

LAMPLIGHTER

29 Elul
Rosh Hashana
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LIVING WITH THE TIMES

This week's Torah portion, Ha'azinu, opens with Moses' words: "Listen, heaven, and I will speak; hear, earth, the words of my mouth." With these words Moses called upon heaven and earth to bear witness concerning his admonitions and exhortations to the Jewish people regarding their performance of Torah and Mitzvot (the commandments).

The commentary Sifrei offers an explanation for Moses' selection of heaven and earth as witnesses. "Listen heaven" - because Torah was given from heaven; "hear earth" - because upon it the Jewish people stood when they accepted the Torah and said "All that G-d spoke we shall obey and hear."

Torah and Mitzvot were given to us by G-d, who is infinitely higher than heaven and earth. In seeking to exhort Israel to a greater degree of performance of Torah and Mitzvot, it is logical to assume that this could be best accomplished by stressing the fact that Torah and Mitzvot were given by G-d, rather than by focusing upon the point that Torah and Mitzvot are connected to heaven and earth. Why, then, the emphasis on heaven and earth?

A Jew is expected to serve G-d on two levels: on one hand he is expected to serve G-d with pure and simple faith and with acceptance of the Heavenly Yoke - a feeling which comes from the soul's essence. On the other hand his service must permeate his internal powers of intellect and emotions so that they too understand and feel G-dliness.

In practical terms this means that a Jew is to connect his soul's essence with his inner powers, so that not only does he serve G-d in thought, speech, and action out of a sense of simple faith, but he also comprehends G-dliness in his mind and loves and fears Him in his heart.

Moreover, a Jew is expected not only to serve G-d in the general and ongoing manner of regular Torah and Mitzvot, he is also to serve Him through repentance - Teshuva. This level of service, a level of service that emanates from the soul's essence and seeks the innermost aspect of G-dliness, must permeate the person's powers of intellect and emotion as well.

This is why when Moses desired to rouse the Jews to the service of Torah and Mitzvot, whose performance was to be not only with pure faith but with the inner powers of intellect and emotion as well, he mentioned that Torah and Mitzvot were given through heaven and earth.

Thus, he aroused within the Jewish nation their inner "heaven and earth," that the heaven -faith- affect the lesser powers of emotion, speech and action that are likened to and on the level of earth.

(Based on the teachings of the Lubavitcher Rebbe)

Days of Awe

By Yanki Tauber

Kings have been in rather short supply in recent generations.

Of course, there's still the Queen of England. She has a crown, a throne, a palace, guards, and ladies-in-waiting--the works. Theoretically, she can even dismiss her parliament and start issuing decrees. But we all know that she'll never do that. So all the pomp and ceremony has a false ring to it.

So we're looking for a real despot? The dictators of our time? One would hardly call those fellows "kings". They instill dread, not awe; they possess power, not majesty. A crown on their head would look ludicrous.

The kings we remember from our childhood story books had majesty. They evoked fear, but also love. Their subjects trembled before them, but they wanted to tremble before them. There was lots of pomp and ceremony, but the pomp and ceremony meant something, represented something real. The crown on their head looked like it belonged there.

The essence of Rosh Hashanah, our sages tell us, is that it is the day on which we crown G-d king of the universe.

For many "G-d" is probably not a word used comfortably. Add to that "king of the universe," and that's enough to make a modern person squirm. When we go to the synagogue on Rosh Hashanah, most of us would not think of it as attending G-d's coronation.

But let us contemplate for a moment what is it that we are missing in our lives. Why it is that we still yearn for those kings of our childhood world.

What we lack in our lives is awe.

There are, of course, plenty of people out there who are prepared to tell us what to do, including many who, given the opportunity, would force us to do what they are telling us to do. But that's not the authority we need and crave.

True authority is absolute. It commands, not advises. At the same time, it is not something imposed upon us, for it is fully in harmony with our quintessential will. It is something to which we submit wholly and unequivocally because we recognize it as the voice of our deepest self.

