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Kenny Hirschhorn

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Douglas Rosenthal (5746)

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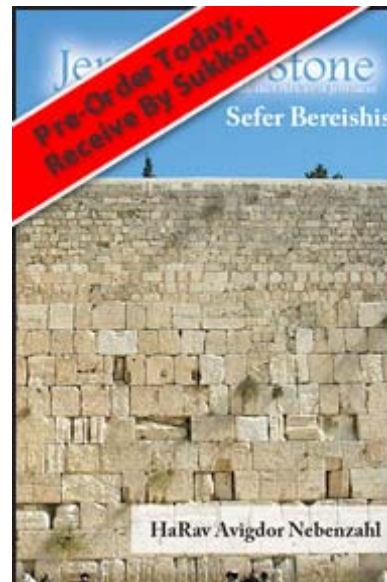
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Hot off the press!



Rav Nebenzahl's sichot for Sefer Bereishit have just been published in English and are available for pre-order. If you would like to receive your copy before Sukkot you must order by Friday September 3. Place your order online **TODAY** at rossipublications.com.

HaRav Podolsky zt"l's books are also available at that site and can be ordered online.



Yamim Noraim

If you are planning on joining us for the Yamim Noraim (many alumni are already here) and have not contacted [Dina](#), please do so in order that we can properly accommodate you and your families.

Ramat Beit Shemesh Shabbaton This Week!!

Look [below](#) for details and the updated schedule.

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Snapshot

Sunday: All of the students, staff, and their families gathered at the Gan Saker park for the annual Welcome BBQ.

Wednesday: Shana Alef got their first taste of Israel, hiking Har Arbel in the Golan Heights, and enjoying the Tzemach Water Park on the Kineret.



Ramat Beit Shemesh Shabbaton This Week!!

RBS Shabbaton Updated Schedule



The Shabbaton will IY"H take place this Shabbos, Parshas Nitzavim-VaYeLech 25th of Elul / September 4th.

The schedule for the Shabbaton is as follows:

Friday night Tefilah: 5:25 PM- Ahavat Tzion, Nachal Timna 2 (corner of Nachal Dolev). D'var Torah will be given by Rav Korn.

Friday night Oneg: 9:30 PM at the Kelaty home, Nachal Ya'ale 9 ב, HaRav Bina will be speaking.

Shabbos Morning Tefilah: 8:30 AM- Ahavat Tzion, Nachal Timna 2 (corner of Nachal Dolev).

Shabbos Morning Shiur by HaRav Chaim Eisenstein: 11 AM- The Greene home, Nachal Ayalon 13/3

Shabbos Afternoon Shiur by HaRav Amos Luban: 4:15 PM - the Shebson home, Nachal Ya'ale 16. The shiur is sponsored for a refuah shleima for Freida Rachel Bas Sarah.

Mincha: 5:15 at Biale Shtiebel, Nachal Dolev 2/2.

Seudah Shlishit: 5:45 at the Kelaty home, Nachal Ya'ale 9 ב, HaRav Bina will be speaking.

Please let us know at afkahn@gmail.com if you would like join us for Seudat Shlishit.

Each alumnus's presence is meaningful. We look forward to an enjoyable and uplifting Shabbos together.

Anyone that would like to help sponsor the Shabbaton or be more involved please be in touch with Fred Kahn at afkahn@gmail.com.

HaRav Nebenzahl on Parshat Nitzavim-Vayelech

HaRav Nebenzahl asks that his Divrei Torah are not read during Tefillah or the Rabbi's sermon



"Redemption must be Accompanied by Tshuva"

The Tochacha section of Parshat Bechukotai concludes with words of consolation: "I will remember My covenant with Yaakov and also My covenant with Yitzchak and also My covenant with Avraham will I remember, and I will remember the Land" (Vayikra 26:42) and "I will remember for them the covenant of the ancients, those whom I have taken out of the land of Egypt before the eyes of the nations, to be G-d unto them - I am Hashem" (ibid. 45). The Tochachot of Parshat Ki Tavo, however, do not end on the same note, they end with the same harshness as they began with: "and there you will offer yourselves for sale to your enemies as slaves and maidservants - but there will be no buyer! These are the words of the covenant ..." (Devarim 28:68-69). The Rishonim dispute whether or not the beginning of Parshat Nitzavim ("perhaps there is among you a man or woman, or a family or tribe, whose heart turns away today from being with Hashem ..." (Devarim 29:17) is a continuation of the Tochachot of Parshat Ki Tavo. Regardless, we can say that the words of consolation found in our Parsha can serve as the conclusion of the Tochachot we read last week.

