



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ד' ראש השנה תשע"ד - 4th September 2013 - Volume 6 - Issue 11

THE NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Remember Eruv Tavshilin

A reminder to make an Eruv Tavshilin on Erev Rosh HaShana (Wednesday)

Shabbos Shuva Drosha

The Rov will be giving his Shabbos Shuva Drosha after Davenning on Shabbos Parshas Haazinu.

מזל טוב

Mazel Tov to Mr & Mrs Daniel Smith on the occasion of Josh's Bar Mitzva on Tzom Gedalia. The Kehilla will be invited to a Kiddush when he Leins on Parshas Noach!

Burial Board

Anyone wishing to join the Shul Burial Scheme can do so by speaking to Avi Stern on 07813 326423. The joining fee will be waived for new members under 30 who join before Rosh Chodesh Kislev.

A Final Note For The Year

The editor would like to that this opportunity to wish the Kehilla a **טובה וחתימה טובה** and ask **מחילה** for any offence caused by, or for omissions from the newsletter during the past year.

THE NEWS ... LATEST NEWS ... LATEST

Everything Depends on Our Teshuvah

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

What is the message of the raspy pleading tone of the Shofar? It's not quite music! It does not qualify as poetry! Is it just some grandiose auditory Rorschach test that everyone can read into what they feel? Why then are so many drawn to it like metal to a magnet? What is the message?

There are some specific allusions that breathe meaning into the Kol –the Voice of the Shofar. Rosh HaShana takes place on what our sages tell us is the birthday of humanity. Adam-man was installed with Divinity as the breath of life was blown into his nostrils. Man received his Neshama- his G-dly soul on this day!

When HASHEM said, "Let us make man our image?" with whom was He consulting? Does G-d have partners? Rashi explains that we learn common decency from The Almighty. We consult and included interest and affected parties in the decision making process. The Nefesh HaChaim says that HASHEM was inviting all of the heaven and the earth to contribute and participate and to plug their fate into "man". Rabbi Mendel Weinbach ztl. Had said that G-d was talking with man! He is the partner that completes the incompleteness of him-self and the entire creation by his doing.

It makes sense then, on the day that intersects this important event, that we revisit it as HASHEM measures and judges how well the investment of all investments is fairing. Therefore Rosh HaShana is a sort of cosmic

board meeting when the stock holders gather to evaluate how well their company is doing.

The Sefas Emes identifies another reference point. "The Shofar's main purpose is to remind us of Matan Torah- the giving of the Torah". Is this in contradistinction to the first approach? Not at all! Matan Torah was an event that was embedded into the beginning of G-d's creation. Just like the entire physical world was crowned with the formation of man so too humanity remained woefully deficient until it graduated and matured to the reception of the Torah. This was a condition baked into

The Week Ahead

ערב ראש השנה

Selichos	Remember Eruv Tavshilin
Mincha & Kabbolas Yom Tov	6.00am
	7.36pm

יום א' דראש השנה

Shacharis	8.30am
תקיעת שופר	Approximately 11.00am
Mincha followed by a Shiur	7.30pm
by Rabbi M L Cofnas	
Maariv	8.40pm
Candle Lighting	Not before 8.40pm

יום ב' דראש השנה

Shacharis	8.30am
תקיעת שופר	Approximately 11.00am
Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.32pm
Candle Lighting	No later than 7.32pm

שבת פרשת האזנו

Seder HaLimud	שבת שובה
Shacharis	8.40am
Mincha 1st Minyan	9.00am
Mincha 2nd Minyan	6.00pm
followed by a Shiur	7.25pm
Maariv & Motzei Shabbos	8.35pm

צום גדליה

Taanis Starts	4.38am
Selichos	6.30am / 7.30am
Mincha & Maariv	7.15pm
Taanis Ends	8.26pm

עשרת ימי תשובה

Monday / Thursday	6.00am / 6.30am
Tuesday / Wednesday	6.00am / 6.40am
Mincha & Maariv	7.45pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

ערב יום כפור

Selichos	6.20am / 7.00am
Mincha & Maariv	3.00pm

the original building of the world. If the Jewish People would receive the Torah, fine, but if not HASHEM would press the reset button and nullify everything before anything got started. Therefore Matan Torah relates directly to the fresh breath of Divinity within the chest of man. What is it then that the Shofar is telling us?