On Rosh Hashanah, we devote two days to the search for the king of the universe we have been seeking since our childhood. But don't look for Him in the synagogue, in your prayer book or in the rabbi's speech. Look for Him in your deepest self: in the things that no one has to tell you, because you already know them absolutely; in the commitments to which you willingly submit, because you recognize them to be expressions of, rather than impositions upon, your true will.

On second thought, do go to the synagogue, be in the company of many others seeking that same core of truth and source of awe. Do read the verses printed in the prayer book, which capture humanity's six-thousand-year quest for a king.

When the shofar sounds, close your eyes. Imagine yourself in the midst of a jubilant crowd who has gathered to celebrate the coronation of their king, submitting to an authority that embodies their own deepest strivings and aspirations.

Slice of LIFE

The Sound of the Silent Shofar

By Daniel Moscovitz

This year, as we enter the portals of our respective synagogues on the first day of the new Jewish year, we will wait in vain to hear the inspiring blast of the Shofar. The cantor will chant, the rabbi will sermonize, and the congregation will join in loving praise of G-d and our people. But the Shofar--the ram's horn whose piercing notes traditionally signify the high point of the Rosh Hashanah service--will remain still.

The Talmud relates in the name of the great sage Rabbah that when the New Year coincides with Shabbat, the day of rest, our weekly dose of spiritual respite supersedes the pageantry and the magnitude of the Shofar's call.

OK, that's the law; but where is the inspiration? Where is the majesty? How can the routine Shabbat observance replace the sound of the ram's horn heard at Sinai? How will we crown G-d king of the universe? How will we get a foretaste of the "great Shofar" that will usher in the time of Moshiach? How can we hear a silent Shofar?

Recently I found the answer in a most unlikely setting. Last week, I attended a Bar Mitzvah that will stay etched in my memory forever. As a community rabbi, I attend many life cycle events. Each in its own way is memorable and significant. But attending the Bar Mitzvah of Shmuel Dovid E., an autistic child with cognitive delays, was difficult. Not for the child or for the family, but for us, the guests.

Don't get me wrong. The parents have their hands full. For years Shmuel Dovid could hardly utter a word or communicate his basic needs. But they handled it. And in handling it, the family, the Bar Mitzvah boy, the inner circle of professionals and support staff--they are blessed with unusual insight that goes beyond the superficial and the external. They are privy to a dimension of life that we can only philosophize about. They can look directly into the soul of this beautiful child of G-d and see a truly stunning work of creation. They nurtured Shmuel Dovid, lovingly and consistently, to achieve his Bar Mitzvah goals.

We the outsiders could only hope to observe, to act natural, to say the right things, and to pretend that all is normal and average and mundane.

At the celebration, Shmuel Dovid's father got up to thank the community, the Keshet school, the friends, relatives, and personnel who have walked hand in hand with the E. family at each and every step of this incredible journey.

And then Mr. E. told a story.

Thirty years ago he encountered a Jewish woman in Seattle who told him about her immigrant father coming to Winnipeg, Canada in the very difficult years of the depression. He had brought with him from his European small town a work ethic that nothing was too hard or demeaning. And so, when the only job available to him in this newfound land of opportunity was to be a simple milk man, he accepted the job with zeal. There was only one problem. He also brought with him from Europe his heritage and traditions. The job required he work on Shabbat. He couldn't, he wouldn't.

So each and every week as he pooled together his meagre wages that barely covered his family's basic needs, he allocated the money necessary to hire a non-Jew to cover for him on Saturdays. It wasn't cheap, he had to pay his stand-in double the daily rate, but there was no other option, he would not disappoint the Sabbath queen.

Every Friday, as the Jewish immigrant went through this financial ritual, he would repeat to his children the following chant: "If the children of Israel keep the Shabbat--the Shabbat will keep the children of Israel."

