



YESHIVAT SHA'ALVIM PRESENTS

# *Sha'alei Teshuva*

September 2018 • Tishrei 5779



This edition of Sha'alei Teshuva has been dedicated in honor of

# Sol Teichman z"l

by Helena and Steven Usdan

Sol Teichman was born in 1927 in Munkacz. Mr. Teichman had the z'chus to have been close to the Belzer Rebbe and to the Munkaczer Rebbe, the Minchas Elazar. Shortly after Sol's Bar Mitzvah in 1940, his father was taken away to a Hungarian labor camp. In 1944, on the second day of Pesach, the Jews of Munkacz were herded into ghettos. A few months later, they were transported to Auschwitz where he lost his mother, sisters and three brothers. Sol often spoke about how his Emuna in Hakadosh Baruch Hu was the one and only thing that kept him alive. He never ate on Yom Kippur and regularly shared his rations with others regardless of his own needs. On the infamous "death march" to Dachau, Sol not only survived but carried his brother Steve, making the two of them part of the small percentage that survived.

After the war, Sol married his Aishes Chayil, Ruthie, yibadel l'chaim tovim ve'aruchim; together they built a wonderful home and amazing family based upon the values of Torah, Avodah and Gemilus Chasadim. Sol was a truly special person who greeted everyone b'sever panim yafos. His Middos were exemplary. His love for Torah, Talmidei Chachamim and B'nei Yeshiva is legendary. He would make countless phone calls every Erev Shabbos and Erev Yom Tov to wish Good Shabbos to friends, children of friends and grandchildren of friends, inquiring how everyone and their families were doing. Sol truly cared; everyone felt that they were one of his best friends.

He was very successful in business and transmitted to his family the message that "financial success is a blessing from God granted in order to help others." Sol's Tzedaka is legendary; he would make dedications not in his own name but rather in the name of the "Teichman Family".

Sol will be sorely missed by so many (a gross understatement) because he was a genuine friend to so many people. He invested his time and energy to build sustainable Jewish institutions such as Emek Hebrew Academy, among too many others to name. Sol truly lived a life that was primarily focused on helping others. His "Ani" embodied the "Ani" of Rav Shimon Shkop in that he constantly cared for, and worked on behalf of, Klal Yisrael.

May his memory be a blessing and may we learn from the pure and holy life led by Sol Teichman Z"L.

תהא נשמתו צרורה בצרור החיים





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# A Message from Our Leadership...

**D**ear Friends,  
5779 promises to be one of the most exciting years ever at Sha'alvim. As a result of the tireless efforts of our Rosh Yeshiva, Rav Michael Yammer, Shlita, as well as our entire talented team of Administrators, Ramim and Morot. We are proud that the incoming classes at the Moty Hornstein Institute, the Yeshivat Hesder and Sha'alvim for Women are the largest incoming classes that we have ever had. Every one of these Talmidim and Talmidot represent the ideals of Sha'alvim and are committed to becoming outstanding Bnei and Bnot Torah.

This Elul, the Yeshiva welcomed 69 Shana Aleph, 50 Shana Bet and 6 Shana Gimmel students to the Moty Hornstein Institute for Overseas Students. This success is a tribute to the Menahel of the program, Rav Ari Waxman, and his talented team.

The Yeshivat Hesder continues to build on its significant growth in recent years, and this year's Shana Aleph welcomed over 50 new students to our Beit Midrash, the highest in decades. This success will significantly enhance the learning in the Yeshiva.

SFW, under the consistently able leadership of Rav Yamin Goldsmith, Shlita, is also enjoying a strong year with 70 Shana Aleph students and 18 returning women for Shana Bet. These young women come to us from several different countries and we expect that they will have an amazing year.

Our seasoned administrators have worked diligently to ensure that we can accommodate all of these new Talmidim, and we are very proud to note

that the newly opened Blisko dining hall will give the Yeshiva its own dining space, and allow for improved quality of food at the Moty Hornstein Institute and Yeshivat Hesder.

With the help of Hashem the Yeshiva continues to grow and we have much to celebrate. Our Yeshiva continues to fulfill its mission of educating at the highest level of Torah scholarship and preparing each student at his or her own pace for life after the Yeshiva.

With the Yamim Noraim approaching, we turn to you – our alumni, parents and friends - to ask for your help. All of the activities of the Yeshiva, on the campuses, as well as its efforts to spread Torah learning in Israel and around the world require significant resources.

We ask for your help and support in this zman of Tshuva, Tefillah and Tzedaka. These funds can help the Yeshiva add more services, offer scholarships to needy families and continue to expand Torah learning.

Please enjoy the unique Torah of Sha'alvim and accept our sincere wishes for a New Year filled with happiness, health and Nachat from our Yeshiva.

Moshe Orenbuch  
*President*

Jacob Weichholz  
*Chairman*



# The Mitzvah of Teshuva: Strive to Maximize Your Potential

**F**or some people, the Mitzvah of Teshuva generates feelings of tension or of discomfort. According to their understanding, this Mitzvah is a form of “*be’di’aved*” - I sinned, now there is a Mitzvah to do Teshuva. They also feel that this Mitzvah is intended to change them, to transform them into someone else.

*“For this Mitzvah which I am commanding to you today is not hidden from you, nor is it distant from you. It is not in the heavens that would cause you to say ‘who will ascend to the heavens and bring it to us?’ ...And it is not overseas that would cause one to say ‘who will travel overseas and bring it to us?’ For it is very close to you in your mouths and hearts to fulfill it’ (Sefer Devarim 30:11-14).*

According to the Ramban the Mitzvah referred to in this passage is the Mitzvah of Teshuva. Why is this Mitzvah specifically referred to as “very close”, “in your mouths and hearts” and “not overseas”? Why are these phrases not mentioned in reference to the Mitzvah of Shabbat, which contains numerous halachot? Why doesn’t the Torah state that observing the Mitzvah of Shabbat is not impossible?

Rav David Azulai, the Chida, poses a talmudic question. Lashes are administered to a person who transgresses a negative prohibition. An exception to this rule is if a person violated a prohibition that can be fixed, a *Lav HaNitak le’Aseh*. For example, if a person stole an item, he is commanded to return that item to the owner; therefore lashes are not administered. Why does the Mitzvah of Teshuva not

absolve every transgression from lashes?! Every transgression necessitates the Mitzvah of Teshuva; why does this not constitute a *Lav HaNitak le’Aseh*?

Rav Zvi Yehuda Kook advances an amazing, fundamental answer. It not only supplies a solution to the question of the Chida, it provides a definition of the Mitzvah of Teshuva. In a *Lav HaNitak le’Aseh*, the positive Mitzvah did not exist prior to the violation of the prohibition. Teshuva, however, is essentially different. Teshuva is not restricted to erasing sins. Rather the meaning of this Mitzvah is to maximize your spiritual potential! Go higher, cling to Hashem! The Mitzvah of Teshuva exists even in the absence of committing a sin; thus transgressions will not automatically generate a *Lav haNitak le’Aseh*.

The Mitzvah of Teshuva is not intended to change a person into someone else. It does not strive to revise a person’s unique qualities. All of us possess our special “portion in Your Torah”. The Torah does not aim to transform an outgoing fellow into a sullen recluse. Rather, equipped with the unique talents that each and every person is blessed with, we all are commanded to maximize our potential. Let us advance from being a candle to being a torch. Our spiritual component must function as the dominant factor of our being.



**Rav Michael  
Yammer**  
Rosh HaYeshiva

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*Rosh HaYeshiva Rav Michael Yammer attended the Netiv Meir Yeshiva High School and Yeshivat Hesder Sha’alvim, serving as long time Ra”M prior to becoming Sgan Rosh Yeshiva and Rosh Yeshiva. Rav Yammer is the author of an extensive volume on contemporary halachic topics.*



The Kotzker rebbe remarks on the verse “*And you shall be holy men for Me*” (Sefer Shmot 22:30) that Hashem does not demand us to be angels; He has enough of those already. Hashem wants holy people who are connected to this physical world, possess human traits and utilize them to serve Hashem.

Precisely because some people associate Teshuva as changing our true selves, the Torah writes that the opposite is the case. Teshuva is inherent within us, it is not overseas, external. We are commanded to bring our potential to maximum fruition; to reach our genuine inner essence.

Everyone has a portion in Torah, in service of Hashem. In that unique portion we all are required to work to elevate ourselves. As Rabi Zusha said “I’m not concerned that I will be asked why I wasn’t on the level of Moshe Rabbeinu, or why I wasn’t like Aharon the Kohen Gadol; for those questions I have answers. I’m frightened that I will be asked “Why weren’t you Zusha?!”

Included in the Mitzvah of Teshuva is the necessity of self-awareness. Who are we? Who are we not? An example of a person who did not recognize his true self is Rabi Elisha son of Abuyah. The Midrash states that he was an outstanding Torah scholar whose lectures were avidly attended and appreciated by the learned (Rut Rabba, Parsha 6). Chazal mention that Acher (literally someone else, in fact Rabi Elisha son of Abuyah) cautioned Rabi Meir to avoid desecrating the Sabbath, while he himself had relinquished hope of Teshuva. Acher predicated his conviction based on a Heavenly Voice, a Bat Kol, that proclaimed that he has no option of return (Masechet Chagiga 15a).

Rav Soloveitchik explains this passage as follows. The Bat Kol intended to convey that “Acher” is

beyond the pale; but Rabi Elisha son of Abuyah is not. Rabi Elisha son of Abuyah, shed the false identity of Acher and revert to your true self! Come Home! Rabi Elisha son Abuyah mistakenly understood that “Acher” is his true self; for Acher, Teshuva was not feasible.

The Bat Kol called out to Rabi Elisha son of Abuyah to return to his true self. The essence of Teshuva is realize who we really are and to behave accordingly. “It is not hidden from you” - don’t change yourself, be yourself!

This is the focal point of the month of Elul: Who are we? What is our spiritual state? In which direction are we striving? How can we transform our candle into a torch?

How did Rabi Elisha son of Abuyah experience such a dramatic spiritual decline? What led him to “go off the derech”?

Comprehension of his fall

can serve for us as a safeguard to avoid even a slight reduction in spiritual intensity.

Chazal mentions several causes.

**A. Difficult Questions:** Rabi Elisha son of Abuyah noticed the tongue of Rabi Yehuda the baker located in the mouth of a dog, dripping blood.....He proclaimed: “This is the Torah and its reward....?! (Talmud Yerushalmi Chagiga 2). Rabi Elisha son of Abuyah had questions concerning reward & punishment. Instead of consulting with Torah scholars he disconnected from tradition. Acher relied exclusively upon his intellect, his arrogance prevented him from requesting input from others. Thus he arrived at wrong conclusions. We adhere to the directive of Chazal “*Aseh Lecha Rav,*” to ask rabbanim for guidance in matters that trouble us. We must not allow the troubling matter to fester within ourselves. We must endeavor to find a solution.

**Teshuva is inherent within us,  
it is not overseas, external.  
We are commanded to bring  
our potential to maximum  
fruition; to reach our  
genuine inner essence.**





**B. Outside Influences:** While sitting in the Beit Midrash, books authored by apostates fell from his clothes; in addition he constantly uttered Greek songs (Masechet Chagiga 15b). Rabi Elisha son of Abuyah was not able to achieve the proper balance between being receptive and sheltered from outside influences. While there is validity to “wisdom found amongst the nations”, excessive openness generates confusion. Caution must be exercised to ensure that this wisdom does not affect the sanctity of the Jewish People.