There are different types of maps of the world. Some focus on topography. Others highlight political lines. Some show concentrations of populations and such. Some maps zero in on various deposits of valuable minerals and resources distributed across the planet. Here is an abundance of gold, and there is plenty of steel. In this place oil is found and another produces coffee abundantly etc. What is the production, the Gross National Product, of the Jewish People? Kevod Shemaim! Honor for HASHEM!

The Chofetz Chaim once remarked that on a map of the world you'll find the names of big cities like New York, Paris, Tokyo, etc. shown in large print on the map. In heaven G-d has His map of the world and there is Jerusalem, Vilna, Radin, etc. in his day and Bnei Brak, Brooklyn, Queens, Monsey- you name it nowadays. These are the places where The Almighty has His people who are learning and praying, and carrying out His will ever so discretely within the four cubits of Hallacha!

"Rabbi, where are the four cubits of Hallacha?" a fellow asked me recently. "Everywhere we go!" was my answer. "It's not the place that gives importance the person", the Talmud tells us, "It's the person that gives importance to the place!" Those are the four cubits of Hallacha. On Rosh HaShana the Shofar is speaking a coded language that agrees

Tefillah Nuggets

Dani Epstein

Tefillah Nuggets

שמונה עשרה - אבות: תפילה

והנורא

הגבור

הגדול

ה-א

And the awesome

The strong

The great

The G-d

Although this phrase has been examined already, none of the terms were explained, which is why I have come back to the same phrase again.

There are some issues that bear examination with the three words הגדול הגבור והנורא.

מה could have quite happily said א-ל גדול גבור ונורא without using the definitive "ה" as a prefix before each word. To all intents and purposes, it's meaning is identical to the original phrase. Why then the definite article prefixed to every word?

Then there is a fundamental problem with using such terms in that these are all relative terms. Describing Hashem using a relative term is as good as being meaningless, as I shall demonstrate shortly.

What do I mean by a relative term? Supposing we were to say "So-and-so is rich." This does not really tell us very much. Richer than whom? How much richer than whoever? Private jet and superyacht rich? Fancy car rich? The word "rich" is a relative term, so when we describe someone as being rich, we mean that his wealth is greater than that of most other people, but we don't quantify it in anyway.

Supposing we were to say to Bill Gates: "You are richer than a schnorrer in the slums of Mumbai". This is not really saying very much; rent there is as low as \$4 a month; one can just imagine what the wages are like. Saying that Bill Gates is richer than that is perfectly true, but does not really give us any idea of the extent of his wealth.

In order to describe Mr Gate's wealth in relative terms that have some kind of useful meaning, we have to compare him to something else of a greater proportion, that the listener is familiar with. So, if we said Bill Gates is richer than the Queen, we now have something that makes some sense. Everyone knows the Queen is absolutely loaded, consequently we if we say Bill Gates is richer than her, or we say he is ten times richer than her, this gives us a sense of proportion without actually quantifying his or the Queen's wealth. Even though we might not know just how wealthy the Queen is, and therefore Bill Gates, we still have a good idea of what level of wealth we are talking about.

So now we come to the word גדול. Conventionally this word is translated as "great". When used as an adjective the word "great" can denote an unusually large dimension or order of size as in "The Great fire of London". It can also mean "wonderful", as in "I had a great time", or of an extreme degree: "that was a great bungee jump". If used as a noun, it will refer to a person who has achieved importance or distinction in a field - "he's a literary great". We mean much the same

thing in לשון הקודש when we say so-and-so is גדול.

Now, in order to know what the most elemental meaning of a word is in לשון הקודש, all one has to do is go to the תורה and find the first usage of that word. From this first instance one can discern what the word means.