Years later this story took on great significance in the life of the E. family. Things were getting tougher. Shmuel Dovid's severely limited ability to communicate was triggering uncontrolled and unpredictable behaviour. Eighteen months before their son's thirteenth birthday, planning a Bar Mitzvah seemed totally impossible. But even more frightening was the realization that living at home was becoming more and more difficult for Shmuel Dovid and for his family. As they contemplated the future, the possibility of a group home for their beloved child, was looming as an uncomfortable but perhaps necessary option. It would bring some long forgotten calm to their home, but what of Shmuel Dovid? Would this be of benefit to him? Then came the religious questions. There was no organized facility in the area that provided Kosher food and a Shabbat environment.

Mr. and Mrs. E. went to their rabbi to discuss the latest challenge. What was the Jewish law? Could they even consider a setting for their precious son that had no provisions for kosher or Shabbat? Was it permissible? What was their Judaic/parental responsibility in this case?

The rabbi was clear. For a child who was unaware of the significance of basic Jewish laws, it would be halachically sanctioned to outplace him, even if the group home could not provide for elementary Jewish practices.

Mr. and Mrs. E. left the rabbi's office with the clarity they had sought. Shmuel Dovid would stay home.

True, his scope of knowledge was limited. His comprehension of things outside his immediate reach was restricted. But he did know of Shabbat. What he did not know was Saturday. His face would shine as his mother lit the Shabbat candles. He anxiously awaited his turn to drink from his father's Kiddush cup on Friday nights. He would drum his fingers and sing along--off tune--as the family broke out in Chassidic song. Shmuel Dovid knew of Shabbat and he even knew of kosher, carefully examining a package for its kosher symbol and recognizing the difference between meat and dairy. Yes, Shmuel Dovid would stay home.

The decision was made and the next eighteen months were a turning point. Together they struggled, they dared, they dreamt, they planned, and they succeeded.

When the big day arrived, Shmuel Dovid was called to the Torah, to make the blessings and take his rightful place among those of all generations past. He lovingly cared for his new pair of tefillin and learned to wrap them each weekday morning just as his father and brothers do. He got his own suit and black hat, like all the other Yeshiva boys, and he brought to the home a new calm that they hadn't felt in a long time. That day he became a "man."

"If the children of Israel keep the Shabbat--the Shabbat will keep the children of Israel."

When Mr. E. finished his story there was not a dry eye in the Shul. Every heart was moved. Each of us sat in awe of this amazing boy, this awesome family, our wonderful traditions, and our treasured Shabbat.

So this year, on the first day of Rosh Hashanah when the Shofar is silent, let us make sure to listen very carefully. We can hear the whisper of generations; we can heed the secret of our survival. We can contemplate of those who have sacrificed and of those who have reaped the benefits of our faith.

We can close our eyes and see our mother's Shabbat candles and taste our Grandfather's sweet wine. We can reach deeply into the age-old wisdom of the weekly Torah message. And we can resolve to emulate the simple devotion and the amazing fortitude of Shmuel Dovid E.

This Rosh Hashanah, listen carefully to the resounding sound of the silent Shofar. It calls us to embrace the Shabbat queen.

MOSHIACH MATTERS

The Baal Shem Tov wrote in a letter that on Rosh Hashana of the year 5507 (1746), his soul ascended to the heavenly realms, where he was granted the privilege of entering the palace of Moshiach. "I asked the King Moshiach, 'Master, when are you coming?' And he replied: 'When your wellsprings [teachings] will be disseminated outward.'" From this reply it is apparent that the Baal Shem Tov's teachings - Chasidut - are closely connected with the coming of Moshiach. Chasidut is the vessel for the great light of Moshiach. (Likutei Dibburim)

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ISSUE 1002



INSIGHTS

LETTERS BY THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

A Good Start for a Good Year

By the Grace of G d
4th of Cheshvan, 5724 [October 22, 1963]
Brooklyn, N. Y.
Greeting and Blessing:

After a long interval, I received your letter of the 29th of Tishrei [October 17], in which you write some highlights of your activities during the month of Tishrei [the month of the High Holidays] in connection with the work of Tz. A. Ch. [Lubavitch Youth Organization], the Shuls [synagogues], etc.