**C. All or Nothing/Physical Pleasures:** Rabi Elisha son of Abuyah stated that if he will not merit the World to Come he may as well enjoy the delights of this world. He proceeded to go off the Derech, and engage in relations with a prostitute. She asked him if he was Rabi Elisha son of Abuyah? He uprooted a radish from the ground on the Sabbath and she remarked: “You are Acher, someone else” (Masechet Chagiga 15).

The transformation of Rabi Elisha son of Abuyah into “Acher” can be explained in two ways.

1. The Kotzker explains that “very good” is the enemy of good, as the evil inclination, the Yetzer Hara, convinces a person that if he/she isn’t 100% righteous then “it’s not worth it” and one should abandon everything. Thus, while in the midst of spiritual descent, he relinquished hope of perfection and proceeded to reject every vestige of Divine Service. We should realize that “being content with

one’s lot” includes the spiritual realm as well. It’s not “all or nothing”. Even in a non-perfect state one should not relinquish hope. Rather we should be happy for the positive points that are current and constantly strive to improve our Service of Hashem.

2. Desire to engage in luxuries. He focused on deriving pleasure from this world as a goal, rather than as a means to serve Hashem.

Thus the causes of the descent of Rabi Elisha son of Abuyah were:

- A. Arrogance, failure to ask questions.
- B. Excessive openness.
- C. All or nothing.
- D. Immersion in the delights of this world.

As we strive to become our true selves we must avoid what led to the descent of Rabi Elisha son of Abuyah. We must ask ourselves:

A. Are we subservient to our Rabbanim? Do we approach them with what troubles us? Do we accept the authority of Chazal?

B. Can we properly balance between receiving positive input from the outside world and sheltering ourselves from improper influences?

C. Are we content with our spiritual state, yet striving to improve?

D. Are we aware that the purpose of this world is not to be submerged in it, but rather to publicly sanctify The Name?

May we merit to recognize that “It is very close to you- in your mouths and hearts to perform it”.

**This Dvar Torah of the Rosh HaYeshiva, Rav Michael Yammer is dedicated by Helena and Steven Usdan and family with appreciation for all that the Rosh Yeshiva does for the Yeshiva in general and the Talmidim specifically.**



# קרוב אליך הדבר מאד



**Rav Yehezkel  
Yakovson**

מזון קל, הכין לו תיכף ומיד חלב אימו, מה שדומה לו במזגו ולפי ערך גדולתו. וכן האוויר אשר בל יוכל היות בלעדיו, הוכן לו בלא טורח. והמים אשר הוא צריך

לא הכרחי כ"כ כמו אוויר, מצוי לו, אך צריך קצת עמל להשיגו. והלחם אשר יותר יכול להתקיים בלעדיו עד שלושת ימים, צריך עמל יותר. והמעון אשר הוא בלתי הכרחי, צריך עוד יותר עמל...

וכן במושכלות ומדות אשר הם עצמיות צורת האדם, נתן לו ההכרחי בהיות האדם הולך משרים ולא יעקם אורחותיו. וזה במדות נתן ההרגש בנפש והעדינות בצורתה אשר בצורת הנפש נחקק אהבת המישרים, כמו הרחקת העול לזולתו, ומהם החמס והגזל ועריות אשת איש וכיוצא בזה, ובכלל: כל מה דסני לך - לחברך לא תעביד. וכאשר יוסר מהאדם כל תאוה מעורת שכלו והרגשתו, אז ימצא

חוקק בה הרחקת העול ואהבת הטוב והמועיל..."

לדבריו, החיים הטבעיים והרגילים של אדם יכולים לעבור כמעט ללא מאמץ, ורק הרצון האישי של האדם במותרות, הוא שמשבש את המהלך הטבעי והפשוט יוצר קשיים ודורש מאמץ. לדבריו, גם ברוחניות, להיות קרוב לקב"ה ללא חטא הוא הדבר הפשוט, הטבעי והמצוי, האדם נברא באופן ישר ללא חטא, ולכן כשהאדם רוצה לשוב בתשובה, עליו לאפשר לעצמו לנהוג באופן "טבעי" לתת ביטוי לו עצמו ולחזור להיות מה שהוא באמת. זהו שנאמר "כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד" - התשובה האמיתית קרובה אל האדם עצמו מאד, והיא אמורה לנבוע מהאדם עצמו והיא איננה תהליך חיצוני שהאדם צריך לעבור משמעות התשובה האמיתית אינה תיקון העבר אלא חזרה למי שהאדם באמת. דברים דומים ניתן לראות בתניא:

"ובזה יובן מ"ש כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד בפיו ובלבבך לעשותו דלכאורה הוא בלבבך נגד החוש שלנו [והתורה היא נצחית] שאין קרוב מאד הדבר להפך לבו מתאוות עוה"ז לאהבת ה' באמת וכמ"ש בגמרא אטו יראה מילתא זוטרתיה היא וכל שכן אהבה!?!..."

**ב**פרשתנו, פרשת ניצבים, מופיע נושא התשובה כנושא מרכזי: "והיה כי יבאו עליך כל הדברים האלה הברכה והקללה אשר נתתי לפניך והשבת אל לבבך בכל הגוים אשר הדיחך ה' אלהיך שמה: ושבת עד ה' אלהיך ושמעת בקלו ככל אשר אנכי מצוה היום אתה ובניך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך: ושב ה' אלהיך את שבותך ורחמך ושב וקבצך מכל העמים אשר הפיצך ה' אלהיך שמה: אם יהיה נדחך בקצה השמים משם וקבצך ה' אלהיך ומשם יקחך: והביאך ה' אלהיך אל הארץ אשר ירשו אבותיך וירשתה וחיטבך והרפך מאבותיך: וקל ה' אלהיך את לבבך ואת לבב זרעך לאהבה את ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך למען חייך: ונתן ה' אלהיך את כל האלות האלה על אנפיך ועל שגאיך אשר רדפו: ואתה תשוב ושמעת בקול ה' ועשית את כל מצותיו אשר אנכי מצוה היום: והותירך ה' אלהיך בכל מעשה ידך בפרי בטןך ובפרי בהמתך ובפרי אדמתך לטובה כי ישוב ה' לשוש עליך לטוב כאשר שש על אבותיך: כי תשמע בקול ה' אלהיך לשמור מצותיו וחקתיו הכתובה בספר התורה הזה כי תשוב אל ה' אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך:"

הפועל "לשוב" חוזר על עצמו מספר רב של פעמים בפסוקים אלה, המדברים על תשובת האדם הפרטי, על תשובת הכלל ועל שיבת עם ישראל לארצו.

בצמוד לפסוקים אלה, מופיעים הפסוקים:

"כי המצוה הזאת אשר אנכי מצוה היום לא נפלאה היא ממך ולא רחקה הוא: לא בשמים הוא לאמר מי יעלה לנו השמימה ויקחה לנו וישמענו אתה ונעשנה: ולא מעבר לים הוא לאמר מי יעבר לנו אל עבר הים ויקחה לנו וישמענו אתה ונעשנה: כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד בפיו ובלבבך לעשותו:"

הרמב"ן מסביר כי "המצווה" המופיעה כאן היא מצוות התשובה. מפסוקים אלה מובן כי התשובה הינה, לכאורה, עניין קל ופשוט, "קרוב אליך הדבר מאד". והרי אנו יודעים כי התשובה איננה מצווה פשוטה כלל, והיא כוללת תהליך ארוך ועבודה עצמית רבה וקשה, ואין ניתן לומר על התשובה כי היא "קרובה מאד"!? "משך חכמה" משווה בין עולם החומר לעולם הרוח ובכך הוא מפרש את פרשתינו:

"כי הבורא יצר כל בחכמתו הבלתי ב"ת ועשה מה שמוכרח יותר, להיות מצוי יותר האדם כשיוולד, בל יוכל לחיות אף רגע בלא

*Rosh Yeshivat Sha'alvim Emeritus Rav Yechezkel Yakovson studied in Yeshivat Kol Torah under Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, and in Yeshivat Hesder Sha'alvim. The rav served as Sgan Rosh HaYeshiva, Rosh Yeshiva and continues to deliver the weekly Shiur Klali as well as a shiur on halachic topics of the Parshat HaShavua.*



היא שיבת כל אדם מישראל למקומו הטבעי, מי שהוא באמת, לאחר ששב בתשובה.

בעזרת גישה זו ניתן אף להבין את מהות המנהג להתיר נדרים בערב ראש השנה, ולפתוח את תפילות יום הכיפורים בתפילת "כל נדרי". העיקרון שעליו מבוססת היכולת להתיר נדר שגָדַר האדם הוא החזרה אל המצב שהיה לפני הנדר, לפני שהאדם שינה את מצבו ואסר על עצמו דבר מה, כמאמר הגמרא: "מה בין חכם לרופא? חכם עוקר את הנדר מעיקרו, ורופא אינו מרפא אלא מכאן ולהבא." (מסכת כתובות דף עד:). העיקרון של התרת הנדרים פועל כמו התשובה, שאף היא מחזירה את האדם למצבו הראשוני והטבעי כפי שהיה לפני שחטא, וכן נכתב במסילת ישרים:

"שבהיות השב מכיר את חטאו ומודה בו ומתבונן על רעתו ושב ומתחרט עליו חרטה גמורה דמעיקרא כחרטת הנדר ממש - שהוא מתנחם לגמרי והיה חפץ ומשתוקק שמעולם לא היה נעשה הדבר ההוא ומצטער בלבו צער חזק על שכבר נעשה הדבר ועוזב אותו להבא ובורח ממנו, הנה עקירת הדבר מרצונו, יחשב לו כעקירת הנדר ומתכפר לו." (שער ד', פרק ד')

בביטול הנדר הוא בטל מעיקרו, האדם חוזר להיות אותו אדם רגיל ללא נדר על ראשו, שהיה לפני שנדר את הנדר, וכך גם בתשובה, האדם חוזר לעצמו, לעצמיותו, ל"אני" האמיתי שלו, ושב להיות אותו אדם רגיל, לפני שחטא.

"כי קרוב אליך הדבר מאוד בפיו ובלבבך לעשותו",  
עלינו להיות אנו עצמנו - אנו עצמנו כפי שבראנו הקב"ה!

*"...and you will return with all your heart...and you will return to Hashem your G-d...and Hashem will return your captives and have mercy upon you and will return and gather you.....And you will return and listen to the voice of Hashem...for Hashem will return to rejoice upon you...for you will return to Hashem your G-d..." (Sefer Devarim 30:1-8)*

The verb "return" appears numerous times in these verses, in reference to the repentance, Teshuva, of an individual person, in regards to communal Teshuva and in connection of the return of the Jewish People to the Land of Israel.

