

Toronto Torah

Beit Midrash Zichron Dov

Parshat Netzavim

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This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Mark Mietkiewicz in loving memory of his late father Mike Mietkiewicz, Melech ben Moshe Dovid z"l, whose 32nd yearzeit is Erev Rosh HaShanah

Happy Holiday? 3 Models of Rosh HaShanah Rabbi Adam Friedmann

On the first day of the seventh month, Rosh Hashanah, the Jews who returned to rebuild the land of Israel and build the second Beit haMikdash gather in Jerusalem. Excited to hear more about how to live their lives in the Holy Land, the people call on Ezra to read to them from the Torah. Everyone listens attentively, trying to absorb the Torah's messages. We don't know exactly which part of the Torah they hear, but those hopeful and inspired Jews are devastated and break down in tears. If we would pause at this point, this scene, described in the book of Nechemiah (Chapter 8), would seem to be the picture-perfect Rosh Hashanah moment. A group of Jews who have become painfully aware of their shortcomings, afraid perhaps of G-d's judgment, crying.

However, this scene was unacceptable to Ezra, Nechemiah, and the other leaders present. They tell the people, "This day is holy to Hashem your G-d. Do not cry and do not weep." (Nechemiah 8:9) Rather, the people should "eat rich foods and drink sweet things and send portions to those who don't have any prepared." (8:10) They "should not be sad, because the joy of Hashem is your [the people's] strength." (ibid.)

That final phrase, "the joy of Hashem is your strength," is unclear. What is "Hashem's joy," and how do we participate in it? How does this joy strengthen us? The commentators provide three different explanations. Each sketches a different path in navigating

the confusing emotional atmosphere of Rosh Hashanah.

Joy in the face of terror

Rabbi Avraham ibn Ezra (Commentary to Nechemiah 8:10), Rabbi Dovid Altschuler (Metzudat David ad loc.), and Rashi (Beitzah 16b) explain that "Hashem's joy" is the joy we partake in *because* of Hashem's command. We are commanded to be happy on the holidays. The Jews were being told that despite their fear they must enjoy the holiday. The fulfillment of this mitzvah is what would give them the merit, and therefore the strength, to thrive in the future.

This is one emotional model for Rosh Hashana. We are afraid, but nevertheless we "rejoice while trembling." (Tehillim 2:11) We undertake this internal conflict because of G-d's command.

Confidence in G-d's kindness

Malbim (Nechemiah 8:9) takes a different approach. He notes a midrash (see Talmud Yerushalmi Rosh HaShanah 1:3) that wonders how our common Rosh Hashana practice of wearing nice clothes and eating fancy meals is logical given that it is a day of judgment. The midrash's answer is that even when they are being judged the Jewish people trust in G-d's kindness. They are so confident in receiving a good verdict that they treat the day as a holiday. In this reading, "Hashem's joy" is the joy we experience from knowing of G-d's kindness. The strength we draw from it

is the confidence that G-d will have mercy on us. Ezra and Nechemiah were telling the people to set aside their fear, trust G-d, and therefore treat the day as a holiday.

This is a second emotional model for Rosh Hashanah. We may be aware of our failures, but Rosh Hashanah is not the time to dwell on the fear of punishment. Rather this is a time to reflect on G-d's kindness, be happy, and confidently treat the day as a holiday.

The excitement of new beginnings

Rabag (Nechemiah 8:10) offers a third approach. The "joy of Hashem" is the joy of discovering that we can fix what we've done wrong and recover our relationship with G-d. The Jews in Jerusalem were distraught to discover all of their failures. Their leaders are telling them that this discovery is itself a source of joy because now they know exactly how to fix their relationship with G-d.

This is a final emotional model. Rosh Hashanah is the day of judgment for the previous year. We shouldn't hide from everything that went wrong (and right!) during that time. But it is also the first day of a new year, and once we have a clear understanding of our shortcomings, we also have what we need to chart a path towards a brighter future.

Ketivah vachatimah tovah!

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Summary

Our chapter continues the motif that started in chapter 12, in which Yeshayahu prophesies about other nations. In our two-part chapter, Yeshayahu prophesies specifically regarding the people of Egypt.