The first time the word גדול appears in the תורה is in בראשית ט"ז:

וַיַּעַשׂ אֱלֹהִים אֶת שְׁנֵי הַמְּאֹרֹת הַגְּדֹלִים אֶת הַמְּאֹר הַגָּדֹל לְמַשְׁלַת הַיּוֹם וְאֶת הַמְּאֹר הַקָּטָן לְמַשְׁלַת הַלַּיְלָה וְאֶת הַנוֹכְבִּים

From the context of the פסוק it is clear that the obverse of the word גדול is קטן, implying that these two words mean "big" and "small" respectively, and are relative terms. This one is big, that one is small, but we still have no notion of their dimensions since there is no frame of reference in the פסוק to indicate some sort of size. We can only conclude that the sun is bigger than the moon.

So, if we say Hashem is "big", just what have we achieved? What is he "bigger" than? Bigger than a car? Bigger than a mountain? Bigger than the world? Bigger than a galaxy?

I would argue that saying Hashem is "big" altogether is absolute heresy, since in order for Hashem to be "big", he would have to be corporeal in some fashion. With having a physical dimension, the word "big" is simply not applicable.

Yes, one can say "that was a big gesture on your part", and we are not talking in meters or inches. This, though, refers to a concept, not an entity. An abstract notion can be described in abstract terms.

The upshot of this is that we clearly cannot say that the word "הגדול" simply means the "big" one. There is simply no way of applying such a term to Hashem in a meaningful manner, since there is nothing of relative dimensions that we can compare Him to that would give us an inkling of His size.

This issue applies right across the board for the other two terms of praise: הגבור והנורא; they are also relative terms, and also suffer from the same issues that הגדול has.

Given these considerations, the Rov שליט"א argued that these three terms – הגדול הגבור והנורא – are in fact titles, as opposed to descriptions. This very neatly side-steps all the issues delineated above and explains why the definite article "ה" is prefixed to each word, and therefore these three terms are perfectly reasonable.

And here is the really clever bit: one can employ those terms without having a clue as to what they refer to. There is nothing peculiar about this at all. Consider the many titles still employed by the aristocracy: knight, viscount, marquess, baron, earl; one can quite happily use all of those titles without understanding what they mean or what their etymology is. The only thing one needs to know is how and to whom to apply them.

In that manner we can address Hashem as being הגדול הגבור והנורא without any concern as to what exactly these titles refer to, and that is perfectly rational and acceptable.

with and resonates within the heart of His loyal servants around the world. A map is being drawn and points of hope are being identified depending upon the response. The purpose of the entire creation and each being is being called into question! Teshuvah not only means "return", but also means "answer". The Shofar asks and everything depends on our Teshuva!

Open Door Policy

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

They are among the most stirring words in the Torah. In vermilion verse, Moses calls upon heaven and earth to bear witness to the poetic image he is about to conjure of Hashem's awesome majesty and His special relationship with the Jewish people. The Song of Moses, which we read in this week's portion, is a stunning paean characterized by sharp rebuke but also glorious hope.

Towards the beginning of his Song, Moses inserts an enigmatic cue for the Jewish people. "As I call out the Name of Hashem, declare the greatness of our Lord!" These are very puzzling lines. Since the entire Song is a declaration of Hashem's greatness, what exactly was he asking the people to contribute? Furthermore, why does Moses calling out Hashem's Name trigger the Jewish declaration of Hashem's greatness?

Let us look for a moment into the first portion of the Torah, which we will be reading in just a few weeks. After the serpent subverts Adam and Eve and causes them to be expelled from the Garden of Eden, Hashem curses him, "And you shall eat dust all the days of your life." The commentators wonder: How severe can this curse be if it assures the serpent of a plentiful supply of food at all times? This exactly is the essence of the curse. The commentators explain. Man, who must struggle for his sustenance, is always calling out to the Creator for help and support, and as a result, man's very needs provide him with the transcendent rewards of a relationship with Him. The serpent, however, was given everything he would ever need and cast aside, without any prospect of enjoying a spiritual relationship with Hashem.