Our Parsha tells us: "It will be that when all these things come upon you - the blessing and the curse" (Devarim 30:1), the end will be "then you will take to your heart ... and you will return unto Hashem, your G-d, and listen to His voice" (ibid. 1-2). Despite all of the tragedies that will G-d forbid befall the Jewish nation throughout the generations, G-d forbid, Am Yisrael will continue to survive and will finally return to Hashem. The terrible exile the Jewish people will find themselves in will not be everlasting: "If your dispersed will be at the ends of heaven, from there Hashem, your G-d, will gather you in and from there He will take you" (ibid. 4) - the Jewish people will eventually be returned

home to the Land of Israel. Ultimately there will be no justification for exile because "Hashem, your G-d, will circumcise your heart and the heart of your offspring" (ibid. 6). Yirmiyahu elaborates that Hashem will make a new covenant with the Jewish nation - not like the covenant on leaving Egypt which was written on Tablets of stone and which we did not keep. Rather, the Torah promises us that this new covenant will be written on the Tablets of our heart and therefore will be everlasting (see Yirmiyahu 31:30-32).

This is very simple and unequivocal - there can be no redemption until the Jewish people improve their spiritual state. There can be no physical redemption, in which the nation resides securely within its borders until we have corrected our sorry spiritual level. The entire purpose of the redemption is to create a Kiddush Hashem - to sanctify His Name throughout the world. If reasons still exist for us to remain in exile, redemption would not create a Kiddush Hashem but a chillul Hashem. If Hashem tells us that the Land will be ours on condition that we observe Shabbat and other Mitzvot, and we are brought there without having fulfilled our end of the bargain, this is a desecration of G-d's Name. Israel's redemption can only come about with tshuva. There is a dispute between R' Eliezer and R' Yehoshua (see Sanhedrin 97b) whether repentance must precede the redemption or whether it will necessarily come when the Jewish people are redeemed. Regardless of which opinion is the correct one, all are in agreement that without tshuva there can be no Geula!

The Sma"g writes (Negative commandment 2) "I have told all the Jewish people in exile, that those who lie to non-Jews and steal from them are among those who are guilty of 'chillul Hashem', for the other nations will say that the Jewish people are devoid of Torah". There are times when one need not return something which rightfully belongs to a non-Jew (see Ramma Choshen Mishpat 348:2, for the very specific circumstances when this applies), yet the Sma"g is telling us that one may not avail himself of these leniencies because doing so can result in a chillul Hashem. What will the other nations say when speedily in our day Hashem redeems us? They are liable to proclaim: "Hashem redeemed a nation of cheats and liars". What a terrible chillul Hashem that would be! Is the purpose of the redemption not to sanctify Hashem's Name? By the same token, redeeming a nation who desecrates the Shabbat in direct violation of Hashem's command, is also cause for chillul Hashem - redemption must be accompanied by tshuva!

The prophet describes the wicked people of his time: "Her leaders judge for bribes and her kohanim teach for a fee and her prophets divine for money - yet they rely on Hashem, saying, 'Behold Hashem is in our midst; no evil can befall us'" (Micha 3:11). The Gemara comments "they are wicked people, but they placed their trust in the One Who said 'let the world exist', therefore G-d brings upon them three punishments corresponding to the three sins in their hands, as the verse states: 'therefore because of You, Zion shall be plowed as a field, and Yerushalayim shall become heaps of ruins and the Temple Mount shall be as the high places of the forest' (Micha 3:12) (Shabbat 139a). The first part of the pasuk is understandable - they are being rebuked for working for bribes and fees, but why did the prophet include among their transgressions "they rely on Hashem"? Let them at least have credit for having faith in Hashem, even if their lifestyles leave what to be desired. The answer is that proclaiming belief in Hashem in spite of one's evil deeds is an announcement that Hashem does not really care whether one observes Mitzvot or is guilty of aveirot, believing that Hashem will protect them regardless of how they act. Such "bitachon" is fake as well as being a chillul Hashem. Did Hashem not say that he will bring you good only "if you will follow My decrees" (Vayikra 26:3). If we do the opposite, G-d forbid, He will not bring us good. If you go and lead lives of sin and still expect Hashem to protect you, this is going against G-d's word and is deserving of punishment. As we said before, the redemption can only come about when accompanied by repentance. Otherwise, this is a denial of all the Tochachot we have just read about. Our Parsha is a promise that our low spiritual status will not last forever, but Hashem will redeem us. Tshuva and

redemption must go hand in hand.