The prophecy begins with a warning to the people of Egypt that G-d will undermine their social unity and they will fight each other. Not only that, but G-d will also break the idols of the Egyptians and will lead them under government by strangers. (19:1-4)

This crisis will be expressed also in the drying of the Nile, Egypt's main source of water and existence. Therefore, the fishermen, the flax workers (who use the water to grow their flax), and the dam builders will suffer and mourn the lack of prosperity in their occupation (5-10)

Egypt is in crisis. The kingdom that is used to being the source of wisdom for the entire ancient east is in a state of humiliation. Pharaoh's wise men and all of his advisers were wrong in their false prophecies. G-d causes them to mislead Pharaoh in their advice. (11-14)

Yeshayahu concludes the first part of his prophecy by stating that nothing will be achieved in Egypt. G-d will turn

this leading land into a frightened nation. (15-17)

The second part of the chapter discusses the spiritual growth that will flourish out of this crisis. Yeshayahu prophesies that five towns in Egypt will worship G-d, and the name of one of them will be "Heres". On that day, adds Yeshayahu, an altar of worship will stand in Egypt, as well as a pillar to G-d on Egypt's border. These monuments will serve as symbols to the Egyptian nation that G-d will help them when they cry to **Him**, rather than to their idols. (18-20)

The crisis will change something in Egyptian spirituality - they will recognize G-d as the king of the world, and they will worship Him. When the Egyptians will turn back their hearts to G-d, He will heal and help them (21-22).

Yeshayahu concludes the second part of the prophecy by announcing a new order in the Middle East. The Assyrians and the Egyptians shall create an international bond between them, a bond which will eventually lead both of them to worship G-d. The people of Israel will join this bond, and together the three nations shall form an alliance, which will be the beginning of a new era. G-d will start a

new time of blessing, and prosperity will begin for all three nations. (23-25)

Insight

There is some debate regarding when the conversion of Egypt and Assyria will take place:

- When the invading Assyrians conquer a portion of Egypt, and then Assyria falls to King Chizkiyahu. (Menachot 109b-110a)
- When a kohen named Chonyo (Onias) established a Temple to Hashem in Egypt, in the 2nd century BCE (Menachot ibid.)
- The time of Mashiah (Abarbanel)

As we stand on the doorstep of Rosh Hashanah, we appreciate the idea of G-d as the King of the world, and the Judge of all nations. We say on Rosh Hashanah, "All creatures shall parade before you, like sheep." Our chapter emphasizes this idea, by showing that G-d is the ruler, not only over Israel, but over Egypt and Assyria as well.

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Siddur Insights: Selichot Insights**Rabbi Steven Gotlib**

"And Hashem passed by before him and proclaimed." (Shemot 34:6) Rabbi Yochanan said... The verse teaches that the Holy One, Blessed be He, wrapped Himself like a prayer leader and showed Moshe the order of the prayer [the Thirteen Attributes of Mercy]. He said to him: "Whenever the Jewish people sin, let them act before Me in accordance with this order and I will forgive them."

The above Talmudic account (Rosh Hashanah 17b) is understood as describing the origin of Selichot, the penitential service recited in the lead-up to Rosh Hashanah as well as during the ten days of repentance from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur. Rav Yosef Dov Halevi Soloveitchik notes (*Hararei Kedem* 1:2:2) that the days of Selichot are ideal for teshuvah and introspection. The recitation of Selichot is meant, first and foremost, to inspire us to embrace the spirit of teshuvah and resolve to change ourselves for the better.

While the core of Selichot - Hashem's Thirteen Attributes of Mercy - is often studied, there are many other aspects of it which frequently find themselves overlooked or underappreciated today.

Indeed, a large section of Selichot is seemingly incredibly repetitive. Several paragraphs detail the requests for repentance of King David, the prophets Michah and Daniel, and Ezra the Scribe. One might be tempted to ask why so many separate accounts are necessary. Why not just include one or two? Rav Soloveitchik (*Hararei Kedem* 1:2:4) answers that

there are many mitzvot in the Torah which have only one way of performing them such as lulav, sukkah, and matzah. Teshuvah, however, is fundamentally different. Rav Soloveitchik writes that there is not just one proper way to do teshuvah. Rather, each and every person chooses for themselves the way to do teshuvah that is proper for them. "There are many paths that return to Hashem" and each figure mentioned in Selichot found a unique one. In reading about each, we can determine the proper path of teshuvah for ourselves as well.