This is what Moses was saying to the Jewish people. When they hear him call out the Name of Hashem, when they realize how immensely privileged they are in that they can always call out to Hashem, that they can raise themselves up spiritually by connecting with Him, then they should declare Hashem's greatness. For surely this precious gift, the opportunity for mortal man to bond with the divine, is one of the greatest kindnesses that He has ever bestowed upon his people.

A king was very displeased with the behavior of one of his sons. Despite being warned many times, the young prince persisted in his profligate ways, and presently, the king could no longer tolerate the situation. With a heavy heart, he banished the prince to a distant province and decreed that he live the rest of his life as a commoner, without any of the privileges of royalty.

On the day the prince was to leave the palace, the king came into his room and handed him a tiny sealed box.

"Take this, my son," he said. Although you are banished from the palace, this box may help you in times of most dire need." Years passed. The prince managed to survive without the protective cocoon of privilege, but not with exceedingly great difficulty. In the hardest of times, however, he knew in the back of his mind that when all else failed he could break open the sealed box and use the riches it contained.

One time, he was in such a desperate situation that he had no choice but to open the box. He fully expected to find it filled with diamonds, but to his surprise, it contained a piece of paper folded over many times.

With trembling hands, he unfolded the paper and read it. Then he burst into tears. It was a letter from the king allowing the banished prince to enter the palace and present any request directly to the king. This letter, the prince realized, was a more precious gift than a boxful of the finest jewels.

While we are still basking in the afterglow of an inspired Yom Kippur service our own lives, it is important for us to realize that the very act of prayer is its own reward, and, that the relationship we form with Hashem through intense spiritual communication is far more important

than many of the things for which we pray. Hopefully, during this season of hope and prayer, Hashem will grant us all long life, health, prosperity and joy. But it is important to remember that even before all these blessings are delivered to our doorsteps, we have already been immeasurably enriched through the very act of prayer.

Climbing Up The Rope to Rachav: Hanging Onto Holiness By A Thread

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

There is a widely discussed question of why Rosh HaShanah precedes Yom HaKippur. Logically, it would seem to make more sense -- and certainly be to our advantage -- for the day of Mercy, when we are forgiven for our sins to precede the day in which we are judged for those sins.

Rav Shimon Schwab answers this question. To appreciate the answer, we must first analyze the second chapter of Yehoshua (which we read as the Haftorah for Parshas Shlach). The first city that was conquered by Yehoshua after entering the land of Israel was Jericho. Yehoshua sent out spies to reconnoiter the land. The spies stayed in the home of Rachav the Zonah. There are commentaries who identify Rachav as an innkeeper, basing the word Zonah on the word Mazon (food). However, as the Gemarah implies, the simple reading of the pasukim is that Rachav was a woman of ill repute -- the normal meaning of the word Zonah comes from the word Zenus -- (sexual immorality).

Rachav provided the spies with the information that they wanted to hear. "I know that Hashem has given you the Land, and that your terror has fallen upon us, and that all the inhabitants of the Land have melted because of you..."

The Talmud asks [Zevachim 116a], "How did Rachav know that the whole country was in mortal fear of the Jews?" The Gemara is making an inference from Rachav's statement that "neither did there remain any more spirit in any man". Rachav was testifying to the loss of spirit and initiative based on personal professional knowledge. She had served as a harlot since she was ten years old. This was her profession throughout the forty years when the Jews were wandering in the wilderness. During this period, there was not a prince or ruler in the area who did not come by and use her services.

At this point of time, at the age of fifty, Rachav repented and actually converted to Judaism. She confessed to G-d that during her years of sin, she made use of three devices to secretly bring customers into and out of her residence: The rope, the window, and the wall. Therefore, she now used these same three items to help the spies escape from her dwelling and from being noticed by the Canaanites, thereby saving their lives. She asked that she be forgiven for her inappropriate use of these devices by virtue of the fact that she now risked her life and used them for a laudatory reason. This is the simple reading of the Gemara in Zevachim.

Rabbi Schwab is not satisfied with this interpretation. Rav Schwab asks, what does it mean that she used the rope, the window, and the wall for people to sin? She ran a house of ill repute for forty years. Everyone must have known exactly what was going on in that house. There was no reason to have a secret entrance by way of the window and rope. After 40 years, who were these princes and kings trying to fool? What were they trying to hide by climbing up the wall and entering through the window? Everyone knew Rachav the harlot and the nature of her business.