Adjacent to the above passage the Torah states:  
*"For this Mitzvah which I am commanding to you today is not hidden from you, nor is it distant from you. It is not in the heavens that would cause you to say 'who will ascend to the heavens and bring it to us?' ...And it is not overseas that would cause*

[אכן] דבר זה קרוב מאד ונקל לכל אדם אשר יש לו מוח בקדקדו כי מוחו ברשותו ויכול להתבונן בו ככל אשר יחפוץ וכשיתבונן בו בגדולת א"ס ב"ה ממילא יוליד במוחו על כל פנים האהבה לה' לדבקה בו בקיום מצותיו ותורתו" (ליקוטי אמרים, פרק יז)

מדברי בעל התניא עולה כי גם אהבת ה' והקרבה אליו יכולות לבוא באופן פנימי מתוך האדם, לאחר מחשבה שמבצע האדם בעצמו, ולאחר התבוננות אישית. למעשה על האדם לאפשר לנפשו הפנימית להשמיע את קולה ולסלק את המעצורים הפנימיים שלו המונעים ממנה לפעול, ללא כל צורך בגורמים חיצוניים.

הן לדברי ה"משך חכמה" והן לדעת ה"תניא" התשובה הינה תהליך טבעי העובר על האדם והיא כוללת חזרה אל מקומו הנכון שבו ראוי שיהיה, ע"י הישמעות לקולו הפנימי. לפי דבריהם מוסבר מדוע גם ההבטחה לשיבת עם ישראל לארצו, נמצאת בפרשה המדברת על התשובה הפרטית והכללית. שני התהליכים דומים מאוד, התשובה הינה חזרה של האדם למקומו הטבעי והברור ביותר, כפי ששיבת עם ישראל לארצו הינה חזרה טבעית אל המקום הראוי להם.

וכן כתב גם הרמב"ם:

"כל הנביאים כולן צוו על התשובה ואין ישראל נגאלין אלא בתשובה, וכבר הבטיחה תורה שסוף ישראל לעשות תשובה בסוף גלותן ומיד הן נגאלין שנאמר והיה כי יבאו עליך כל הדברים וגו' ושבת עד ה' אלהיך ושב ה' אלהיך וגו'." (הלכות תשובה פרק ז)

אף לדעת הרמב"ם, שיבת עם ישראל לארצו, תלויה בתשובה הפרטית של האדם, ומשמעות שיבת עם ישראל למקומו הטבעי, לארצו,

*one to say 'who will travel overseas and bring it to us?' For it is very close to you in your mouths and hearts to fulfill it' " (ibid, verses 11-14). .*

The Ramban explains that "this Mitzvah" refers to the Mitzvah of Teshuva. These verses indicate, apparently, that Teshuva is easy and simple to perform. "Very close to you". Yet we know that the Mitzvah of Teshuva is not at simple at all! It is a lengthy process involving difficult and intensive work. How can it be termed "very close"?!

The *Meshech Chochma* compares the physical and spiritual realms, thus enabling comprehension of the verses. The basic formula states that what is more necessary is proportionally easier to attain. And the converse: Lesser need generates a higher price in effort and cost.

In His wisdom, Hashem created the world in a way that allows access to the most vital needs of people.



A new born baby is provided with milk from his/her mother; air is free. Water, not as crucial as air, is readily available, but requires some exertion to attain. Additional effort is needed to produce and acquire bread. A roof upon one's head demands a higher price.

Likewise in regards to the essence of a person, intellect & character traits. A person instinctively will act properly; affinity towards proper, just conduct is natural. Distancing oneself from harming others is intuitive; "don't do to others what you would not like done to you". When a person removes desires that blind proper thought & feelings, he/she will find a natural desire to abhor injustice and to desire benefiting others.

According to the *Meshech Chochma* a person who intends to live a normal, natural life is able to do so without investing great effort. However, the human desire to engage in luxuries disturbs the natural process. This creates difficulties and requires extensive efforts. This applies in the spiritual sphere as well. It is simple and normal to cling to Hashem and to refrain from sin. Man is inherently righteous; we are not born in sin. A person embarking upon Teshuva must enable him/herself to act in accordance with his/her inherent essence. We aim to be our true selves. This is the meaning of the verse "it is very close to you" - because this is the real us! Teshuva is our return to our roots; it is not an external process that we have to endure. The essential meaning of Teshuva is not repairing the past; it is returning to whom we really are.

This concept is advanced by the *Baal HaTanya* as well. He writes in the *Likutei Amarim* (chapter 17) that love of Hashem and clinging to Him can materialize via an internal process in the person. Subsequent to profound, personal thought and introspection, the person can heed his/her internal essence and remove barriers to worship of Hashem.

According to both the *Meshech Chochma* and the *Baal HaTanya*, Teshuva is a natural process of returning to our true selves. This explains why the

Divine Promise of the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel is recorded in the same passage that includes personal and collective Teshuva. The return of the Jewish People to the Land of Israel is natural; we return to the land that matches our unique character.

The Rambam writes that the Jewish people will be redeemed via Teshuva. The Torah promises that we will return to Hashem and that He will return us to the land (*Hilchot Teshuva*, Chapter 7). The Rambam also opines that the return of the Jewish people to its land is contingent upon the individual return of the people. A return to our natural essence & location is the common thread.

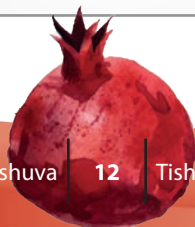
This principle enables us to understand the custom of releasing vows, Hatarat Nedarim, on Erev Rosh HaShanah and of the recitation of Kol Nidrei at the beginning of Yom Kippur. The essence of Hatarat Nedarim is returning to the state of the individual prior to taking the vow. The sage, the Chacham, who executes the Hatarat Nedarim uproots it from the beginning (*Masechet Ketubot* 74b). If the person at that time frame would have known the consequences of his/her vow, he/she would not have made it. In reference to Teshuva, the Ramchal writes in *Mesilat Yesharim* that when a person recognizes the sin, admits to it, ponders upon the harm that it caused and regrets, **from the beginning**, what he/she did, fervently desiring that he/she had never done this, abandons the sin and decides to refrain from it in the future, this operates similar to the uprooting of a vow and he/she is forgiven.

The removal of the vow enables the person to return to his/her original state without the vow. Likewise in Teshuva; the person returns to his/her true self prior to the sin.

*"For it is close in your mouth and your heart to fulfill it".*

Let us return to our true selves as created by Hashem!

**Rav Yakovson's article has been dedicated by Yael & Ephraim Sobol in honor of their son Boaz for all the great choices he has made on his journey to becoming a true Ben Torah.**



# Sacrifice

The Mishna Brurah, in Siman 581 (6), provides two reasons for the Ashkenazi minhag brought down by the Rema to say slichot for a minimum of 4 days before Rosh Hashana. His first explanation is related to the minhag that people had to fast for all of the aseret y'mei teshuva: since on four out of those ten days one would be unable to fast (two days of Rosh Hashana plus Shabbat Shuva plus erev yom kippur when there is a mitzvah to eat), one must say slichot for four days to compensate for the four days when he would have otherwise been fasting but couldn't.) The second explanation brought down by the Mishna Brurah relates to korbanot: just like an animal that will be sacrificed as a korban needs to be set aside 4 days prior in order to be checked for perfection (i.e. to make sure that it does not have a blemish), so too must each person, 4 days prior to Rosh Hashana, perform a 4-day long check, to make sure that he is blemish free—to check himself for figurative blemishes, and of course to make the necessary changes to perfect himself in preparation for Yom HaDin. The Mishna Brurah proves this idea by pointing out that in Parshat Pinchas, when the Torah commands us in all of the korbanot for the various chagim, the lashon used is “והקרבתם עולה”, however by Rosh Hashana only, the Torah switches to “ועשיתם עולה”, implying that unlike the other chagim where the animal is to be sacrificed, on Rosh Hashana one must literally “make” the korban, by turning oneself into the korban. If we ourselves are the korban to be brought on Rosh Hashana, then how fitting to say slichot, a form of self-introspection and cleansing ourselves from our sins of the previous year, for four days just as we examine an animal that was set aside as a korban.

The idea of turning ourselves into a korban as the Mishna Brurah suggests might strike us as odd since

we know that in Yahadut we are entirely opposed to human sacrifice, in fact it is considered one of the worst forms of avodah zarah! How could the Mishna Brurah

then infer from the passuk that Hashem expects us, specifically on rosh Hashana, to turn ourselves into the actual korban?

In the very beginning of Sefer Vayikra, when we are introduced to the concept of korbanot, the Ramban famously explains why Hashem put the system of korbanot into place and why He made it a central part of our religion. He writes:

“Since the deeds of people are determined by thought, speech and action, God, may He be blessed, commanded that when he sins, he brings a sacrifice and place his hands upon him corresponding to the deed, and confess with his mouth corresponding to the speech, and burn the innards and the kidneys, as they are the instruments of thought and desire. And the limbs [of the sacrifice] correspond to the hands and feet of a person that does all of his work. And he sprinkles the blood on the altar corresponding to the blood of his soul, so that a person think in doing all of this that he sinned to God with his body and his soul, and it is fit for him that his blood be spilled and his body burnt; were it not for the kindness of the Creator, who took an exchange and ransom from him [in] the sacrifice -



**Mrs. Michelle  
Elmaleh**

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that its blood be instead of his blood and its soul be instead of his soul. And the central limbs correspond to his central limbs.” (Ramban, Vayikra 1:9)

Simply put, the message of the ritual of the korban according to the Ramban is that really it should be the human being who is on the altar burning—one’s limbs should be burned for the sins he did with his arms and legs, his heart should burn for the sins he did with his heart, his eyes for the sins that were caused by his eyes, etc. Specifically because Hashem does not want the human to burn, however, and only because He does not desire human sacrifice does He command man to burn the animal instead. It would be completely fair and justifiable for Hashem to expect us to be the sacrifice and to burn on the altar, but in His mercy He has us sacrifice animals instead, a ritual whose purpose is to remind us that really it should be man himself who is burning on the altar as a result of his sins.

Not surprisingly, we find that the story of Akedat Yitzchak, the closest a Jew has ever come to human sacrifice (under divine instruction), is a featured theme of Rosh Hashana, and is the kriyat Hatorah read on the second day of Rosh Hashana. In *Worship of the Heart: Essays on Prayer* by Rav Soloveitchik, the Rav beautifully discusses the blurred line between animal sacrifice and self-sacrifice. There he teaches that “The doctrine of korbanot...demands human sacrifice, but in the form of an animal...After the temple was destroyed...the concept of worship remained unaltered. The symbol may be lacking but the idea survives. Animal sacrifice is not practiced in our day; human sacrifice endures!” In line with the thinking of the Ramban, Rav Soloveitchik points out that surely it isn’t an animal sacrifice that Hashem desires, it is simply a symbolic display of what Hashem truly expects, that we sacrifice ourselves l’shem shamayim,

that we devote every fiber of our being to the greater Cause known as Hakadosh Baruch Hu. Continues the Rav in line with this thinking, that even though we don’t have the capacity for physical korbanot today, the idea of “human sacrifice,” the essence of what korbanot really symbolize—still remains an essential component of our daily experience.

