was ready. In fact in Samuel II the prophet Nathan came and told David that he could build it. In reality he couldn't, he didn't. So why would a prophet tell him he could. In the end the materials gathered were used for something else. What a waste. Actually they weren't wasted. The Beit Hamikdash has another name. It's called Sukkat David (David's booth). But he didn't build it? It seems confusing. The answer is; since David gave his whole heart, he gave his everything to build it it was as if

he did it. It didn't happen but his dream was still valid... so much so, that it's called after his name. In fact God did not want him to build it because the dream of what he wanted it to be was even greater than what it could be in reality.

We dream of being something, somebody great. We may want to be the greatest Torah Scholar, philanthropist, Mother, Father or whatever. We want to change. We want to be good. We want to repair our relationships with other people. When we stand there on Rosh Hashana and we crown our King, we want to be the best we can be. Hashem values that. He sees what is in our hearts and he judges us accordingly.

Psychology speaks of the 'Ideal You' and the 'Real You'. The idea is to try and gradually get the real 'us' as close as possible to the Ideal 'us'. This is a Torah idea. But the Torah idea is even more powerful. Along the way we are judged as if we are the 'Ideal Us' already. Even if we fall short but we try we are still in for a good judgement for what we WANT to be.

Rosh Hashana is called 'Yom Harat Olam' the day of the Conception of the world (not Birthday). It's a day when we are judged for our potential. Rav Wolbe zt'l speaks about how change is a gradual process. Change in small increments allows us to work undetected by the 'radar' of our Evil inclination that tries to prevent us to grow. So let's take a small thing an easy thing and try to add it to our daily or weekly routine.

In this merit of that great person that we genuinely want to be and the small changes that we make (sometimes even holding on to who we are and not slipping) may Hashem inscribe us in the Book of the Righteous and grant us many happy, pleasant years and a good sweet year ahead, Amen!



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