Rav Schwab interprets the Gemara differently. The Gemara is teaching us one of the secrets of Repentance. What finally inspired Rachav to repent? Rachav was inspired to repent through the realization that after 40 years in business, there were still people who were embarrassed to walk into her front door! There were still people who would be so ashamed that they would only enter by way of the rope, the wall, and the window. The fact was that after all these years, there were still people who had a modicum of dignity and embarrassment. They possessed some latent degree of sensitivity and morality that at least prevented them from committing this sin in a blatant fashion. Despite the fact that the times and the society were immersed in immorality, there were still individuals who at least had a sense of guilt, some

remnant intuition of possessing a "Tzelem Elokim". Teshuvah can only begin under such circumstances.

Teshuvah can only begin if I do not give up on myself. If I believe that I am totally worthless, then I cannot begin to think about repentance. However, when I realize that somewhere deep down inside, there is still the dignity of man, there is still something holy, then I can use that feeling and begin the trek down the road to repentance. This is what Rachav meant when she referred to the rope, the window, and the wall.

The Mishneh states "Don't be wicked in your own eyes" [Avot 2:13] This is why Rosh HaShanah must precede Yom Kippur. In order for a person to begin the process of Teshuvah, he must first realize that he is somebody of value. He must take note: I am a son of Israel. I have a King in Heaven. I am a servant of the King. Yes, I may not have been a very good servant, but at least I can say that I am His servant.

The realization that there is a King and that I am His servant, and therefore that I have self worth, is a prerequisite for the process of Repentance. If we would start the Ten Days of Repentance merely with confession -- merely with a recitation of all the sins that we committed, we would overwhelm ourselves with our worthlessness, and we would not be in a position to repent.

On Rosh HaShanah, we never say the words "Al Chet" (upon the sins...) or "Ashamnu" (we are guilty). Leave the sins out of it, for the meanwhile. On this day, a person must think about who he is, his vast potential, and his goal in life. From such a perspective, repentance may flow forward.

The Baal Shem Tov suggests a beautiful Chassidische insight on this past week's portion: "If your dispersed shall be at the ends of Heaven, from there the L-rd your G-d will gather you and take you." [Devarim 30:4] The Baal Shem Tov comments that we would have expected the pasuk [verse] to read "If your dispersed shall be at the ends of the Earth." However, the pasuk says "...at the ends of the Heaven". The Baal Shem Tov teaches the same lesson that we mentioned above: The only time that a person can be gathered back to G-d, is if "Heavenliness" is still present within the person. If a person feels that he still has a Heavenly attachment - despite the fact that he may have sullied himself with the pleasures of the earth -- then from there G-d can gather him back.

Rachav was a harlot for 40 years, but she eventually married Yehoshua bin Nun, the greatest man of his generation. It all began with her contemplation of the wall, the rope, and the window - with her recognition that man - for all of his shortcomings - still possesses holiness. That must be the beginning of the path to Teshuvah.

Nerve Centre of the Year **Rabbi Eliyahu Hoffmann (Torah.org)**

Some people thrive on irregularity. They love changes in their schedules - days off, exploring new places and doing new things. These people often find day-to-day life dull and humdrum; they constantly await the opportunity to investigate new vistas and experience new events.

Then there are people like me. I love routine. I thrive on regularity. I find drastic schedule changes difficult to adapt to. Such people would gladly do the same thing day in/day out, rarely feeling the need to "get away" from routine and do something out of the ordinary. For such individuals, days like Rosh Hashana present a unique challenge. We are asked to pour tremendous energy and concentration into a short, 48 hour period. In complete departure from schedule, we spend most of our day in shul, immersed in prayer. We are told that these two short days have a disproportionate effect over our entire year. How is one to understand and adapt to this sudden and drastic change? How can we gain an appreciation of these days, so that we may truly utilize them to their full potential?