While until the rebuilding of the bet hamikdash there is no formal system of korbanot in place, the concept of korbanot in general and the message of akedat Yitzchak specifically teaches us the central role that human sacrifice—or perhaps better said self-sacrifice—is meant to take not only in the Rosh Hashana experience but for the entire year ahead. After saying slichot for four days (more than four days this year), and examining ourselves as we would an animal korban, we will stand in front of Hashem and offer ourselves as an actual korban on Rosh Hashana. After going through the process of teshuva we will hopefully be pure and unblemished beings, worthy of being sacrificed to our Master. But perhaps on Rosh Hashana, when we are focused on the entire year ahead, cleansing and readying ourselves to be sacrificed on Rosh Hashana itself does not suffice; the theme of sacrifice on Rosh Hashana requires each of us to ask ourselves to what extent am I willing to sacrifice l’shem shamayim throughout the upcoming year? What do I need to give up in order to make myself a better person, a more worthy korban for Hashem? What habits and comforts and expectations do I need to free myself from, do I need to say I am ready to let go of, in order to insure my worthiness as a “human sacrifice?”

יהי רצון that in the merit of all of the sacrifices that we make, the very essence of “self sacrifice,” may we be zoche to participate in the bringing of korbanot to the rebuilt bet hamikdash במהרה בימינו.

**Mrs. Elmaleh’s article has been dedicated by Shaye and Shani Hirsch  
in Memory of Shaye’s grandmother Leichu Hirsch**

שרה לאה בת נחע פייגה ע"ה





Rav David Lebor

# ברית העקידה מרכזיותה של מסירות הנפש ביהדות

**ב**ליל "כל נדרי" אנו אומרים פיוט "לברית הבט ואל תפן ליצר". נושא כותרת הפיוט הזה עומד במרכז כל התפילות שלנו במשך כל הימים הנוראים, ובעצם במשך כל השנה – הברית שבינינו ובין הקב"ה.

אף העיקר של סדר "זכרונות" במוסף של ראש השנה הוא הברית. הברכה מסתיימת כך: "זוכר הברית". ואף פסוקי זכרונות - ברובם ככולם מוזכר המלה "ברית". בשני פסוקים אף שלא מוזכר, הוא רמוז, בנח (שגם שם היה ברית), ובפסוק חסד נעורך וכו' (שרמוז ברית הנישואין).

וצריכים לשאול: על איזה ברית מדובר כאן? על פי נוסח הברכה נראה ברור שמדובר על הברית בעקידה. "זכור לנו ה' אלקינו את הברית ואת החסד ואת השבועה אשר נשבעת לאברהם אבינו בהר המוריה". אמנם, זה אף עיקר בקשתנו בזכרונות, כפי שרואים בסיום הברכה: "כי זוכר כל הנשכחות אתה הוא מעולם, ואין שכחה לפני כסא כבודך, ועקדת יצחק לזרעו היום ברחמים תזכור. בא"י זוכר הברית".

אנחנו זוכים בדין בזכות העקידה. חז"ל דורשים שלשון המאכלת של העקידה שהיא מאכלת אותנו - על פי הזכות הזו אנו אוכלים וקיימים. בהקדמת האברבנאל לפרשת העקידה הוא כותב שיש צורך מיוחד לעיין היטב בפרשה זו כי "הפרשה הזאת (העקידה) היא כל קרן ישראל זכותם לפני אביהם שבשמים".

בכל יום של עשרת ימי תשובה אנו מוסיפים בסליחות סליחה בשם "עקידה" על ענין העקידה. עקידה זו תמיד מופיעה לפני "זכור רחמיך... זכור ברית אבות". המסר העיקרי של סליחה זו הוא שעל זכות העקידה אנו סומכים:

*"לבם ונפשם היה נכון - לכן תפילתנו לפניך תכון."*

*מיהר ולקח מאכלת - לכן זרעם תציל ממיתה משכלת.*

*נעקד יחיד כשה לטבח - לכן תפילתנו תרצה כעולה וכזבח.*

*סידר עצים והצית עליהם אש - לכן בעמידתנו היום לא נתבייש."*

*וכן - זכרון לפניך בשחק, לעד בספר יוחק,*

*ברית עולם לא נמחק, את אברהם ואת יצחק" (עקידה ליום ד' של עשי"ת).*

וכן אנו אומרים בסוף הסליחות: מי שענה לאברהם אבינו בהר המוריה... מי שענה ליצחק בנו כשנעקד על גבי המזבח - הוא יעננו.

אנו חוזרים ומזכירים את ענין הברית, וזה שאנו בני בריתך, אין ספור פעמים בנוסח התפילות שלנו, ובמיוחד בימים אלו, בכל הזדמנות אנו

מזכירים את ענין הברית - "וכתוב לחיים טובים כל בני בריתך".

אפילו במקום שזה לא כל כך נראה לנו, עושים מאמצים להכניס את המלה "ברית". בשלש

עשרה מידות אנו מכריזים שיש כאן ברית - "ברית שלש עשרה!" למרות שענין קשירת הברית לי"ג מידות הוא נגד פשט הפסוקים, חז"ל עשו את הקשר "הנה אנכי כורת ברית". "ברית כרותה לי"ג מידות שאינן חוזרות ריקם, שנאמר: הנה אנכי כורת ברית" (ראש השנה טו). אמנם, פסוק זה שייך להמשך הכתובים שמדובר שה' כורת ברית אתנו על מנת שאנו לא נכרות ברית עם הכנעני. אך חז"ל ראו צורך לקשור את הענין דוקא בברית. ועל פי זה אף תקנו שפסוק זה יהיה חלק מקריאת התורה בתענית ציבור. בכל מקום שיש אפשרות, חז"ל רוצים לקשור את הקב"ה אתנו ביחס של ברית ולא סתם שבועה, וודאי לא רק בחסד. יש אף תביעה לקב"ה שכביכול יש לו מחויבות בגלל הברית: "אל תנאץ למען שמך אל תנבל כסא כבודך, זכור אל תפר בריתך אתנו" (ירמיה יז, כא - יום ב' של עשי"ת אחרי נד). כביכול יש איזה ניאוף או נבלה מצד הקב"ה אם הוא לא יקיים את הברית!

## ברית או שבועה?

אך האמת היא שכל המהלך הזה הוא קשה מאד, וככל שמרבים להזכיר את ענין הברית בעקידה הוא יותר קשה - שהרי לא היתה ברית בעקידה, ולא מוזכר ברית, רק שבועה של הקב"ה - "בי נשבעתי". אכן כשמעיינים בכל פרשת העקידה אנו לא מוצאים את המילה "ברית" אפילו פעם אחת!

מה ההבדל בין ברית לשבועה? ברית הוא ענין הרבה יותר מחייב מאשר שבועה. שבועה יכול להיות חד-צדדי. אדם אחד נשבע לאדם שני. אך בכל ברית יש שני צדדים. כלומר, יש כאן הסכם שעל שני הצדדים למלא. ועוד, שבועה אפשר להתיר, אך ברית אין להפר.

יתירה מזאת, ברית היא הרבה יותר חזקה מהסכם או חוזה בין שנים. חוזה והסכם יכול להיות בין שני צדדים על רקע דבר שצד אחד כבר קיים.

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אזכור". המדרש מעיר שאצל יצחק לא כתוב הפועל 'זכר', למה? והתשובה היא שאין צורך בזכירה מיוחדת אצל יצחק - מפני שאפרו של יצחק צבור ומונח על גבי המזבח, והקב"ה רואהו תמיד (ויקרא רבה, שם).

דבר זה הוא מדהים, שהרי העקידה של יצחק לא הגיעה לסיימה. אמנם, יצחק לא נשרף, האפר שהקב"ה רואה תמיד הוא לא אפרו של יצחק ממש אלא העקידות של צאצאיו של יצחק שבכל דור ודור.

כוונת האברבנאל שהעקידה "היא כל קרן ישראל וכותם לפני אביהם שבשמים", היא לא בגלל העקידה של אברהם אבינו שהתקיים לפני אלפי שנים, אלא בגלל העקידות שלנו שבכל יום עמנו.

גם מאתנו נדרשת מסירות נפש, וזה כל הזכות שלנו לזכות בדין בימים הנוראים, וגם בזמנים אחרים. אמנם אין הקב"ה דורש מאתנו מסירות נפש ממש, אלא הוא דורש מאתנו החלטה - ההחלטה של מוכנות למסור את הנפש.

ואין הכוונה בדוקא מסירות נפש פשוטו כמשמעו. דור דור וניסיונותיו. לכל דור היו ניסיונות שהתאימו להם. היו דורות של שמד, היו דורות של פוגרומים, היו דורות של עוני ודחק, היו דורות של עבודות, היו דורות של גירוש, ואף היה דור של שואה. אנחנו חיים בדור של חסד אדיה אך גם מאתנו נדרשת מסירות נפש. על איזה דברים אנחנו מוסרים נפש - דברים של מתיקות - עוד כמה דקות של התמדה, להתלהב ולהינות מדבר מצוה, לעזור ליהודי אחר - אך נדרשת מאתנו שכל הדברים הללו יעשו במסירות נפש!

לפעמים כשאנו קוראים ושומעים סיפורים על מסירותם של הקדמונים, או סיפורים מהשואה או מתמלאים בוושה כשמשווים את זה לענייני המסירות שלנו. אך אין זו תחושה נכונה. כאמור, בכל דור הניסיון שלו. אין צורך להתגמד, אך יש צורך להתמודד. וגם כמובן יש צורך גדול להודות להקב"ה על החסד שגמלנו, שנולדנו בדור של חסד, בדור של בנין, בדור של ישוב הארץ, בדור של קיבוץ גלויות. לשבח, להלל ולהודות שאין אנו צריכים לעמוד לפני הניסיונות של העבר.

מבחינה מסוימת לחיות על קידוש השם היא משימה יותר קשה מאשר למות על קידוש השם. כלומר, לחיות את החיים במסירות נפש היא משימה יותר קשה מאשר למסור את הנפש ברגע אחד. חיים של מסירות זה עסק מתמשך ויש בזה ניסיון גדול.

אם נחיה אנחנו חיים של מסירות בלימוד תורה שלנו, בתפילה שלנו, בעבודת ה' שלנו, בבין אדם לחבירו שלנו - אז נוכל להכריז בלב שלם ובבטחה - לברית הבט ואל תפן ליצר!

(לדוגמא, כשכותבים חוזה על שכירות דירה, יתכן שהשוכר כבר שילם את שכר הדירה מראש, זה הסכם אבל איננו ברית). ובגלל זה הסכם ניתן לשכות, כי המעשה קרה בעבר הרחוק. אולם המשמעות של ברית היא דבר מתמשך ששני הצדדים מקיימים כל הזמן. בברית כל צד מקיים וממשיך לקיים, אחרת יש הפרת הברית. ברית לא שוכחים, כי ברית מתקיימת כל הזמן. בברית אין שכחה, בברית יש זכירה. לכן בברית תמיד מופיע הפועל "זכירה": "זכרתי את בריתי וכו', וזכר הברית וכו'.

על פניו נראה שבעקידה יש מימד של דו-צדדיות שהוא כמו הסכם וחוזה - ("יען אשר עשית את הדבר הזה" וכו'), דהיינו על מעשה שכבר התקיים.