It is now the beginning of the new school year. This should be a cause of joy for us, many children will learn how to read and begin to learn Chumash. We must realize, however, many children are now entering a system in which they will be taught not to observe Torah and Mitzvot. While these children certainly can be categorized as "tinokot shenishbu" (literally: children taken captive, meaning those who will not be given the opportunity to study Torah), Hashem does not wish for us to become a nation of tinokot shenishbu. Had this been His wish, He would have left us in Egypt. We were taken out of Egypt to be given the Torah and to observe it. From this perspective, the beginning of the school year should fill us with a sense of shock and fear. There may be many religious schools, and this certainly is a cause to celebrate, but so many others are being educated to a life of tinokot shenishbu. Their first day of school is tantamount to their first day in captivity. Imagine if we were to open the newspaper and read that the Syrians, G-d forbid, took one thousand children captive. Would we not be outraged? We must feel the same outrage towards the system that is taking our children captive. When the teacher greets them their first day with "Shalom first grade class", it is a welcome to captivity. As we mentioned, our Parsha promises an end to this captivity - we will return to a life of Torah observance, yet we must daven that our tshuva be a pleasant one and not a result of Hashem's wrath, G-d forbid. The prophet may tell us: "As I live - the word of the L-rd Hashem Elokim I will rule over you with a strong hand and with an outstretched arm and with outpoured wrath" (Yechezkel 20:33), and the Gemara comments "Rav Nachman said 'O that the Merciful One would bring all this wrath upon us and redeem us'" (Sanhedrin 105a), we would prefer the redemption comes even out of G-d's wrath than that it be delayed - yet obviously we would rather the redemption not take place with "outpoured wrath", but in a peaceful manner.

The redemption we seek is not only for ourselves but for Hashem as well, so to speak. When we are in exile, the Shchina is exiled as well. We wish the honor of heaven to return in its full glory. Chazal comment on the pasuk: "it is for You to save us" (Tehillim 80:3), that the word "alecha" "it is for you" is written with a "hei" at the end (rather than the usual "kaf sofit"), this comes to teach us that the entire redemption is Hashem's (see Midrash Shochar Tov on Tehillim 80:3). According to the Midrash, this pasuk is: "one of the verses that show that the salvation of Hashem is the salvation of Israel" (Vayikra Rabba 9:3). We pray daily "for we hope everyday for Your salvation". We must keep in mind that Hashem too is in need of salvation, so to speak, we long for the day when the honor of heaven will shine forth.

The Torah reading for Mincha of Yom Kippur is the section dealing with illicit relationships. The Rishonim struggle to find the connection between this section and Yom Kippur. Various explanations have been given and I would like to add one of my own. One of the concluding psukim of this section is "let not the land disgorge you for having contaminated it, as it disgorged the nation that was before you" (Vayikra 18:28). Just as a human stomach cannot tolerate that which is unfit to eat, and it therefore vomits it out, similarly, the Land of Israel cannot tolerate those who are guilty of aveirot and as a result spits them out. Such strong language, I believe, is not found anywhere else in the Torah. We read this when we stand at the last moment before the sealing of our fate, this is our last opportunity to do tshuva. Reading these words of the Torah serves to awaken us to make us realize that this is the time of repentance. I have mentioned this idea many times over the years. In recent times, however, our situation in Eretz Yisrael is so desperate that one does not need the Torah to spell out for us how the Land of Israel is liable to spit us out if we continue in our sinful ways. The Land first threw us out of Yamit, then out of Gaza and Yericho, Hebron, Shchem and other places, when will this end? How many more places can we be removed from? The time has come to awaken before, G-d forbid, we are removed totally. Hashem promises us that this situation will not last forever, there will be a time when we will all do tshuva and

return to our Land. When will this happen? The Torah does not tell us. It is known that many Gedolim made different calculations as to when the final redemption will take place. None of them could say with certainty - "no man will know until it actually takes place" (Rambam Hilchot Melachim 12:2) - we can only say with certainty that it will take place.

The certainty of the redemption is the theme of the bracha of Shofarot. In the bracha of Malchuyot we proclaimed that Hashem is King and rules His world as He sees fit. We then recited Zichronot in which we stated that although Hashem has the ability to do as He wishes, He limits His ruling power by basing His actions on the deeds of man. If a generation is completely liable, He brings about a flood "to destroy all living flesh because of the evil of their deeds". If in that generation there is one righteous individual, Hashem will sustain the world in his merit. In the merit of three righteous people He removed us from Egypt. Hashem only acts in response to our actions. To recall, the bracha of Malchuyot states that it is Hashem Who determines the operation of this world, the bracha of Zichronot states that it is we who determine, and now the bracha of Shofarot resolves this apparent contradiction. Man may determine how Hashem will deal with His creations, but man's influence is limited. The world will always be run within the framework of a Divine Plan. The wicked may perform all sorts of wicked deeds which defy the will of Hashem and therefore effect how this world is run, in the long term they will not succeed in altering Hashem's overall plan for this world, which is that the Jewish people will be redeemed, there will eventually arise a Sanhedrin, a Beit Hamikdash, and a Kingdom of David. Hashem's rule will be recognized throughout the world: "All you inhabitants of the world and dwellers of the earth - you will see when the banner is hoisted up upon the mountains, and when the shofar sounds you will hear!" (Yeshayahu 18:3), "and it will be on that day that a great shofar will be blown" (Yeshayahu 27:13) - this is the essence of the bracha of Shofarot.