We have heard from my father-in-law of saintly memory on several occasions that the way one begins the new year during the [Jewish] month of Tishrei, makes it easier to follow in this spirit throughout the year. May G d grant that the good beginning which was made in the month of Tishrei will pave the way for ever growing activities in all matters of Torah throughout the year, in accordance with the principle that all matters of holiness should be on the ascendancy.

As requested, I will remember your daughter, Chava Sarah, in prayer in connection with her birthday, which is today.

With prayerful wishes for Hatzlocho [success] and good news in all your affairs, both personal and communal.
With blessing
By [signed by the secretary]

New Year's Message to Jewish Soldiers

Erev Rosh-Hashono, 5704 [the eve of Rosh Hashanah 1943]
B"H
Happy New Year!
Dear Friend:

We are sending you here with a special message, based upon a talk with the celebrated Lubavitcher Rabbi, Rabbi Joseph I. Schneerson. This message has been published by us in small pocket-size form for your convenience. Added to it are also a few selected Psalms, specially recommended by the Lubavitcher Rabbi, for their particular appeal and suitability for the Jewish service man.

Read this message frequently, and you will derive growing faith and courage from it.

We wish to add here a few words which have been recently pronounced by the Lubavitcher Rabbi at a great mass-meeting in New York:

"It is a great Mitzvah (precept) and a sacred duty upon each one of us to make known to every Jewish member in the armed services on land, sea, and in the air, the following:

"Our sages, their memory be blessed, said that 'he who puts on Tefillin regularly merits long life'.

"Brothers in the armed services! Be very careful to put on Tefillin on each weekday!

"The service man who has absolutely no possibility to put on the Tefillin in the morning, should put them on later in the day, but before sunset.

"The putting on of the Tefillin is a special merit which will evoke G d's mercy that you may return home safely!"

We urge you to observe all our religious precepts with the same care as that of Tefillin. You should regard it also as your duty to urge your Jewish comrades to do likewise.

With our best wishes for a Happy New Year, a year of victory that will see you and your comrades return home safe and sound with a distinguished service record, both as a Jew and as an American; a year of Complete Redemption of our people through our righteous Messiah.

Very sincerely yours,
Rabbi Mendel Schneerson,
Chairman, Executive Committee

CUSTOMS CORNER

Biblically speaking Rosh Hashanah is just one day. For thousands of years, however, Rosh Hashanah has been, and continues to be, celebrated for two days.

This extra day is not exclusive to Rosh Hashanah. As a matter of fact, the Jewish courts of old added an extra day to all of the biblical holidays (with the exception of Yom Kippur). However the added day of Rosh Hashanah is unique for two reasons: 1) It is observed in Israel as well (whereas the other added days only apply to Jews living in the Diaspora). 2) The 48 hours of Rosh Hashanah are not seen as two days, but rather as "one long day".

Due to this second reason it is doubtful whether one should make the Shehecheyanu blessing on the second night/day of Rosh Hashanah.

It is therefore preferable to have a new fruit, one we haven't eaten yet this season, on the table when lighting the candles and reciting the Kiddush. Since the new fruit is sufficient reason to make a Shehecheyanu we thus avoid any doubt regarding the appropriateness of this blessing. After Kiddush (before washing the hands for bread) we recite the blessing for fruit and eat some of the fruit.

Alternatively one can wear a new garment, which is also sufficient reason to make a Shehecheyanu, and this is actually what the Shofar blower does on the second day of Rosh Hashanah.

If new fruit are not available and one does not have a new garment, the Shehecheyanu blessing is still recited.

A WORD

from the Director

Rosh Hashanah is the beginning of the year. On that day Adam, the first man, and Eve were created. Although creation began six days before Adam and Eve were created, the 6th day is nonetheless considered the beginning of the world, Rosh Hashanah. For mankind is the centre of the universe for whom everything was created. Upon his creation, the entire world was completed and G-d's desire in the world came to its fulfilment.