אמנם בעקידה מופיע המונח שבועה, אך אנו עומדים על זה שזה לא רק שבועה חד צדדית, ואף לא הסכם וחוזה דו-צדדי - אלא ברית! כלומר, אנו באים ותובעים מהקב"ה: "יש כאן ברית, ואסור להפר את הברית אתנו." הסיבה לכך, כאמור לעיל, מונחת בהבדל בין ברית לשבועה או חוזה. ברית הוא ענין מתמשך - כל צד מקיים וממשיך לקיים, אחרת יש הפרת הברית.

לכאורה, דבר זה קשה, שהרי העקידה היתה מאורע חד-פעמי בהיסטוריה של עם ישראל, ולא דבר המתמשך. אלא ההסבר הוא פשוט וברור לנו, שלדאבוננו, לאורך כל ההיסטוריה, אנו, בני ישראל, קיימנו את הצד שלנו בברית, ולכן אנו תובעים מהקב"ה שהוא ימלא את הצד שלו. אמנם היה היו הרבה עקידות בכל הדורות. וכמו שאמרה חנה (אם לשבעה בנים שנהרגו על קידוש ה') לבנה האחרון שלא השתחוה לצלם: "לכו ואמרו לאברהם אביכם: 'אתה עקדת מזבח אחד - ואני עקדתי שבעה מזבחות' (ג'יטין נז,ב).

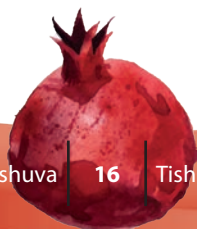
הרבה מן הסליחות של הימים הנוראים עוסקות בצרות של כלל ישראל, ובמיוחד על הריגת כלל ישראל על קידוש ה'. דוגמא: "יחלנו לך בעת צרה לדורשך, כל היום הורגנו על שם קדשך" (נג, יום ב' של עש"ת). ולכאורה מה הקשר לסליחות - אין אלו קינות אלא סליחות - דהיינו מטרות בקשת סליחה, לא הבעת צער ויגון!?

אלא הדבר פשוט - זה חלק מן הסליחה והכפרה - הברית, שקיימנו וממשיכים לקיים לדאבוננו.

אמנם המשכנו לקיים את הברית. אין כאן רק שבועה חד-צדדית, ואין כאן חוזה על מעשה שכבר התקיים - יש כאן ברית מתמשכת מאז ועד היום. לאורך כל ההיסטוריה כלל ישראל אחוז במעשה אבותיהם - בני ישראל גילו מסירות נפש אדירה במשך כל הדורות.

זכרתי את בריתי יעקב, ואף את בריתי יצחק, ואף את בריתי אברהם

**Rav Lebor's article has been dedicated by the Bodek Family**





# Hashem's Unseen Pain

**H**uman emotional experiences were given to us, at least in part, so that we could understand Hashem to the best of our ability. Experiencing mercy and compassion for others helps us comprehend what it means that Hashem has mercy and compassion for His creations. Hashem tells us about His sadness and disappointment (see בראשית 1:27), which we can only fathom in light of having those emotions ourselves. The deep love a person feels for his wife or child gives us an inkling into the depth of Hashem's love for us. While the topic of Hashem's "emotions" is complex, we are nonetheless implored to at least attempt to grasp whatever we can about the ways He interacts with us. The pasuk says, "כי אם בואת יהלל המתהלל השכל וידע אותי *For only with this may one glorify himself - contemplating and knowing Me*" (ירמיהו ט:כג). "Knowing Hashem" requires us to draw from our experiences as human beings created in the image of Hashem, and extrapolate to what these experiences can teach us about how Hashem runs the world. Understanding Hashem's ways is an essential component of relating to Him.

An all too common human occurrence that we "share" with Hashem is the pain of being unseen. Feeling invisible is an agonizingly difficult emotional experience. Children who grow up in families in which they are expected to "be seen and not heard," or where their emotions are not recognized, often describe

this form of immense suffering. One adult reflecting on his childhood put it this way:

*I wasn't just invisible physically, disappearing into solitude when my household chores were done. I felt invisible on a deeper, more fundamental level, unheard, unseen, as if nothing I thought, said, or felt was taken into account by others. I was emotionally isolated, feeling disconnected from everyone else. My feelings or desires were seldom elicited and even on the rare occasion when they were, I do not recall them ever being taken into account: if decisions were made that were in sync with my wishes, it was coincidental, not by design. People talked over the top of me, behaved as if I was not in the room, would not allow me to finish articulating a thought without either interrupting me or changing the subject mid-sentence. It was as if I was the only one who knew I was there and felt or thought anything.*

This experience of going unnoticed can happen in parent-child relationships, friendships, or even



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marriage, and in all cases it is deeply painful. Humans need to feel seen and recognized in order to thrive. It is one of the fundamental building blocks of interpersonal connection.

Hashem can also “feel” unseen. The word “עולם” comes from the same root as the word “העולם” because the world is a place that hides Hashem. This means that if we do not choose to see Him, He will simply go unnoticed. And although Hashem does not experience pain in the way we understand it, we do know that He wishes to be recognized (for our sake, not His). The Ramchal states in his introduction to Daat Tevunot that the primary undercurrent running through all of existence is the ongoing process of unveiling Hashem for all to see. From this perspective, every human act can either be categorized as concealing or revealing Hashem’s presence. Our ultimate goal is to help Him emerge from a state of hiddenness into a world in which He is finally recognized by all.

So Hashem wants us to see Him. But how can we “see” Hashem? Chazal specifically describe Hashem as “one who sees but cannot be seen” (ברכות י:). The answer is that there are two types of seeing. In human interactions, one can physically see that another person is in the room without thinking about what is happening in that person’s subjective experience. This is how it is possible to see (first type) without really seeing (second type). With Hashem there are also two types of seeing, although they are different than the two types we find in human interactions. Seeing Hashem with our eyes is not relevant with Hashem, as Moshe is told, “כי לא יראני האדם והי”, *For no man can see Me and remain living*” (שמות לג:כ). Yet there is another type of seeing, and that is done with the heart. Yes, the heart can also see, as explicitly stated in the Midrash (קהלת רבה א:לח). But what does it mean that the heart can see?

We are clearly not referring to vision in the same sense as that which we do with our physical eyes. What

we are referring to, however, is sensing Hashem as a Being that is present right here, right now. It is a type of vision performed by the heart that refers to detecting Hashem’s existence in a real way. It is a vision that involves both the mind and body, so that the object being viewed is not only known but felt viscerally. It is the difference between knowing someone is standing before you because you’ve been convinced it is so, versus knowing the person is standing before you because you are experiencing him or her in real time with your own senses. This is the type of sensing Hashem that we wish to reach.

It is interesting to note that sensing Hashem in this way is the core definition of Yirat Shamayim, and yirah has the same letters as re’iyah, meaning “to see.” Apparently, Yirat Shamayim is all about sensing that we are in the presence of Hashem in this very moment. Furthermore, just like our physical eyes can either be open and closed, our hearts can also be either open or closed. The pasuk states that we are asked to do a brit milah on our hearts, “ומלתם את ערלת לבבכם.” Circumsizing the heart means removing the covering that closes it. Open up your heart, says the Torah, so that you can use it to see G-d. When the eyes of the heart are open, we can sense Hashem’s presence in a way that feels very real.

This is what Rosh Hashana is all about. Rav Yerucham (דעת חכמה ומוסר חלק ב', עמ' רעב) explains that the essence of Malchut is when Hashem’s presence is felt in the body and not merely known in the mind. Experiencing Hashem is much more than a cognitive event. Being part of Hashem’s Malchut requires us to sense that He really exists, that He is really here, and that we are really in His presence. Malchut should affect the way we experience nature and current events. It should determine whether or not we live with a moment-to-moment awareness that everything that happens to us is part of his intimate involvement in our lives. Unfortunately, we sometimes lose touch



with this truth. We must remember that Hashem is not only Melech over the whole world but also over our individual lives as well.

Hashem's Malchut was first revealed to us at Yam Suf, when we uttered the timeless phrase, "ה' ימלוך לעולם ועד," that Hashem will reign as King forever and ever. The Ramban writes that just as Hashem showed us that He is the King and Ruler over the entire world, so it is Hashem's intention to reveal Himself in the same way to future generations. At Yam Suf we literally pointed to Him and said "זֶה אֱלֹהֵינוּ," that this is my G-d. Hashem wants us, in our generation, to be able to point to Him with certainty just as they did.

It is much harder for us to see Hashem than it was for them. We daven every day for the ability to see Him, ותחזנה עינינו, and we yearn for it to happen quickly, נקוה לך ה' א-לקינו לראות מהרה. But what can we do to hasten this process? For one, we can stop speaking as if He isn't in the room. We can stop forgetting to take into account the things He tells us. We can stop acting like He's not able to hear or see us, when in fact He's

closer than we often think. And we can start looking for Him more often, because He is always operating just behind the scenes.

In human interactions, one who wishes to relieve the pain of another who feels invisible must first be willing to look past himself. He must attempt to look deeply into the other person's experience and really care about what he finds there. This skill of looking past oneself is also necessary to live a G-d-centered life. Seeing G-d requires us to position His presence as a primary focus in our lives. We tend to get wrapped up in ourselves, but what would it be like to get wrapped up in G-d?

While Hashem does not need anything from us, there is something He chose to depend on us for. We are the ones who are meant to notice Him, not with our eyes, but with our hearts. None of us would ever wish to experience the pain of being invisible. But if we ever have, perhaps we can use it to understand just how much Hashem wants us to really see Him.



# Yaakov Avinu and the Yom Kippur-Sukkot Connection

After Yaakov Avinu leaves the home of his father-in-law Lavan, and after his encounter and eventual parting of ways with his brother Eisav, Yaakov travels to a place called “Sukkot”. The Pasuk tells us:

וַיַּעֲקֹב נָסַע סֻכּוֹתָהּ וַיִּבֶן לּוֹ בַּיִת וּלְמִקְנָהּוּ עָשָׂה סֹכֶת עַל־כֵּן קָרָא שְׁמֵהֶם־מִקּוֹם סֹכוֹת: (בראשית לג:יז)

*And Yaakov traveled to Sukkot and built himself a house, and for his cattle he made Sukkot; therefore he named the place Sukkot. (Bereishit 33:17)*

The Torah explains that the reason that location is called “Sukkot” is because when Yaakov arrived there, he built a house for himself and built Sukkot for his cattle.

Why did Yaakov name this place Sukkot? If the Torah is naming this location after a structure that Yaakov built, wouldn't it have made more sense to call the place “Bayit” after the house that he built for himself and his family? Why is the place named after the huts he built for his cattle?

The Zohar explains that Yaakov's building of Sukkot for his cattle is symbolic of B'nei Yisrael's spiritual journeys of repentance. Yaakov's cattle needed extra protection. How can this be understood, and what is the possible connection between B'nei Yisrael's spiritual journey and the huts Yaakov built for his livestock?

When someone begins undertaking a process of Teshuva, he enters a state of spiritual fragility. The decision to turn one's life in a different direction is a bold one, but is often accompanied by haunting thoughts of their recent past. This nascent piety is consequently very

precarious. The repentant's new spiritual undertakings are at great risk of being battered by thoughts and

experiences of the past. The Ba'al Teshuva needs not only a staunch psychological commitment to his process of return, but outside help in the form of support and encouragement as well. This outside help is exemplified by the story of the cattle of Yaakov.