The sounds of the Shofar allude to this as well. We begin with a tekia - a simple sound. We then sound a shvarim or trua - referred to by Chazal as "genuchei ganach, vilulei yalil" "moaning or sobbing" (Rosh Hashana 34a). This is followed by another tekia. The "pshuta shelefanaha" - the simple sound that we open with refers to the Kingdom of Heaven in all its glory as it was in its original state prior to the creation of the world: "Master of the universe Who reigned before any form was created". This total governance of Hashem also existed at the beginning of our history as a nation, when we all declared at Har Sinai "naase venishma" "we will do and we will obey" (Shmot 24:7). This period, however, was followed by many years of "moaning and sobbing", beginning with Adam HaRishon who ate from the tree of knowledge, and then the great flood, and much more. Regarding the Jewish nation itself, the great gathering at Har Sinai was followed by the chet haegel, the chet hameraglim, and other manifestations of moaning and sobbing which continued with the destruction of the Beit Hamikdash and onward until the Holocaust. We are promised, however, that the "genuchei ganach, vilulei yalil" will eventually come to an end, at which time we will once again hear the simple and calm tekia - the "pshuta shele-achareha" - "After all has ceased to be, He, the Awesome One, will reign alone"! The culmination of the Divine Plan will be the rule of Heaven with all its glory manifested by the return of the Davidic dynasty and the great Sanhedrin in Yerushalayim.

The final redemption will come about in any event - despite the actions of the wicked people who will try to prevent it and despite the fact that Hashem limits His Dominion by linking it to man's actions. Each and every one of us must ask ourselves, how we act within the framework of Hashem's Divine plan. Do we wish to be counted among those who hasten the redemption, alongside Avraham, Yitzchak, Yaakov, Moshe, Aharon, and many other tzaddikim throughout the generations who are bringing the building of the third Beit Hamikdash that much closer, or do we wish to join the group that includes Pharaoh, Titus, and Haman? The Beit Hamikdash will be rebuilt regardless, and when that happens we will see not only the physical stones that make up the Temple, but the

spiritual bricks as well. Many giant stones have been laid by our forefathers, by Moshe and Aharon, by Rashi, the Rambam, Ri"f, Ra"n and all the other tzaddikim throughout the generations. If only we could add a tiny pebble to this great edifice. The choice is ours: Do we wish to "assist" Hashem in carrying out His plan or do we wish to be among those who, G-d forbid, attempt to thwart this plan. The fact is that none of the world's evil people will succeed in preventing Hashem's plan from taking place.

How can we cause the Divine Plan to take effect at an earlier time? We can begin with the "moaning and sobbing" on Rosh Hashana. We are told that during the time of Ezra the people began to cry on Rosh Hashana "and the Levites quieted all the people saying: 'be silent, for this day is sacred'" (Nehemiah 8:11). In addition, the poskim dispute whether or not crying is appropriate while davening on Rosh Hashana. All of this refers to external crying. An inner cry, a cry from the heart, is always appropriate and even recommended "Rend your hearts and not your garments" (Yoel 2:13). On Yom Kippur we outwardly display our discomfort - we do not wear shoes, we do not eat, drink, wash, nor anoint. On Rosh Hashana, however, these external displays of discomfort are not demanded of us. It is for this reason that on Rosh Hashana the Jewish people were told: "go, eat rich foods and drink sweet beverages" (Nehemiah 8:10). What is required of us on Rosh Hashana is that our hearts are broken, that we have deep regret for all that we may have done that would be classified as an affront to the Kingdom of Heaven. On Rosh Hashana we must desire that His Kingdom be revealed to the world.

One recommended "segula" for this great Day of Judgment is to recite with great kavana "Amen yehei Shmei Rabba". Chazal, in fact, tell us "Whoever responds 'Amen: may His great Name be blessed' with all his might, the evil decree in judgment against him is torn up" (Shabbat 119b). What do Chazal mean when they tell us that one should respond "with all his might"? There are two interpretations offered: one view is that he should recite it out loud (not so loud that people would look at him as if he were crazed), the other view is that he must have total kavana. In practice, we must follow both views - to recite it out loud and with great kavana. Total kavana does not only mean that one must understand the meaning of the words (it goes without saying that we must understand the meaning of the words).

It is the heart that must identify with what we are saying, we must sincerely make it as the goal of our life that "His great Name be blessed forever and ever". This means that Hashem's Name must be blessed in all worlds. How can we accomplish this? By learning Torah and observing Mitzvot such as Shabbat, Kashrut, reproving our fellow Jew when appropriate, refraining from loshon hara, and by not being guilty of senseless hatred and bringing about disputes. In short, the way to cause His Name to be blessed is through fulfillment of the six hundred and thirteen Mitzvot. Our Mitzvah observance must be with the goal of having "His great Name blessed forever and ever". This in fact must be our purpose in anything we do.