Along similar lines, Rav Hershel Schachter [writes](#) that the Torah sets boundaries between that which is permitted and that which is forbidden. That which is permitted, though, consists of a broad multi-dimensional space as opposed to a simple straight line. Instead of focusing on not getting out of line, so to speak, our job is to stay within the appropriate framework of Judaism and not cross over the border into forbidden territory. Playing off the words of the prophet Hoshea (14:10) that "the paths of Hashem are straight" with paths in the plural, Rav Schachter states that when it comes to Judaism, "there are more than one lane in this wide highway." Just as there is more than one way to be a Jew (Ashkenazi, Sephardi, Mizrachi, Yekke, Chassidish, Litvish, etc.) so too there is more than one way to do teshuvah. May we all find the ways that are right for us and strengthen our service to Hashem accordingly.

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Biography

Rabbi Gavriel Zinner

Rabbi Yair Manas

Rabbi Gavriel Zinner is a well-known halachic authority living in Boro Park, New York. He is the author of the *Nitei Gavriel* series of books, consisting of more than thirty volumes on various topics, including the halachot of each of the Jewish holidays, mourning and weddings.

Rabbi Zinner was ordained by Rabbi Yosef Grunwald of Pupa, whom he served for over twenty years, and was close with Rabbi Yaakov Yitzchak Neiman zt"l, the leader of the Belz community in Montreal. He also learned with Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach zt"l.

In his writing, Rabbi Zinner generally tries to follow the rulings of the Kitzur Shulchan Aruch [Rabbi Shlomo Ganzfried, 19th century Hungary] and the Chayei Adam [Rabbi Avraham Danzig, 18th-19th century Poland]. He tries not to deviate from tradition for stringencies or leniencies. Rabbi Zinner contends that people who have traditions to be lenient are lenient because they believe that this is the halachah. For example, people who do not follow Rabbeinu Tam to wait until seventy-two minutes after sunset to conclude Shabbat are not being lenient; they believe that per halachah, Shabbat concludes at an earlier time. A person may choose to be stringent, but there is no need to do so if he follows his tradition.

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Torah and Translation

The Shofar of Friendship

Rabbi G. Zinner, Nitei Gavriel, Rosh HaShanah, Petichah

Translated by Rabbi Jared Anstandig

כתב האריז"ל והובא בסידור כתר נהורא שצריך אדם לקבל עליו בכל יום קודם התפלה מצות ואהבת לרעהו כמוד.

ויש להרחיב הדברים עפ"י דברי הח"ס שמבאר דלכן נצטוינו לתקוע בר"ה קול תרועה, כמו שנאמר "יום תרועה יהיה לכם," כי התרועה יש בה שתי משמעויות, גנוחי גנח וילולי יליל, והיא גם לשון חיבה וריעות, כמו שפרש"י (במדבר כג: כ"א) עה"פ ותרועת מלך בו.

והיינו דבשעה שאדם מביט על מעשיו בר"ה בכניסת יום הדין ורואה שאין לו במה לעמוד למשפט, והוא במצב של גנוחי גנח וילולי יליל, יש לו עצה לקבל על עצמו אהבת ישראל בכל נפשו, יום תרועה, של חיבה וריעות, ללמד זכות על כל איש ישראל כמו על נפשו, ולבטל כל המחשבות רעות שהיה לו על בני ישראל במשך כל השנה.

ואף אם בפועל לא נהג עצמו במדה זו, מ"מ ע"י הקבלה בלב יעורר ג"כ שיתנהגו עמו כן.

וזהו שאומרים בסיום ברכת שופרות "שומע קול תרועת עמו ישראל ברחמים," כי אעפ"י שעדיין אין הקב"ה רואה במעשה האהבה והריעות אלא שומע קול תרועת עמו ישראל, שישראל מקבלים על עצמם אהבה וחיבה וריעות, הוא ג"כ מתמלא רחמים.

The Arizal writes, and this is brought in the siddur *Keter Nehora*, that a person must accept every day, before prayer, the obligation of loving one's neighbour as oneself.

And one could expand this based on the words of the Chatam Sofer, who explains that this is why we are commanded to sound the *teruah* blasts on Rosh Hashanah, as it says, "A day of *teruah* you shall have" (Bamidbar 29:1), for the term "*teruah*" has two meanings: (1) sighs and cries (Rosh Hashanah 33b), and also (2) love and fellowship, as Rashi explains in his commentary to Bamidbar 23:21, on the words, "With him is the *teruah* of the king." [On this verse, Rashi explains that the word *teruah* means love and fellowship. See Shemuel II 15 and Shoftim 15 for other instances where this root connotes affection.]