The Shem MiShmuel (Sukkot תרע"ג) explains that the word “Sukkah” can be understood as referring to a form of protection. David Hamelech in Tehilim describes the protection that G-d provides over his head as a Sukkah:

יְהוָה אֲדֹנָי עֹז יְשׁוּעָתִי סֻכָּתָהּ לְרֹאשִׁי בְּיוֹם נִשְׁקָ: (תהילים קמח:ח)  
*God, O Lord, the strength of my salvation; You shall protect my head on the day of battle. (Tehillim 140:8)*

The Ibn Ezra there elaborates that the Sukkah to which David Hamelech refers is like a hut that defends from arrows. The animals that Yaakov Avinu herded back with him to Eretz Yisrael were not always his. He acquired them from Lavan while working in Charan. These newly spiritually elevated animals, now in the possession of Yaakov, needed protection to ensure their continued purity. Yaakov's family, on the other hand, was never under the control of Lavan, never fully immersed and exposed to the dangers



**Rav Gershon  
Turetsky**

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of that environment, and did not need a heightened level of spiritual protection. They did not require a Sukka to provide them a spiritual defense system. The significance of the place where Yaakov Avinu made camp is that his cattle were provided a spiritual refuge. Therefore the place was called “Sukkot”. This is symbolic of the Teshuva process that the B’nei Yisrael undergo. While in the process of repenting, and certainly in the beginning of the process, they need protection to ensure that they do not relapse to their pre-Teshuva state.

If in fact it was so important to protect the cattle, why did Yaakov Avinu wait to build these Sukkot? Much happened since they were spiritually liberated!

The Torah, when describing the obligation to acquire the Arba Minim for Sukkot, writes:

וּלְקַחְתֶּם לָכֶם בַּיּוֹם הָרִאשׁוֹן פְּרֵי עֵץ הָדָר כַּפַּת תְּמָרִים וְעֵנָף  
עֵץ-עֵבֶת וְעֵרְבֵי-נַחַל וּשְׂמַחְתֶּם לִפְנֵי יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵיכֶם שִׁבְעַת יָמִים:  
(ויקרא כג:מ)

*And you shall take for yourselves on the first day, the fruit of the hadar tree, date palm fronds, a branch of a braided tree, and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord your God for a seven day period. (Vayikra 23:40)*

When the Pasuk refers to the “first day,” the implication is that it is talking about the first day of the Holiday of Sukkot. The Medrash Tanchuma (Emor 22) homiletically points out that perhaps it would have made more sense for the Pasuk to tell us to take our Arba Minim on the 15th day because Sukkot falls out on the 15th day of the month of Tishrei. The reason the Torah refers to this day as the first day is because it is the first day that we are held accountable for our post Yom Kippur sins.

What about the sins that one might transgress during those days between Yom Kippur and Sukkot? Are they not counted? The Rema writes at the very

end of Hilchot Yom HaKippurim (OC, 624:5) that the scrupulous person begins building his Sukka immediately following Yom Kippur. The very next Siman begins the Halachot of Sukkot, and there (625:1) the Rema writes basically the same thing! Why would this Halacha be written twice right next to each other? One could suggest that the Rema is teaching us that one way to ensure an easy transition to post-Teshuva life is to constantly be occupied with Mitzvot and Avodat HaShem to such a degree that they overlap each other. Go from one Mitzvah to the next.

Perhaps this is why Yaakov did not feel the need to build Sukkot immediately after leaving Lavan’s house. He was waiting until they came to a resting point, after the drama that ensued following the exit from Lavan’s house and the frightening encounter with Eisav and after the battle with Esav’s angel. Only once life began to calm down did Yaakov build the Sukkot to protect the spiritual state of these new Ba’alei Teshuva.

This idea provides the penitent with two different, yet complimentary approaches to protecting spiritual strides and accomplishments. One approach is to be constantly involved in and surrounded by Mitzvot, symbolized by the time between Yom Kippur and Sukkot – active and building. The other equally important approach is to insure a protective and uplifting environment so that while in a fragile state, any temptation to return to the pre-Teshuva state will be avoided.

The Tur (Siman 417) writes that each of the Moadim correspond to one of the Avot. Pesach corresponds to Avraham, Shavuot corresponds to Yitzchak and Sukkot corresponds to Yaakov Avinu. Yaakov taught us the pathway of the Ba’al Teshuva and the power of the Sukka. May we all merit to follow his message and maintain the holiness we acquired through the Yom Kippur process.



# Balancing Priorities: A Study of the Akeida



Rav Daniel Alter

א ויהי אחר הדברים האלה, והאלהים, נסה את-אברהם; ויאמר אליו, אברהם ויאמר הנני. ב ויאמר קח-נא את-בנך את-יחידך אשר-אהבת, את-יצחק, ולך-לך, אל-ארץ המזוה; והעלהו שם, לעלה, על אחד ההרים, אשר אמר אליך. ג וישכם אברהם בבקר, ויחבש את-חמרו, ויקח את-שני נעריו אתו, ואת יצחק בנו; ויבקע, עצי עלה, ויקם וילך, אל-המקום אשר-אמר-לו האלהים. ד ביום השלישי, וישא אברהם את-עיניו וירא את-המקום--מרחק. ה ויאמר אברהם אל-נעריו, שבו-לכם פה עם-החמור, ואני והנערה, נלכה עד-כה; ונשתחווה, ונשיבה אליכם. ו ויקח אברהם את-עצי העלה, וישם על-יצחק בנו, ויקח בידו, את-האש ואת-המאכלת; וילכו שניהם, יחדו. ז ויאמר יצחק אל-אברהם אביו, ויאמר אבי, ויאמר הנני בני; ויאמר, הנה האש והעצים, ואיה השח, לעלה. ח ויאמר אברהם, אלהים יראה-לו השה לעלה, בני; וילכו שניהם, יחדו. ט ויבאו אל-המקום אשר אמר-לו האלהים, ויבן שם אברהם את-המזבח, ויערף את-העצים; ויעקד, את-יצחק בנו, וישם אתו על-המזבח, ממעל לעצים. י וישלח אברהם את-ידו, ויקח את-המאכלת, לשחט, את-בנו. יא ויקרא אליו מלאך יהוה, מן-השמים, ויאמר אברהם אברהם; ויאמר, הנני. יב ויאמר, אל-תשלח ידך אל-הנערה, ואל-תעש לו, מאומה: כי עתה ידעתי, כי-ירא אלהים אתה, ולא חשכת את-בנך את-יחידך, ממני. יג וישא אברהם את-עיניו, וירא והנה-איל, אחר נאחו בסבף בקרניו; וילך אברהם ויקח את-האיל, ויעלהו לעלה תחת בנו. יד ויקרא אברהם שם-המקום ההוא, יהוה יראה, אשר יאמר היום, בהר יהוה יראה. טו ויקרא מלאך יהוה, אל-אברהם, שנית, מן-השמים. טז ויאמר, כי נשבעתי נאם-יהוה: כי, יען אשר עשית את-הדבר הזה, ולא חשכת, את-בנך את-יחידך. יז כי-ברך אברהם, והרבה ארבה את-זרעך, ככוכבי השמים, וכחול, אשר על-שפת הים; וירש זרעך, את שער איביו. יח והתברכו בזרעך, כל גווי הארץ, עקב, אשר שמעת בקלי. יט וישב אברהם אל-נעריו, ויקמו וילכו יחדו אל-באר שבע; וישב אברהם, בבאר שבע.

The Akeda is arguably the most difficult test to understand: what was Hashem trying to achieve by asking Avraham to sacrifice his son?

Let's view the story through the eyes of Avraham. This will help us understand how the test impacted Avraham and his mission in life.

Avraham's fundamental value was to deliver the message of ethical monotheism to the world. He spread an awareness of God wherever he traveled, influencing inhabitants throughout the land. He used his wealth and fame to bring the world closer

to Hashem and realized success in doing so. The one thing absent from his life was a child to continue his legacy.

We can only imagine the joy and contentment that Yitzchak's birth brought to Avraham and Sarah when they were finally blessed with a son after many years. They now had an heir who could continue the important work that they had started. The next stage in Avraham's mission could now begin. Avraham began to imbue passion, knowledge and leadership in his son that would inspire Yitzchak to continue

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promoting ethical monotheism and guarantee the continuity of Avraham's legacy.

In short, the birth of Yitzchak represented a new opportunity and milestone in the life of Avraham.

However, Hashem was concerned that Avraham would become so engrossed in raising this miracle child for whom he had waited so long, that Avraham would be less committed to his other responsibilities. This is why Hashem chose to test Avraham in a way that would remind him of the need to balance the various roles he needed to play in life. While this newborn child would understandably become a central focus for Avraham, Hashem was worried that Yitzchak would become an exclusive focus.

With diluted focus as a concern, we can now understand the text of the Akeida story:

In pasuk beit Hashem said "take your son, your only son, who you love." The verse powerfully describes a unique relationship between father and son. Avraham was to take "yechidcha," his only son, and slaughter him. The language used in the text conjures imagery of exclusivity to describe the nature of the challenge. Hashem recognized the unfortunate potential for Avraham to see Yitzchak as his exclusive focus at the expense of other important concepts.

In Pasuk gimmel we are told that Avraham took Yitzchak and his two lads with him on the journey. Given that the Midrash states that these two lads were Yishmoel and Eliezer, it is surprising that these two prominent characters are not mentioned in the text. If the Torah felt no need to name them, why mention that they traveled with Avraham on this journey? Once again, the Torah is highlighting the unique, exclusive relationship that Avraham had with Yitzchak. All

other relationships, even with those who were close to Avraham, were not deemed worth naming in comparison to his relationship with Yitzchak.

This theme continues in Pasuk hey, as Avraham decided to leave the two lads behind and continue on this spiritual trek with Yitzchak alone. This upcoming unique spiritual experience was to involve only Yitzchak and exclude Eliezer and Yishmoel.

In Pasuk vav we read "vayelchu shneihem yachdav". The language implies that only Yitzchak and Avraham walked together, not just physically but also spiritually. This language is repeated again in Pasuk chet for emphasis.

While the nature of the test of the Akeida is still difficult to comprehend, we are now better positioned to understand the message of the test.

What was to happen to Avraham's mission in life if he were to fulfill the command of Hashem and kill his son? Avraham would then return to playing the same role he was destined to play before the birth of his son; av hamon goyim- the father of many nations. He would then be the spiritual leader for the entire world, not just

one person. Avraham must have contemplated this possibility during the entire trek to Har Hamoriah, considering and reevaluating his life. When the angel saw that Avraham was willing to sacrifice his son, essentially acknowledging that he would continue to impact upon the world and be an av hamon goyim, he realized that the message inherent in the test of the Akeida had been understood. The Akeida was no longer necessary (and maybe this had been the plan from the outset). Avraham understood the need for balance and equilibrium and recognized that he was capable of giving special attention to his son, while at

## All other relationships, even with those who were close to Avraham, were not deemed worth naming in comparison to his relationship with Yitzchak.



the same time being a spiritual leader for all. The latter was too important a calling for him to ignore or make less of a priority.