It is called Rosh Hashanah, literally meaning "Head" of the year, and not merely, the beginning of the year. As mentioned, the holidays are a reoccurrence of the original event that took place on that day. Just as in the beginning of creation, G-d considered the creation of the world, so too on every Rosh Hashanah, G-d relates to the world with renewed vigour, in a way which He never did before and which forms His relationship to the world for the entire year to come.

As a head contains the life, and is the nerve centre of the entire body which is controlled by the brain, so does Rosh Hashanah contain the life and sustenance for the entire year. This is the significance of the judgment on Rosh Hashanah, and why the Rosh Hashanah spirit, in Jewish tradition, is that of solemnity. Depending on our "turning" towards G-d, G-d decides on Rosh Hashana how he will relate, and consequently sustain and bless us for our fulfilment of his commandments.

On the first Rosh Hashanah of history, immediately after his creation, Adam recognized and proclaimed G-d's Kingship of the Universe, and called on all creatures: "Come let us worship, bow down and kneel before G-d, our Maker."

Every Rosh Hashanah, we renew our acceptance and proclamation of G-d's Kingship of the Universe at large, and over each of us in particular. Thereby, turning toward Him, to lead our lives in accordance with His will. G-d accepts our prayers and is willing to master the Universe and grant us all a good and sweet year.

J. I. Guterlich

IT HAPPENED



A Novel Audit

With the approach of Rosh Hashanah as we close the past year and welcome the new, what better time for auditing our experiences in the past year so that we can better them in the year to come. Each one of us does so in our own personal way. Yet, there is something we can all learn from Moshe the innkeeper who employed a unique method of accounting.

The Baal Shem Tov's students once asked how to prepare for the High Holidays. He sent them to observe the simple innkeeper, Moshe. The students took a room in his inn, and waited to discover the answer to their question. At midnight before Rosh Hashanah they heard Moshe rustling about in the front room. They peeked out and saw Moshe taking down two large notebooks from the shelf. He sat down on a small stool, lit a candle, and began reading from one notebook.

The notebook was a diary of all the misdeeds and transgressions the innkeeper had committed in the course of the year-the date, time and circumstance of each scrupulously noted. His "sins" were quite benign -- a word of gossip one day, oversleeping the time for prayer on another, neglecting to give his daily coin to charity on a third -- but by the time Moshe had read through the first few pages, his face was bathed in tears. For more than an hour Moshe read and wept, until the last page had been turned.

He then opened up the second notebook. This, too, was a diary -- of all the troubles and misfortunes that had befallen him in the course of the year. On this day Moshe was beaten by a gang of peasants, on that day his child fell ill; once, in the dead of winter, the family had frozen for several nights for lack of firewood; another time their cow had died, and there was no milk until enough pennies had been saved to buy another.

When he had finished reading the second notebook, the tavern-keeper lifted his eyes heavenward and said: "So you see, dear Father in Heaven, I have sinned against you. Last year I repented and promised to fulfil your commandments, but I repeatedly succumbed to my evil inclination. But last year I also prayed and begged you for a year of health and prosperity, and I trusted in you that it would indeed be this way.

"Dear Father, today is the eve of Rosh Hashanah, when everyone forgives and is forgiven. Let us put the past behind us. I didn't always do what was asked of me and you didn't always do what was asked of You. I forgive you and you forgive me, and we'll call it even."