Chazal tell us "Great is repentance, for on account of an individual who repented, the entire world is forgiven" (Yoma 86b). Furthermore, Chazal tell us: "Great is repentance for it brings the redemption nearer, as it is said: 'a redeemer will come to Zion, and to those of Yaakov who repent from willful sin' (Yeshayahu 59:20)" (Yoma 86b). How are we to understand this? Were there not many righteous individuals, such as Yirmiyahu and Yechezkel, who lived during the period when the Beit Hamikdash was destroyed? Can it really be said that there was not a single person during that time period who repented? Could not the tshuva of R' Yochanan ben Zakkai and other holy Tannaim of the time have prevented the destruction of the second Beit Hamikdash? Can we truly say that not a single tzaddik during the terrible Holocaust repented? What about R' Chaim Ozer, R' Baruch Ber, and even the Chazon Ish who was in Eretz Yisrael at the time? Did not a single one of them do tshuva? G-d forbid that we should even think such a thing! It goes without saying that all of these tzaddikim did tshuva! If so, where is the redemption? Did we not just say in the name of Chazal that when an individual

repents not only are his own sins forgiven but those of the entire world? Does not tshuva hasten the final redemption?

The answer to this question is that proper tshuva is not as simple as it sounds. The prophets tell us that the Jewish nation asks: "Since our sins and our iniquities are upon us and we are wasting away because of them, how can we live" (Yechezkel 33:10). The Jewish people themselves do not really believe that tshuva can help them. As a result Yechezkel was forced to swear to them in the Name of Hashem that their tshuva is in fact accepted. We recite some of Yechezkel's words in our Neila tefilla: "Say to them: 'as I live - the word of Hashem/Elokim - I swear that I do not desire the death of the wicked one, but rather the wicked one's return from his way, that he may live'" (ibid. 11). We are already used to the words of Yechezkel and Chazal regarding tshuva. To us it appears quite simple - we fast on Yom Kippur, recite a few piyutim some of them even have very nice tunes, we hit our heart a few times (not too hard, we would not wish to G-d forbid hurt ourselves in the process), recite viduy a few times, and we assume that Hashem will forgive us. It is for this reason that the poskim have written that Motzaei Yom Kippur should be treated as a bit of a Yom Tov and we must rejoice over the fact that our sins have been forgiven (Ramma Orach Chaim 624:5). From this perspective, tshuva is in fact very simple: "Rather, the matter is very near to you" (Devarim 30:14) - nothing is closer to us than tshuva.

R' Levi Yitzchak M'Berdichev zt"l posed the following question: How is it that on Yom Kippur we recite the bracha: "the King Who pardons and forgives our iniquities and the iniquities of His people, the Family of Israel, and removes our sins every single year"? What if Hashem elects not to forgive us? Would this bracha not then be classified as a bracha levatala (a bracha made in vain)? R' Levi Yitzchak answered with the following analogy: a child wants to eat an apple. If he were to ask his mother for one, he runs the risk of her denying his request. What does he then do? He stands beside her and in a loud voice says: "baruch ata Hashem Elokenu Melech haolam borei pri haetz". The mother, of course, runs quickly to bring him an apple in order that his bracha not be levatala. The same may be said regarding the Jewish people on Yom Kippur. We recite the bracha "the King Who pardons and forgives our iniquities", as a means of forcing Hashem, so to speak, to forgive us in order that our bracha not be classified as a bracha levatala. From a strictly halachic perspective, I would say that the child did not act correctly for it is forbidden to recite a bracha on an apple when not in possession of one. The example is brought, however, to illustrate the fact that if we say before Hashem that He is "King Who pardons and forgives", then He will certainly forgive us. This was taught to us by the prophet Yechezkel - tshuva does have an effect, it is that easy - we refer to Hashem as "King Who pardons and forgives" and He forgives us in order to avoid a bracha levatala.

On the other hand, tshuva is not so straightforward. The tshuva process can be described as "a ladder set earthward and its top reached heavenward" (Bereishit 28:12). To reach the first rung of a ladder is easy, but to climb further and further up and reach the top rung is much more difficult. Rabenu Yona writes (Shaarei Tshuva shaar 1:1), that clothing can become clean with a bit of washing, but the more it is cleaned the whiter it becomes. For a soiled garment to appear as good as new is very difficult.

Chazal tell us that Adam HaRishon was given "one easy commandment and he transgressed it" (Shabbat 55b). We are told that for the next one hundred and thirty years he fasted and underwent all sorts of suffering in an attempt to repent for his sin (see Eruvin 18b). With all that Adam HaRishon did, the world did not return to its former state. To a certain extent, Hashem accepted Adam's tshuva, as we note on Rosh Hashana "Your word is true and endures forever" - just as You accepted the tshuva of Adam HaRishon, may You accept our tshuva as well. His tshuva, however, was not sufficient to nullify the decree that people will die, that "by the sweat of your brow shall

you eat bread" (Bereishit 3:19), and that the women were cursed with: "I will greatly increase your suffering and your childbearing" (ibid. 16). These decrees are still in effect today, even after Adam's one hundred and thirty years of penance.