This approach gives us insight into the nature of the bracha given to Avraham in Pasuk tet zayin as reward for passing the test of the Akeida. The angel bestowed two blessings upon him. The first blessing was that he would have many children. In a context where he was willing to sacrifice his only son, this blessing is easily understandable. Then the angel said “vehitbarchu bizaracha kol goyei ha’aretz ekev asher shomato bekoli- all the nations of the land will be blessed through your children because you listened to me”. What is the relevance of this bracha to the Akeida story? The answer is that this point speaks directly to the nature of the test. In Parshat Lech Lecha, Hashem promised Avraham “venivrichu becha kol mishpechot ha’adama- all the nations of the land will be blessed through you.” At the time, this was only a temporary blessing that applied to Avraham, but not his children. Now Hashem was saying that Avraham had shown that he continued to recognize the need to focus on others. It was time to make the bracha permanent in a way that would apply to his children as well.

Through his focus on his children, he would continue to impact on the world as they continued to perform his mission. He could focus on both his family and the world around him.

Avraham was a changed person upon his return from the Akeida. In pasuk yud tet we are told that he returned to his lads and “vayelchu yachdav- they travelled together”. This time they all left together, not just physically but also spiritually. He recognized that he could now impact on the two lads as well, and bring them on his spiritual journey.

It was possible to focus on Yitzchak and still focus on others around him.

The gemara in taanit 16a in explaining the words “har hamoriah,” reflects this duality. One explanation is that horaah- teaching- imparts from this mountain to the Jewish people, and the other explanation is that yirah- awe- imparts from this mountain to the world. Apparently, Har Hamoriah holds relevant lessons to both the Jewish people and to the people of the world. Thus, Har Hamoriah serves as a reminder to Avraham and the Jewish people about the need to balance the responsibilities to their own children with their responsibilities to the rest of the world.





# Shabbat Shuva

The idea of Shabbat Shuva seems to be a bit paradoxical. How can Shabbat, with its requirement of oneg, enjoyment and pleasure, coexist with teshuva, which requires painful soul-searching and confession? The Tur asks a similar question:

ונוהגין בספרד שגם בשבת מרבין לומר סליחות ותחנונים ואני תמיה על מנהגם שהרי אין מריעין בשבת ואיכא מ"ד הרעה בפה פי' לומר העניות והם אומרים עניות ותחנונים ובאשכנז אין נוהגין כן: (טור אורח חיים הלכות ראש השנה סימן תרב)

The Tur formulates his question in halachic terms: The Gemara in Taanit (19a) forbids crying out to Hashem on Shabbat, and according to one opinion there (14a), this includes crying out in tefillah (and not only with a Shofar). If so, how could we say tefillot of teshuva on Shabbat?

The Beit Yosef suggests that those communities that have such a practice understand that, just like if a town was in the midst of a life-threatening disaster, such as war or a flood, such tefillot are permitted, so too taking advantage of the opportunity of Aseret Yimei Teshuva before one's fate is sealed is equally pressing!

Practically speaking though, the minhag for Ashkenazim, as the Tur himself points out, and as is recorded by the Rema (OC siman 602:1), is not to say teshuva related tefillot on Shabbat Shuva. Still, as we pointed out at the beginning, isn't there a contradiction between Shabbat and teshuva beyond the specific issue of reciting *tachanunim*? Perhaps the teshuva of

Shabbat Shuva is special, a teshuva of Shabbat, as we will try to explain.

The Tosefta in Demai (5:1) states that, under

certain circumstances, an am ha'aretz, who is not usually believed regarding whether he separated maasrot from produce that he sold, is believed if he is asked about the produce's status on Shabbat. The Yerushalmi (Demai 4:1) quotes one explanation of this Tosefta, from Rav Bibi b'shem Rav Chanina, that the Am Ha'aretz will certainly be truthful on Shabbat because "the fear of Shabbat is upon him." Rav Tzadok Hakohen has a beautiful explanation to this Gemara:

... באמת כל הרשעות אינו נוגע לעצם היהדות ונקודה האמיתית שבלב וכמו שכתב הרמב"ם (הלכות גירושין פרק ב' הלכה כ') בהא דכופין עד שיאמר רוצה אני משום דבאמת רוצה עיין שם ואפילו הגדיל עבירות וכבר נכנס היצר ממפתחי הלב לפנימיותו ונעשה בעל הבית (סוכה נ"ב ב) מכל מקום שורש היהדות ישנו במעמקי הלב רק שמעוסף בהרבה לבושי שק וה' אשר יראה ללבב רואה גם אז בו אותה הנקודה הנותנת ריח טוב... ולפיכך גם הגרוע שבישראל מרגיש איזה קדושה בשבת כי מצא מין את מינו וניעור. ועל כן אמרו (ירושלמי דמאי פרק ד' הלכה א') אפילו בעם הארץ החשווד שואלו בשבת ואוכל על פיו דאימת



**Rav Daniel Rosenfeld**

*Originally from Connecticut and Chicago, Rav Rosenfeld learned in Shaalvim for two years and then continued to YU, where he learned in Rav Rosensweig's shiur. After completing his studies and semicha at YU, Rav Rosenfeld made aliyah with his wife and children to Yad Binyamin and began learning in the Eretz Hemdah Dayanut Kollel in Yerushalayim. After completing his learning there and receiving Yadin Yadin semicha from Eretz Hemdah and the Rabbanut Harashit, Rav Rosenfeld returned to Shaalvim where he serves as a Shoel Umeishiv in the mornings, and works in the afternoons at Eretz Hemdah.*



שבת עליו לשקרה דקדושת השבת מפיל יראה על האדם ... (פרי צדיק ויקרא קונטרס עמלה של תורה)

The am ha'aretz who during the rest of the week would be willing to lie, who didn't value the mitzvah of hafrashat maasrot, suddenly on Shabbat has a completely different perspective. The kedusha of Shabbat melts away all of the layers that distance him from Hashem. How could he lie when he is in the presence of Hashem? How could he belittle the mitzvah of maaser, or any mitzvah, on Shabbat, when he is intimately connected with the Commander of the mitzvot? Rav Tzadok Hakohen explains that the kedusha of Shabbat connects with a Jew's inner self

and reminds him of who he really is and what he is truly capable of.

Perhaps this is the idea of Shabbat Shuva. It's not a day of crying out or even of painful introspection, it is a wonderful spiritual opportunity to have a birds eye view of ourselves. Who we really are: how we are capable of davening, speaking, and learning when we are attuned to our connection with Hashem. Once we have that clarity and focus on who we want to be and what we are capable of, then, after Shabbat, we can transition to the weekday teshuva of *vidui*, *charata*, and *kabbala al haatid* with a renewed sense of vigor and awareness of our goals.

## The kedusha of Shabbat connects with a Jew's inner self and reminds him of who he really is and what he is truly capable of.



# Like a Light

From the beginning of Elul through Shmini Atzeret we have the custom to recite L'David Hashem Ori twice a day. In describing this custom, the *Kitzur Shulchan Aruch* (128:2) points to a Midrash (*Vayikra Rabbah* 21:4) which draws a number of connections between the perek and this time of year. The first connection, which will be our focus, stems from the phrase ה' אורי (Hashem is my light). The Midrash teaches that Hashem acts as a light primarily on Rosh Hashana. The Midrash, however, does not expand on this or explain how Hashem acts as a light. Perhaps, by exploring the key themes of Rosh Hashana, מלכיות, זכרונות and שופרות, with light in mind, we will see many possible ways in which Hashem acts as our light on Rosh Hashana.

Let us begin with the theme of מלכיות in which we declare Hashem our King. We sing כתר מלוכה לך ויתנו לך כתר מלוכה and begin referring to Hashem as מלך in places we normally say א-ל. When thinking of the purpose of a מלך בשר ודם, we see his job is to act as a light in providing clarity to his people. This is demonstrated in Sefer Shoftim (21:25) where it is written בְּיָמֵינוּ אֵין מֶלֶךְ בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל אִישׁ בְּעֵינָיו יַעֲשֶׂה, at that time there was no king over Bnei Yisrael and each person did what he saw fit. Sefer Shoftim makes clear that Bnei Yisrael doing “as they see fit” does not work, as they sink lower and lower throughout the Sefer. Interestingly, Shoftim attributes this failure to there not being a king. They needed someone to illuminate the correct path and shed light on correct behavior, thereby acting like a light. If the role of a מלך בשר ודם is to highlight good behavior, then all the more so for מלכי המלכים. Therefore, in declaring Hashem our King on Rosh Hashana, we are reminding ourselves of His role as King, to illuminate

for us the best way to behave, and that it is in our best interest to follow all that He teaches us.

When looking at Rosh Hashana's

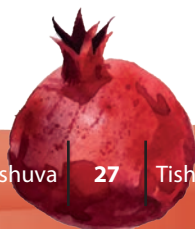
theme of זכרונות, we can also find Hashem acting as a light, though perhaps in a more fearsome way. We experience our judgement with an awareness that Hashem has זכרונות, or memories, of all our actions. Just as a light makes everything in its focus visible, so too, on Rosh Hashana, Hashem makes everything about us visible. We say in Mussaf לפני כסא אין שכחה ואין נסתר וכבודך ואין נסתר מנגד עיניך, כבודך ואין נסתר מנגד עיניך, nothing is forgotten or hidden from Hashem. We pass before Hashem one by one and Hashem places His spotlight upon us as His ספר הזכרונות is opened, with none of our actions able to hide from Hashem's light.

While the idea that everything we do appears in Hashem's spotlight is scary, the theme of שופרות provides us with some element of comfort as it reminds us of the chance for Teshuva. The Rambam (*Hilchot Teshuva* 3:4) teaches that the job of the Shofar is corrective, telling us הביטו לנפשותיכם והטיבו דרכיכם ומעליכם, look into yourselves and improve your ways. While this makes sense, it seems strange that Shofar blowing in Mussaf is juxtaposed to the declaration היום הרת עולם, today the world was created. What does a call for correction have to do with the world's creation?



**Ms. Elana  
Trombka**

*Ms. Elana Trombka attended Sha'alvim for Women from 2010-2012, and then received her BA in Jewish Education from Stern's Legacy Heritage program and a Master's in Tanach from Yeshiva University's Bernard Revel Graduate School. She currently teaches Middle School Judaic Studies in Bi-Cultural Day School in Stamford, CT.*

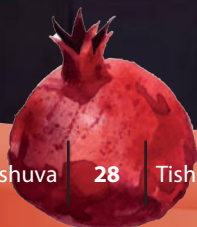




Perhaps it is to remind us of how creation began, with Hashem bringing light. Rashbam comments that the reason Hashem began with light was (*Breishit* 1:3), לתקן, להאמור וְחָשַׁךְ עַל פְּנֵי תְהוֹמוֹת. The world was dark, and Hashem brought light to fix that. Like the sound of Shofar, creation was corrective. As a result perhaps, we recount Creation after hearing the Shofar to remind ourselves of the very first act of correction and how now we have the chance to be corrective as well.

## We recount Creation after hearing the Shofar to remind ourselves of the very first act of correction and how now we have the chance to be corrective as well.