While Rosh Hashana is indeed the Jewish New Year, the word Rosh does not mean new. Rosh means head; thus Rosh Hashana is the Head of the Year. Why do we refer to it as the head, as opposed to the beginning, of the year? If a person has a problem with his feet, his feet suffer. If his hands are not healthy, his hands hurt. If a person has difficulty with his brain, his entire body suffers. The brain is not simply another

organ playing its role in the multifaceted creation we know as the human body - the brain is the nerve-centre of the entire body. It controls our actions, our movements, even our thoughts and feelings. While in rare cases doctors may consider amputating a sick limb, or even transplanting a critical organ such as a liver or heart, one does not remove the brain.

Thus it would be fair to say that, within the scheme of the human body, the relatively small brain plays a disproportionately large role. This is why we go to such lengths to protect our heads. Bicycle helmets are now required by the law. Broken hands and feet can be mended; a blow to the brain, G-d forbid, can be life-threatening.

Just like the body has an appendage that plays a central and irreplaceable role in its function, time also has its "head." Rosh Hashana is the "Head of the Year." It is the nerve-centre of the Jewish calendar. While it represents a relatively small portion of the time-cycle, its effect over the coming year is powerful and immeasurable. Just like a small irregularity in the brain could have catastrophic effects on the entire body's function, so too even small deviations and lapses on Rosh Hashana can cause untold harm to our lives over the coming year. Is it just? Is it fair that such a short period should have such a powerful impact? That's not for us to judge. We can only absorb the fact, and try our best to take advantage of these incredibly powerful 48 hours.

This concept helps to explain some of the unusual customs and laws surrounding Rosh Hashana. Commentators quote the Talmud Yerushalmi that suggests one not rest (during the daytime) on Rosh Hashana. "One who sleeps on Rosh Hashana will have a sleepy mazal the coming year." What's the difference, one might ask, if I have a little nap on Rosh Hashana? I do it every other Shabbos and Yom Tov! Rosh Hashana is different. It is the "head" of the year. Half an hour - a small period of time - on Rosh Hashana, may regulate entire weeks or even months of our coming year, just as a tiny area of the brain may control critical bodily functions and services. Commentators even question why we're allowed to sleep at night on Rosh Hashana! (Luckily for us they rule it permissible.)

Rosh Hashana is steeped in ritual. We eat the head of a sheep or fish as a symbol of leadership and ascendancy. We dip our challah and apple in honey in the hope of a sweet year. We even avoid sharp, bitter or pungent foods for the same reasons. While all year long we would consider such practices superstitious and obsessive, Rosh Hashana has such tremendous impact on our lives that even small changes that serve to put us in the right frame of mind (sweet, positive), and arouse us to prayer and faith, are necessary and normal.

On Rosh Hashana, we are especially meticulous with our prayers. While all year long we are not particular about the precise vowelization of some words, on Rosh Hashana we are. "Zochreinu l'chaim - remember us for life!" While during the year we often pronounce it "La'chaim," on Rosh Hashana we are careful to say "L'chaim," because La'chaim sounds too similar to "Lo chaim," which means "not life." (Mishnah Berurah 582:16) Consider this: If halacha requires us on Rosh Hashana to be so careful with our prayers, how much more so must we be careful with what we speak about at our Yom Tov meals, or during our breaks from prayer or Torah study!

The Talmud (Yerushalmi quoted by Ran) rules that if one blows the shofar from its wider side, he has not fulfilled his obligation. The shofar may only be blown from its narrower side. Perhaps this halacha alludes to the above concept: The voice of the shofar emerges from a tiny hole, travelling through an ever-widening cavity, until ultimately it leaves its confines, and its powerful voice fills every corner of the synagogue, permeating as well the thoughts and consciousness of all who hear it. So too Rosh Hashana is a small window to our year, from where our lives emerge, never unchanged, impacted by these two short days with such great repercussion.

Just 48 hours of time, with so much hanging in the balance. Forty eight is the numerical value (gematria) of moach - the brain. Rosh Hashana is the nerve-centre of our coming year. May the Almighty grant us the sense and the clarity to utilize it to its full potential and appreciate its impact.