The prophet Yeshayahu, on the surface, was guilty of a very minor infraction - he said of the Jewish people: "I dwell among a people with impure lips" (Yeshayahu 6:5). We are immediately told: "One of the Seraphim flew to me and in his hand was a coal; he had taken it with tongs from atop the altar" (ibid. 6) - this coal was so hot that even the angel was unable to grasp it, he needed tongs. (My Rebbe HaRav Dessler zt"l explained that this heat refers to his closeness to Hashem - it was on such a great level, that even an angel could not touch it.) The pasuk continues with the angel relaying Hashem's message to Yeshayahu: "'Behold, this has touched your lips; your iniquity has gone away and your sin shall be atoned for'" (ibid. 7). The angel was informing Yeshayahu that by touching these coals to his mouth, his iniquities have vanished and his sins have been atoned for. We then read of Hashem asking: "whom shall I send, and who shall go for us?" (ibid. 8) - who will carry out the mission of rebuking the Jewish nation (see Rashi there). We must realize that the job of being the prophet who rebukes is not some honor that includes being accorded Shlishi or Shishi every Shabbat. Being sent to chastise the Jewish nation involves much suffering and being persecuted, as Yeshayahu himself describes: "I submitted my body to those who smite me and my cheeks to those who pluck" (Yeshayahu 50:6).

Many prophets, such as Moshe Rabenu, Yirmiyahu, and Yechezkel, attempted to flee from this mission. Yeshayahu, on the other hand, volunteered immediately "and I said: 'here I am! send me!'" (Yeshayahu 6:8). The prophet was willing to undergo all the suffering and persecution that comes with this task. If we assume he was not persecuted during the rules of the righteous kings of Yehuda such as Uziah, Yotam, and Chizkiyahu, then he "only" suffered for the forty year rule of the wicked Achaz. In addition, he lived during the period of the Beit Hamikdash when the "seir hamishtale-ach" was offered (again, with the exception of the reign of Achaz who placed a halt on the service - see Sanhedrin 103b). The seir hamishtale-ach atones for lighter sins even in the absence of tshuva (see Rambam Hilchot Tshuva 1:2). We can certainly assume that Yeshayahu did tshuva as well. In spite of all this, at the age of eighty he was killed with a blow to the mouth for the same seemingly minor infraction - referring to the Jewish nation as a people with impure lips. After eighty years, eighty Yom Kippurs, following the offering of eighty seirim, Yeshayahu was still punished for his sin! All the suffering he underwent was not enough to totally erase the sin as if it had not taken place. What about the angel having informed him: "and your sin shall be atoned for"? There is atonement and there is atonement. It is for this reason that each Yom Kippur a person must also confess for that which he had already confessed the previous Yom Kippur (see Orach Chaim 607:4). There is no end to the depth of forgiveness needed and to the depth of tshuva needed. The tzaddikim of previous generations certainly repented, but their tshuva did not attain the perfection required to bring about redemption for the world. On the other hand, as we mentioned: "the matter is very near to you" - it is very easy to arrive at the lower level of tshuva - we not go beyond our ability. We must do as best we can, each level of taking leave of sin, of regret, can bring about some sort of forgiveness, pardon, and tikkun.

Let us think as we stand in judgment on Rosh Hashana "which nation is destined for the sword and which for peace". How many terrorist acts are destined to, G-d forbid, take place during this coming year? How many people will die from traffic fatalities and diseases, may G-d have mercy that they do not take place. It all depends on us - it is our actions that will determine what will take place in the coming year. Eretz Yisrael is in desperate need of water. The rain in fact is the litmus test for how great our tshuva was: "If you will follow My decrees and observe My commandments and perform them, then I will provide your rains in their time" (Vayikra 26:3-4), "It will be that if you hearken to My commandments ... then I shall provide rain for your Land" (Devarim

11:13-14). The Torah describes the uniqueness of the Land of Israel in these terms: "but the land to which you cross over to possess it is a land of hills and valleys; from the rain of heaven will it drink water" (ibid. 11) "a land that Hashem, your G-d, seeks out; the eyes of Hashem, your G-d, are always upon it, from the beginning of the year to year's end" (ibid. 12). Chazal tell us that first and foremost this latter pasuk refers to the amount of water that will be provided for Eretz Yisrael (see Rosh Hashana 17b) - we are in desperate need of water. The dearth of water may pose a greater threat to our existence than terrorists. Everything depends on us.

I once pointed out that there are sixty seven days from Rosh Chodesh Elul until the seventh of Cheshvan (the day we begin to ask for rain "veten tal umatar" in Eretz Yisrael). Sixty seven is the numerical value of "Elul". We can learn from here that if we observe our Elul as we should, then we will be blessed with dew and rain on the seventh of Cheshvan. We must understand just how much really depends on us - how much good can come about because of us. Every good word we speak, every time we sit to learn Torah, we are bringing the redemption that much closer. Chazal tell us "he who studies Torah 'lishma' ... hastens the redemption, as it says 'And I have placed My words in your mouth - and with the shade of My hand have I covered you - to implant the heavens and to set a foundation for the earth and to say unto Zion, you are My people'" (Yeshayahu 51:16) (Sanhedrin 99b). Our Torah, our tshuva, our tefillot of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, our joy on Rosh Hashana ("go, eat rich foods and drink sweet beverages") which with Hashem's help is not accompanied by fasting and suffering can bring about redemption and so much good for the Jewish nation.