As we enter Rosh Hashana and envelop ourselves in the rich themes of מלכיות, שופרות, and זכרון, hopefully we can remember the overarching theme of ה' אורי." Doing this can not only add more meaning to our Rosh Hashana, but also carry us throughout the new year, highlighting the importance of always following the "guiding light" or laws, of our King, remembering that each of our actions are seen by Hashem, and finally, remembering that even if or when we make a mistake, we always have the opportunity to correct our behavior and shine a "light" into darkness.



# ABOUT SHA'ALVIM

Sha'alvim Educational Institutions began on the Kibbutz of Shaalvim (between Latrun and Modi'in) in 1961 with the establishment of the Yeshiva. Today, on a campus greater than 32 acres, more than 2,700 students arrive daily to learn, to study and to grow. Sha'alvim's programs begin in pre-school and continue through to the world renown yeshivat hesder for post-high school boys and includes overseas programs for men and women as well as kollel and training for rabbinic ordination.

At its core a successful Sha'alvim education is built on three foundational elements:



## Values & Character

Above all else Sha'alvim places a very strong emphasis on the moral and spiritual growth of each of its students. The paradigm is the student with a combination of a high level of Torah knowledge and observance as well as "Yir'at Shamayim," a proper reverence of God. That success manifests itself in a person who is of high values and character at each and every moment, who integrates fully in to life in Israel and exudes the sense of "Torah Im Derech Eretz."



## Learning Environment

Sha'alvim provides optimal conditions for every student who comes to learn on its campus. Students learn from and study with Rabbis and unique Torah personalities and educators many of whom live on campus. Many open spaces and sports facilities allow the students to be able to participate in a wide range of games and recreation that assist in building camaraderie and lifelong friendships as well as enhancing the overall atmosphere that surrounds the learning.



## Social & Community Connected

The students and alumni of the Sha'alvim are known for their involvement in activities that benefit the community at large. Starting from a young age, students are encouraged to volunteer and give back. The students and graduates spearhead many projects and are found at the forefront of social involvement throughout the community and across the Land of Israel.

# SHA'ALVIM INSTITUTIONS



## Yeshivat Sha'alvim Hesder

The hesder program at Yeshivat Sha'alvim is known the world over as a premier institution of Torah study. The Yeshiva is a five-year program combining Torah learning and military service. The Yeshivat Hesder is built with four key goals in mind: Life preparation, Personal Growth, Meaningful & Impactful Service in the IDF and High-level Torah Study. Over the many years of the Yeshiva's existence more than 1700 students have studied within its walls. They now fill roles as educators, rabbis, doctors, lawyers, members of government and the full spectrum of Israeli and Jewish community.



## Yeshivat Sha'alvim Moty Hornstein Institute for Overseas Students

For over forty years the overseas program has provided young men from the United States, Canada, Brazil, France, England, Belgium, Switzerland, and Australia the opportunity to learn side-by-side with Israeli hesder students. In 1990 the program was renamed the Moty Hornstein Institute for Overseas Students, in memory of Moty Hornstein, a"h, an alum of the Yeshiva from 1989. Together, the students develop study habits, learning skills, and middot to shape their character and guide them throughout their lives. Teaching toward the 'complete person,' i.e. the combination of intellect, character, spirit and soul, and providing personal attention so that each student can develop his own unique approach to Avodat Hashem is a hallmark of Sha'alvim. Over the many years more than 1700 young men have studied at Sha'alvim and are now found serving in leading roles in almost every Jewish community around the world.



## Sha'alvim For Women (SFW)

Sha'alvim for Women began 12 years ago with 45 students and currently boasts over 650 proud alumni across the globe. The program was designed to fill a void in high level Zionist Women's education. The SFW leadership and faculty have created an educational environment that promotes the ideals of Yeshivat Hesder Sha'alvim; a love for Torat Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael, Am Yisrael and Medinat Yisrael. The high level of learning at SFW provides the students with the analytical skills and abilities to tackle the most complex texts, while the exceptionally warm environment, along with the committed faculty and staff provide lifelong inspiration. Our alumni have taken on challenging careers in the fields of medicine, education, law and others and they have become leaders in their communities the world over. Some have even returned to SFW as faculty!



## Shlomo Aumann Institute

The Shlomo Aumann Institute is an institute for research and publication of new and revised editions of sefarim. The institute is named in memory of Shlomo Aumann, Hy"d, son of Nobel laureate Professor Yisrael Aumann. Shlomo, an alumnus of the Yeshiva was killed in battle in the First Lebanon War. He was a lover of books and one who knew his works. The institute operates with his personality as its guide. The institute is engaged in publishing works of Rishonim and Achronim that are either based on manuscripts and/or original publications with an attempt towards comparing and correcting the works, their sourcing, notes and references for the purpose of benefiting today's and future Torah scholarship.

# SHA'ALVIM INSTITUTIONS



## Ulpana High School for Girls

Nearly 600 girls, grades 7 through 12, attend the girls' high school. The students come to Sha'alvim from many locations, near and far. The matriculation rate on bagrut stands at 95%. The educational philosophy teaches towards three goals: character development, reverence of Heaven and communal and social involvement. Programming and curricula are developed to further each of those goals. Additionally, classes and studies are structured for every student to succeed on bagrut exams at a high level. The students are given the chance to 'major' in biology, chemistry, literature, history, computers or the arts which is above the required three science courses and mathematics.



## Yeshiva Ketana Derech Chaim for Boys

120 boys study at Derech Chaim. The four year structure of the Yeshiva differs from the typical high school. The first three years at Derech Chaim are dedicated exclusively to Torah study. All areas of Torah (Talmud, Bible, Jewish Law) are part of the curriculum and the style of learning is mostly in chavrutot directed and facilitated by the dedicated faculty. In the fourth year, the students are given the opportunity to study for the bagrut exams in a specialized learning program designed for the students. Approximately, 95% of the students successfully receive their bagrut certification.



## Yeshiva High School for Boys

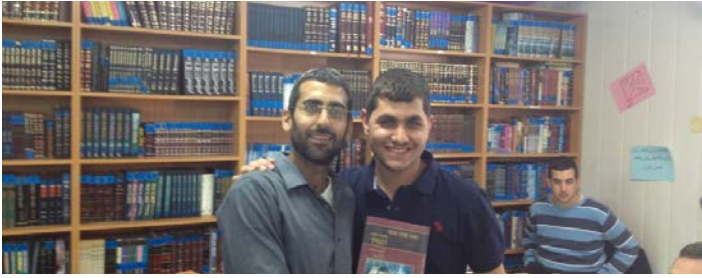
Approximately 400 students between grades 7 and 12 attend the boys' high school. The school is a national religious Zionist institution that lives by the motto of 'Yirat Shamayim & Excellence'. That sense of 'Awe of Heaven' is manifested in pursuing excellence in every field and educating the students to have a real sense of a 'living Torah', of continually deepening their learning, of increasing their happiness and of building great friendships and the regular performance of good deeds. This effort is greatly enhanced by a faculty that 'lives' for the students at every hour of every day.



## Shalhevet Elementary School for Boys/Girls

The twin elementary school programs on the campus of Sha'alvim serve many hundreds of boys and girls on a day to day basis. The students are from the local communities and there are a number of students who travel to Shalhevet each day as a result of strong commitment to education and a commitment to excellence. It is at Shalhevet where the boys and girls are instilled with the ethos of the Sha'alvim Educational Institutions.

# SHA'ALVIM INSTITUTIONS



## HaShlucha Program

The HaShlucha program responds chiefly to graduates of high school who wish to deepen and consolidate their spiritual lives and values but do not necessarily envision themselves in either a 'classic' Yeshivat Hesder environment, a pre-military mechina or fully integrated in the IDF. Sha'alvim built a program with a unique form of education, which succeeds in developing these young men from various backgrounds into high moral and character values individuals, full of content and motivation, and serving Hashem with great joy.

## Na'aleh High School Program for Overseas Students

Na'aleh is a fully subsidized high school program in Israel. Students in the program receive a full scholarship to come and study in Israel which includes: Full tuition, free flight to Israel, room and board. Students in Na'aleh range from 10th grade to 12th grade and come to Israel from multiple countries including: England, Italy, France, USA, Canada, Russia, Australia and more. The goal of the program is to progress from 'uplan to bagrut' (Israel matriculation exams). The program subsidy is provided by the Ministry of Education.





# HISTORY OF SHA'ALVIM



## **1961: The founding of the Yeshiva**

Rav Meir Schlesinger, the Rabbi of Kibbutz Sha'alvim, is elected to head the Yeshiva that was formed at the initiative of the Ezra movement and the Po'aley Agudat Yisrael Party. The students in the Yeshiva learned Torah during the day with their weapons at their sides, and protected the border at night.



## **1967: The second Hesder Yeshiva in Israel**

After the Six Day War, Sha'alvim and the Ayalon Valley were freed from the fear of the Jordanians, and the military Yeshiva becomes the second Hesder Yeshiva in Israel whose students combine Torah learning with army service.



## **1970: Overseas program begins**

A program was formed for high school graduates from abroad who come to the Yeshiva for a year or two to learn Torah. Since then, and through the Moty Hornstein Institute for Overseas Students more than 1700 students have learned in the Yeshiva. Through the years more than 400 alumni of the overseas program have made Israel their home.



## **1971: The Yeshiva High School**

The 'Yeshiva Ketana' becomes a Yeshiva High School, whose students learn Torah subjects along with general studies. Rav Yaakov Tzur is appointed the first Rosh Yeshiva of the High School.



## **1979: Kollel Opens**

A Kollel was established for young married students, and an institution to train alumni of the Hesder Yeshiva to become Rabbis opens its doors.

# HISTORY OF SHA'ALVIM



## **1987: The opening of Shalhevet for Boys and Shalhevet for Girls**

An elementary school was created in conjunction with the Kibbutz, under the auspices of the Sha'alvim Educational Center



## **1988: Torah Seed Projects**

The first Torah seed project named "Sha'alei Torah" opens in Beit Shemesh. Following that group, others went on to Sderot, Yavneh, Katzrin, Kadima, Chatzor, Dimona and Kiryat Hayovel in Jerusalem.



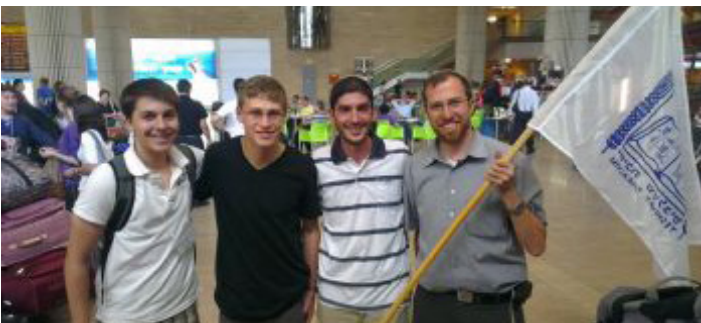
## **1999: The establishment of a High School for Girls**

The Sha'alvim Educational Center founded an Ulpana for girls as a sister school to the Yeshiva High School.



## **2005: Sha'alvim for Women**

Sha'alvim for Women, the seminary for overseas post-high school students opened its doors.



## **2012: Na'aleh**

Na'aleh, a program for religious high school students from overseas began at Sha'alvim.