CANDLE LIGHTING: 28, 29, 30 SEPTEMBER 2011



BEGINS			ENDS		
28th	29th	30th	1st October		
6:03.....7:01	6:04.....	MELBOURNE.....	7:03		
5:57.....6:54	5:59.....	ADELAIDE.....	6:55		
5:28.....6:21	5:29.....	BRISBANE.....	6:22		
6:25.....7:14	6:25.....	DARWIN.....	7:14		
5:27.....6:20	5:28.....	GOLD COAST.....	6:21		
5:58.....6:53	5:59.....	PERTH.....	6:54		
5:37.....6:33	5:38.....	SYDNEY.....	6:34		
5:45.....6:42	5:47.....	CANBERRA.....	6:44		
5:55.....6:55	5:57.....	LAUNCESTON.....	6:57		
7:03.....8:01	7:05.....	AUCKLAND.....	8:02		
7:04.....8:04	7:06.....	WELLINGTON.....	8:07		
5:55.....6:56	5:57.....	HOBART.....	6:58		
5:26.....6:20	5:27.....	BYRON BAY.....	6:21		

For the 29th one must light after the given time. For the 30th one should light at the given time (not after), and from a pre-existing flame only.

Legal Defence

One year, when the first day of Rosh Hashanah occurred on Shabbat, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev ascended the podium in the centre of his synagogue and addressed the heavens:

"Master of the Universe! Today, all your creatures pass before you like a flock of sheep, and You pass judgment upon them. Two great books lie open before you, the book of life and the book of death. The righteous are inscribed in the book of life, and the transgressors are written in the book of death, G-d forbid.

"But today is Shabbat. Did you not command in Your holy Torah that is forbidden to write on Shabbat? True, it is permitted to violate Shabbat in order to preserve a life, so You are permitted to inscribe the righteous in the book of life. But no such clause permits inscribing those who have transgressed your will in the book of death. I therefore inform You, dear Father in Heaven, that according to the law of the Torah, You must inscribe all Your children for a year of life, health and prosperity!"

Thoughts THAT COUNT

This is the day which is the beginning of Your work.

The world was created on the 25th of Elul. Rosh Hashana, the first of Tishrei, is therefore the sixth day of Creation. How, then, can we say about Rosh Hashana, "This is the day which is the beginning of Your work"? The fact of the matter is that the entire purpose of Creation was to make a "dwelling place below" for G-d and this is accomplished through man. Because of this, before man was created, it is impossible to say that the world existed in the true sense, for its purpose was still missing. Therefore, the sixth day of Creation, on which man was created, is "the beginning of Your work". (*Likutei Torah*)

CHABAD HOUSE OF CAULFIELD LUBAVITCH

439 INKERMANN STREET, CAULFIELD

ROSH HASHANAH

1-2 TISHREI • 29-30 SEPTEMBER

WEDNESDAY NIGHT: CANDLE LIGHTING: 6:03 PM
 MINCHA: 6:10 PM
 MAARIV: 6:50 PM

THURSDAY MORNING • 29 SEPTEMBER • 1ST DAY OF ROSH HASHANA
 SHACHARIS: 9:00 AM
 SHOFAR BLOWING: 11:00 AM (APPROX)
 A child minding facility will be available from 10:00 AM
 MINCHA: 5:50
 TASHLICH: 6:00 PM
 LIGHT CANDLES AFTER: 7:01 PM
 MAARIV: 7:00 PM

FRIDAY MORNING • 30 SEPTEMBER • 2ND DAY OF ROSH HASHANA
 SHACHARIS: 9:00 AM
 SHOFAR BLOWING: 11:00 AM (APPROX)
 A child minding facility will be available from 10:00
 MINCHA: 6:10 PM
 CANDLE LIGHTING: 6:04 PM
 KABBOLAS SHABBOS: 6:45 PM

SHABBOS MORNING • PARSHAS HAAZINU • 1 OCTOBER • 3 TISHREI
 SHACHARIS: 10:00 AM
 MINCHA: 6:00 PM
 SHABBOS SHUVA DRASHA AFTER MINCHA
 SHABBOS ENDS: 7:03 PM

FAST OF GEDALIA • 2 OCTOBER • 4 TISHREI
 FAST BEGINS: 5:36 AM
 MINCHA: 7:00 PM
 FAST ENDS: 7:50 PM

WEEKDAYS: SHACHARIS SUN-FRI: 9:15 AM
 MINCHA: 7:15 PM
 MAARIV: 8:00 PM