This is to say that at the time that one introspects upon one's actions on Rosh Hashanah, at the onset of the Day of Judgment, and one sees that one lacks merit to withstand judgment, and one is in a state of sighing and crying, a good suggestion is to accept upon oneself to love all Jews as oneself, [transforming this to] a day of *teruah* which is of love and fellowship, to give the benefit of the doubt to all Jews, as one does for oneself, and to remove all negative thoughts that one had in one's heart against all Jews throughout the year.

And even if in practice one did not behave this way [in the past], nonetheless, by accepting it upon oneself in one's heart, it awakens His desire with him [meaning that G-d will judge favourably those who themselves commit to judge others favourably].

And this is what we mean when we say at the end of the Shofarot blessing [during the musaf amidah on Rosh Hashanah], "He who hears the sounds of Israel's *teruah* with mercy." Even if G-d does not see in practice love and fellowship, but He only hears the sounds of the *teruah* of His nation Israel, that Israel is accepting upon themselves love and fellowship, He will also be filled with mercy.

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Shabbat Sept 23-24

20 min before minchah on Friday, R' Steven Gotlib, Erev Shabbos Chassidus, Village Shul

After hashkamah R' Yehuda Mann, Halachah from the Parshah, Clanton Park

Before minchah R' Jared Anstandig, Washing Away Our Past?, Shaarei Shomayim

Before minchah R' Steven Gotlib, Pirkei Avot, Village Shul

After minchah Idan Rakovsky, Mitzvot in the Parshah, Shaarei Tefillah

After minchah R' Mordechai Torczyner, Gemara Ketuvot, BAYT (Gruda Beis Medrash) (men)

Sunday Sept 25 Erev Rosh HaShanah

9:00 AM R' Zev Spitz & R' Yehuda Mann, Semichat Chaver Program, Clanton Park (men)

Monday Sept 26 Rosh HaShanah Day 1

2:00 PM Idan Rakovsky, Elul 5782, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/idanrak> *not this week*

20 min before minchah R' Steven Gotlib, Rosh HaShanah's Timeless Teachings, Village Shul

8:30 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Getting Ready for Tishrei, Shomrai Shabbos (men) *not this week*

Tuesday Sept 27 Rosh HaShanah Day 2

10:15 AM R' Steven Gotlib, Reviewing Ourselves, Renewing Our World, The Petroff Gallery (1016 Eglinton West)

11:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Pray and Learn: The Meaning of the Day, Shaarei Shomayim

7:05 PM R' Steven Gotlib, A Recipe for Good Judgment, Marlee Shul

9:00 AM Idan Rakovsky, Tzidkat haTzaddik, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university) *not this week*

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Wisdom of King Solomon, ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (men) *not this week*

7:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 16), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (men) *not this week*

Wednesday Sept 28 Fast of Gedaliah

6:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Talmud: Avodah Zarah, Shaarei Shomayim

After maariv R' Yehuda Mann, Contemporary Halachah, Clanton Park *not this week*

Thursday Sept 29

1:30 PM R' Mordechai Torczyner, Shemuel (Chap. 27), ZOOM: <http://tiny.cc/weeklymt> (women) *not this week*

8:00 PM R' Yehuda Mann, Gemara Beitzah, *not this week*

Friday Sept 30

9:00 AM R' Jared Anstandig, Parshah, Yeshivat Or Chaim (university)

10:30 AM R' Jared Anstandig, R' Mordechai Torczyner, R' Yehuda Mann, Ketuvot Perek 1 *advanced*
In-person at Yeshivat Or Chaim, on ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/frishiur>

Our Professional Ethics Classes return after Succot, on ZOOM!

7:30 PM Monday evening October 31, Legal Ethics
Shepherding Jewish Families Through Family Law Litigation, Part 2
Registration is now open at <https://torontotorah.com/cpd>
On ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/mtethics>

12:30 PM Wednesdays November 9, 16 and 23, Business Ethics
Debt Forgiveness: Good Religion, Good Business?
COVID, Hockey Canada and the Toxic Workplace
When Employers Change the Terms of Employment
Registration will be at <https://torontotorah.com/business>
On ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/bmlunch>

7:30 PM Monday evening November 21, Medical Ethics
Vaccination and Risk-Taking in Judaism
Registration will be at <https://torontotorah.com/cme>
On ZOOM at <http://tiny.cc/mtethics>