May it be the will of Hashem that our sounding of the Shofar will awaken within us the sense of self-sacrifice that Yitzchak Avinu had when he was bound upon the altar. With this, may we merit hearing the Shofar of the Moshiach, speedily in our day. Amen.

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Staff Dvar Torah by Rav Kenny Hirschhorn

Teshuva!

You're sitting in an airport in some foreign country waiting for your connecting flight home. You take a walk through the airport, look around, and yet are unable to neither read any of the signs nor understand the language being spoken. Not ideal, but that's fine - you will be boarding in just a few hours. That's what you think - suddenly you are surrounded by uniformed and armed men who whisk you off in handcuffs to a local jail. You are unable to communicate with anyone and are even denied the right to make a phone call. After a speedy trial (which of course you have no idea what was being said), you find yourself in a very scary looking prison.



You're thrown into a cell, hear the bars slam shut and begin to freak out. But! You are not alone - in the cell is a fellow prisoner who happens to speak English. He tells you that this maximum security prison is full of the worst criminals known to man, but as luck would have it, he is planning to escape (it turns out he just so happens to have a full body tattoo of the prison blueprints). He asks if you wish to join him.

Do you wish to join him? What kind of a question is that? You would be willing to have your toes chopped off to join him! Escape is your goal and reuniting with your loved ones is your quest.

We go through life sinning and distancing ourselves from Hashem. The consequence of

our actions will inevitably bring about a punishment much worse than the previous scenario, what's more it will be absolutely justified. But there is an escape plan, it is called teshuva. This is our way out - this is our way to reconnect with our Creator. Do we deserve this - absolutely not! Is it available for us - yes it is!

There are special people who realize this and begin their road to teshuva immediately at the conclusion of Yom Kippur. Other pious Jews wait until the following Elul to begin their return. Most of us, however, only wake up when we will hear the solemn tune of selichot - this coming Motzaei Shabbat.

How do we begin our road to repentance? The first thing is to say we are sorry - selicha. The first thing a person wishing to do teshuva must do is to acknowledge his sin. When Adam HaRishon was confronted, he blamed the error in his ways on his wife; when Shaul HaMelech was confronted he blamed it on the people; when Dovid HaMelech was confronted he simply said: "chatati" - I have sinned. We preface our viduy (ashamnu, bagadnu ...) with aval anachnu ... chatanu. The word aval in this case does not mean but, but rather it means indeed - yes, indeed I am aware that I have sinned - please allow me to rectify the situation.

In Parshat Nitzvaim we find the following pasuk: "see - I have placed before you today the life and the good and the death and the evil" (Devarim 30:15). R' Moshe Feinstein asked why the emphasis on "today". He answers that every single day man is given these two choices - good or bad, life or death. It does not matter if until now you have always chosen one path, every day both paths are open before you and you must make a conscious decision which path to take.

As we mentioned, we begin Selichot this Motzaei Shabbat. Next week is already Rosh Hashana - it is your choice - "The Decision 5771".

LeShana Tova Tekatevu veTichatemu

Alumni Dvar Torah by Douglas Rosenthal (5746)

"Ki karov elecha hadavar meod beficha uvilvavcha laasoto" (Devarim 30:15)
Translated literally, the pasuk means "because the word (or matter) is very near to you, in your mouth, and in your heart, that you may do it." The word meod in the phrase "ki karov elecha hadavar meod" is being employed as an adverb describing the word karov - near. How near is this davar (matter)? Very near.

What is this mysterious davar referring to? Many, including Ramban and Sforno identify this vague davar as being the mitzvah of tshuva. Hence, the pasuk is alerting us to the fact that tshuva is so close - it is well within the reach of us all. It is as close as being in our mouths and in our hearts to accomplish.

With that stated, however, there may be a deeper layer of interpretation and meaning as well. We know from the first parsha of Shema that the word meod also has another meaning - in the phrase "U'v'chol meodecha" meod means "possessions". Perhaps we can now interpret the pasuk in a slightly different manner. By punctuating the pasuk in a slightly different manner, we can now read the pasuk as: "because this matter - meod (i.e. your worldly possessions) is near to you, in your mouth and in your heart that you may do it."

