

The Shul
at the Lubavitch Center
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September 12, 2020

Nitzavim – VaYeLech

23 Elul, 5780

Two Heads Are Better Than One

As we approach Rosh Hashana, the “head” of the year, we are reminded of the adage “two heads are better than one.” We’re not referring to the fact that the Jewish New Year is celebrated for two days. Rather, as this is the season when Jews customarily greet each other with good wishes for the coming year, two heads - people - extending blessings are surely better than one.

“Have a good, sweet year,” “Shana Tova,” “May you be blessed with a healthy, happy year.” These sentiments are offered when we bump into an acquaintance, call a relative or send New Year’s cards. Judaism encourages us to keep those blessings coming not only before, during and immediately after Rosh Hashana, but throughout the entire year, as well.

How important the concept is of blessing others can be learned from the beginning of the Torah. The first letter of the first word of the Torah is the Hebrew letter “beit.” Would it not have been more appropriate, one might ask, for the Torah to begin with the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, “alef”? However, to emphasize the importance of the concept of blessing, the Torah begins with the letter “beit,” the first letter of the word “bracha,” or blessing.

Just as the Torah begins with the letter beit, signifying blessing, so too, should a Jew - a living Torah - “begin with a blessing.” Simply stated this means that we should try to begin or at least incorporate into our conversations and correspondence good wishes and blessings to others.

The Chasidic masters used to say, “When two Jews meet, their meeting should provide a benefit for a third Jew.” As stated before, “two heads are better than one!” It can and should be part of our routine, in these days before Rosh Hashana and throughout the year, that when we encounter a friend or acquaintance, we figure out how our meeting can assist a third person. Perhaps you know someone who needs a job and I know of a job opening. Maybe I have a friend who is not feeling well and to my, “May so-and-so have a speedy recovery,” you can answer a hearty “Amen.” Or you just might know a nice (single) Jewish man and you can ask me if I possibly know Ms. Right.

Let no one underestimate his or her ability to so profoundly help another person while expending so little effort. For, as we approach the New Year for the world and the anniversary of the creation of humankind on Rosh Hashana, we are reminded that each person is obligated to say, “The world was created for me.” Far from being a call to selfishness and egotism, the obligation to view the world as being created “for me,” sensitizes us to the far-reaching affects that our conduct can have and that our deeds will affect the entire world.

May we all be blessed materially and spiritually, and may we usher in the ultimate Redemption, NOW!

(<http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

Worrying More About Our Souls Than Our Bodies During the Ten Days of Repentance

There is a halacha in Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim, Siman 603: “Even someone who is not meticulous about abstaining from bread baked by non-Jews (the rest of the year), should be careful about this during the Asseres Yemei Teshuva (Ten Days of Repentance).” Many people do eat “pas akum” (“non-Jewish bread”) throughout the year. The Talmud discusses whether or not the Rabbis formally adopted such a rule on a permanent basis. The bottom line is that if one buys kosher bread from a non-Jewish baker, it is permissible to eat it. Nevertheless, between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, the Shulchan Orach says that we may only eat Jewish baked bread.

This ruling is somewhat anomalous. Which way is it? If pas akum is forbidden, it should be prohibited the whole year and if it is not forbidden, it should be permissible the whole year!

The Tolner Rebbe tries to explain this strange halacha in Shulchan Aruch.

Many times, the Shulchan Aruch uses the terminology “A baal nefesh (e.g. – a person concerned for his soul) should be strict in the matter.” This means that something can be perfectly permissible, but there exist certain spiritually sensitive souls who should shun any practice that is in any way questionable.

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The term baal nefesh is not synonymous with "chossid" or "tzaddik", both of which are terms that express righteousness and piety beyond the norm. What exactly is a "baal nefesh"? Where does it come from?

Rashi (Niddah 16b) defines a baal nefesh as someone who is "fearful and abstains from even a question of transgression." It is the type of person who is diligent when it comes to avoiding even a doubt of prohibition, even though according to the bottom line halacha, the action is 100% permissible.

The Sefer HaManhig defines a baal nefesh as "one who rules over his soul."

In short, a baal nefesh is a person who is worried about his soul. There is constant tension between a person's body (guf) and soul (nefesh). Most people worry about their bodies more than their souls. Regarding ruchniyus (spirituality), we say, "Nu, I have bitachon (confidence)." Regarding gashmiyus (materialistic matters) – we are not so religious that we always say, "I have confidence." We are worried more about our materialistic needs than our spiritual needs. A baal nefesh is a person who is concerned about his nefesh, concerned about his soul.

The Rambam writes in Hilchos Teshuva 7:6 as follows, "How exalted is Repentance. Yesterday he was separated from Hashem, the G-d of Israel ... he cries out and is not answered ... and today he clings to the Divine Presence... he cries out and is immediately answered."

When a person repents, he becomes a different person. Just yesterday, he was distant from the Ribono shel Olam and today he is close to Him. That is why the Shulchan Aruch says that during the Ten Days of Repentance, we should be particular about eating only pas Yisrael. During these holy days following Rosh Hashanah, we become different people – baalei nefesh. At least during these 10 days, we are worried about our souls. Let our bodies take care of themselves – we will worry about that later. Our main concern during this period of time is "What is going to be with our souls?" A baal nefesh is a person who is worried about his ruchniyus (spirituality).

Therefore, once a person experiences Rosh Hashanah and is transformed into this different person, an entire new set of halachos in Shulchan Aruch apply. The rest of the year, kosher "Pas Akum" is perfectly permissible. However, for a "baal nefesh," throughout the year and for every one of us during the spiritually auspicious time between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur when we become "baalei nefesh," the Shulchan Aruch provides us with a more demanding standard.

(by Rabbi Yissocher Frand from Project Genesis at www.torah.org)

Membership and Yizkor ("Book of Life") forms and General information are available on the Shul Website. [Click here](#) or go to <https://www.chabadshul.org/index.php/8-shul/204-high-holiday-forms-for-5781-2020-2021>

Seat reservations **MUST** be made through the online survey. [Click here](#) or go to <https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=X7nFaQSCHUCnLa4KnSz00Eev8m0B9k9HgUuqyMVmhZBUNVZZVUIVS0s3V0pEOFY3Wk5MTjdMSjQ1Qi4u> **NOTE: Only those who have reservation can be accommodated on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur.**

Yahrzeits This Week:

Leslie Silverberg 23 Elul - Friday night / Shabbat for father Eugene Hettleman

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

Friday, 9/11 — 22 Elul

Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.
Candles — 7:01 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Shabbat, 9/12 — 23 Elul

Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:50 a.m.
Beitzah Gemora Shiur — 5:52 p.m.
Minchah — 6:50 p.m.
Ma'ariv — 8:01 p.m.
Selichot — 1:00 a.m. (Sunday)

Sunday, 9/13 — 24 Elul

Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Monday, 9/14 — 25 Elul

Selichot & Shacharit — 6:20 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Tuesday, 9/15 — 26 Elul

Selichot & Shacharit — 6:30 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Wednesday, 9/16 — 27 Elul

Selichot & Shacharit — 6:30 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Thursday, 9/17 — 28 Elul

Selichot & Shacharit — 6:20 a.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

Friday – Erev Rosh Hashana, 9/18 — 29 Elul

Selichot & Shacharit — 6:10 a.m.
Hatoras Nedarim
Candles — 6:50 p.m.
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:50 p.m.