Admittedly this reformulation of the pasuk may appear to vary from the simple reading

of the pasuk from a grammatical and homiletic perspective, nevertheless there is a basis for the point made and there is much to be learned from it. In fact it appears to flow from the previous three psukim: "For this commandment that I command you today, it is not hidden from you and it is not distant. It is not in heaven, for you to say: who can ascend to the heaven for us and take it for us, so that we can listen to it and perform it? Nor is it across the sea, for you to say: 'who can cross to the other side of the sea for us and take it for us, so that we can listen to it and perform it" (Devarim 30:11)

The commandment referred to in these psukim is as noted above, the mitzvah of tshuva. The Torah is teaching us that tshuva is never too distant from us, and is eminently attainable. The mention of "in heaven" and "across the sea" is explained by some as an allusion to the haughty - whose arrogance reaches the heavens, and the merchants - who are constantly traveling to peddle their wares across the great watery divides. Nevertheless, even such characters, who might have otherwise argued tshuva is elusive given their great challenges and impediments, still have the capacity to achieve a complete tshuva.

How?

By acting in consonance with the reformulated version of the pasuk as outlined above. Specifically, by assigning tshuva the same priority that is given to our worldly possessions (meod) - by constantly ensuring it is close to the heart and mouth. A businessman constantly has his business "in his mouth" by constantly speaking about his business, promoting same and working hard to make his enterprise more efficient and profitable. Likewise, he always carries his business on his heart, prepared to make necessary sacrifices for its advancement.

So too, should we view tshuva and spirituality from this perspective. We should all go into the business of tshuva - there's a great market for this product - everyone needs it, and you have only yourself to compete with. You can reap the rewards you richly deserve commensurate with your efforts . . . and then some.

The mitzvah of tshuva should constantly linger in our mouths and on our hearts, not only at this auspicious time of year before the Yom HaDin HaGadol V'HaNorah, but throughout the course of the entire year. May our "business" of tshuva continue to grow and expand and may we benefit from its dividends in both this world and in the World to Come.

Wishing all a heartfelt Ketiva V'Chatimah Tova and warm wishes for all our new students for successful year in Yeshiva.

Visitor Log, Mazal Tov's, Tehillim List

Visitor Log

The following people visited/learned in the Yeshiva:

- Shamshy (5765-66) Schlager
- Dr. Jeff (5752) Silverman

Mazal Tov

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh wishes a Mazal Tov to:

- Rav [Yaakov](#) and Tzila Darmoni on the birth of a grandson.
- [Michael](#) Berger (5756, 5761-62) on his marriage to Yael Johnson.
- [Yehuda](#) and Esther Adler (5761-63) on the birth of a baby boy.

Baruch Dayan Emet

Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh regrets to inform you of the loss of:

- The maternal grandfather of [Shmuel](#) Barrell.

The following members of our extended YNA family need our tefilot:

Printer Friendly Tehillim List

- Ditzza bat Vardit
- Zev Eliezer ben Chaya Shaindel
- Chaya bat Grunia
- Yitzchok ben Shayna Ita
- Moshe Zanvel ben Brindel
- Gershon Yitzchok ben Mottel Tzerel
- Reuven ben Tova Chaya
- Rivka Margalit bat Etta
- Chaya Meira Mindel bas Chava Golda
- Sarah Nechama bas Russ Malka
- Chaya Sarah bat Fanya Luna
- Elazar ben Nouber
- Na'ava Bat Ami bat Sara Leah
- Gilad ben Aviva
- Edmund ben Nazir
- Devorah Leah bat Hindel
- Avram Gershon ben Tzippah
- Sarah Nechama bas Russ Malka
- Dovid ben Miriam
- Evelyn Bat Dina
- Rafael Pinchas ben Esther
- Avraham Pinchas ben Sarah Etel
- Lev ben Esther
- Akiwa ben gittel
- Avraham David ben Miriam Goldeh
- Ephraim Yitzchak ben Golda
- Margalit bat Rachel
- Yaacov ben Baila
- Chaya Tziporah Sheva bat Faiga
- Ester Bas Lea
- Miriam Rivka bat Adina Leah
- Chaya Esther bat Golda Rachel
- Shayna bas Chava
- Eliezer ben Sorah
- Fruma bat Rochel
- Yonatan Moshe ben Devorah Tova
- Naomi Sara bas Henna Miriam
- Fruma bas Ita
- Tinok ben Esther Sharon
- Leah Bat Rivkah
- Zacharia Kalman ben Yael Margolit
- Eliezer ben Sorah
- Shmuel Chai Ben Hadassa
- David Yosef ben Faige Perel
- Tsilah Blimah bas Tsipporah
- Tuvia ben Yachad
- Lev Ben reuven



And of course we are always davening
for the safe return of Gilad Shalit (Gilad
ben Aviva)

[Submit Names](#) to the list.

[Send Us Your Announcements](#)

Please, if you have any smachot or chas v'shalom, less happy occasions, [let our office know](#) so we can keep everybody updated. **Are you visiting Israel?- [let us know!](#)** We'd love to host you for a shabbat meal, davening, a shiur and would love for you to stop by.

Shabbat Shalom,
Rav Bina, Netiv Aryeh
Yeshivat Netiv Aryeh