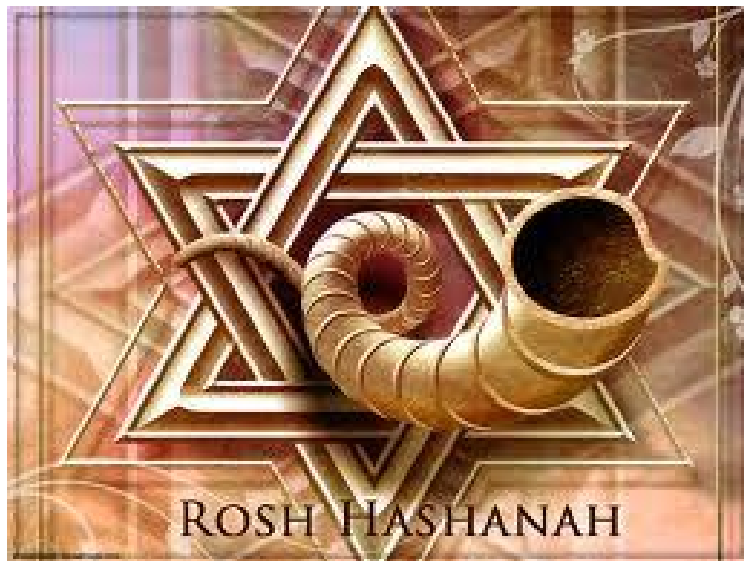


Shofar

Elul 5771-Tishrei 5772
September-October 2011



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RABBI'S NEW YEAR MESSAGE

DAYS OF PREPARATION

Before a wedding or a bar-mitzvah, a great deal of preparation is involved anticipating the momentous event – invitations, a caterer, seating of guests, etc. We expend all of this time and effort in order to achieve what we hope will be a near perfect simcha.

In the same manner, but even more importantly, we must realize that to truly experience and appreciate the awesome holiness that Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur afford, it is imperative that we also prepare ourselves. In fact, the more we prepare ourselves, the greater the kidusha (holiness) we can hope to experience. Interestingly, the Targum (Shemos 19:10) interprets the work “vikidashtem” -- and sanctify them, as “uszaminum” – prepare them. This underscores the idea that holiness is contingent upon preparation. We cannot expect to “fall into” the unique holiness of these days without any planning or forethought.

Our spiritual preparation begins with Rosh Chodesh Elul and the daily blowing of the shofar to signify a call for repentance. It continues with the recital of Slichos the week of Rosh Hashanah, ultimately intensifying during Rosh Hashanah itself, and the following Yimay Tishuvah (Days of Repentance). The greater the preparation, the greater the achievement and thus, the greater the insurance of a “Kisivah Vichasimah Tovah” for ourselves and our families.

On behalf of my family and myself, I would like to wish you all a “Kisivah Vachasimah Tovah”. May G-d grant that we be inscribed for a healthy, happy, and successful new year.

Rabbi Yisrael Gettinger



President's Message



Dr. Steven Frankel

Dear Friends,

I received this email from Breslev Israel at the same time as a last minute email request for my Shofar column so it seemed bashert to combine the two emails into this column:

The following is a partial transcription from a recent CD in Hebrew called The Supreme Monarch by Rabbi Shalom Arush based on the teachings of Rebbe Nachman of Breslev. It is highly appropriate for Elul or any time of year and vitally important for each and every one of us. Read each bullet out loud until each one of them enters your heart - literally!

1. Egotism and Emuna are mutually exclusive. Emuna crowns Hashem, egotism says, I AM THE BOSS!
2. With Emuna, you flow with Hashem, knowing everything is from Hashem, and it is all for the best. Even when things are not going according to plan, we have to thank Hashem.
3. Some times we have to accept that things don't go the way we plan it, Hashem has different plans. The negative thoughts (frustration, anger, sadness) attach itself to our logic and intellect...we must throw the intellect away to rid ourselves of the negative thoughts, and let Emuna rule! Don't revolt against Hashem's monarchy.
4. To strengthen your emuna, you must DESIRE emuna, DESIRE is our FREE CHOICE, and our free choice is all we are!!! The manifestation of DESIRE is tefilla, in your own words. If we believe in Hashem, we talk to Hashem.
5. Daven to Hashem: Let me feel that no one can hurt me unless you say so, strengthen my belief that everything you do is for my ultimate welfare; help me thank you for the seemingly bad as well as for the good; help me rid myself of ego, and know that there is no bad in the world.
6. Sometimes we feel so much disappointment in ourselves, even though we do all the right things, read all the books, do hitbodedut (take to Hashem in our own language)...Strengthening Emuna is a life-long project. All the time, you are making constant gain, moving up to higher spiritual levels, and the challenges on that higher level are far greater. We are constantly moving higher. When we work on our emuna, we cannot feel ourselves growing, but if we look back a few years, we will see that things that used to bother us, don't anymore. Don't loose heart...by continuing to strengthen our emuna, we move closer to Hashem. If we

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want emuna, if we have DESIRE, Hashem will help us. Emuna is not instant gratification. A lot of perseverance is required...an hour of personal prayer is required. The soul needs its daily vitamins of Hitbodedut.

7. Whenever we have a set back, tell yourself, this is the way Hashem wants things...no depression or sadness...life is smooth even with set backs.
8. When we do something wrong, slip up, slander someone, knowing it is wrong, don't fall into despair because of it, that is an EGO ATTACK...with emuna, we know it is part of life..we are not expected to be angels...Confess to Hashem that: I did an aveira because my desire to do your will was not strong enough. Help me to strengthen my desire to do your will; help me strengthen my desire to guard my tongue, for example. Asking Him to help us avoid transgression isn't enough, human nature is fighting against us all the time; Ask Him to give us the DESIRE to avoid transgression, that is one of the highest, loftiest forms of teshuva there is, it is real teshuva, with joy, real penitence! Ask Him to enhance our desire to do His will.
9. Remorse asks, "Why wasn't my desire to do Hashem's will strong enough? Hashem made me sin to show me that my will to do His will was not strong enough" This leads to proper teshuva. Ask Him to enhance our desire to do His will. Help me want more than anything to be an upright person.
10. Depression (nothing but an ego trip) asks, whines, "Why did I fail so miserably?" This is imitation teshuva. We are not Moshe Rebbeinu, or King Tut! ...of course we will fall! Rav Arush says, If you fell, it is because you were too high up in the air..inflated ego leads to depression.
11. Rabbi Natan says: Deficiency means lack of prayer; set backs mean we need to pray more. Negative feelings are not teshuva, they come from ego, which stems from the Dark side. Ain Od Milvado. You can't move a finger unless Hashem decides.
12. Hashem loves us, and does everything for our eternal good..there is no bad in the world...our own heresy, that we think there is bad in the world, is the only bad in the world!

Shana Tova U'Metukah!

The Month of Elul

The Elul season is of unusual importance in the religious life of the Jewish people. This is because the month of Elul is dedicated to the spiritual preparation for the coming season of Yomim Noraim (The Days of Awe, consisting of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur). Thus beginning with the second day of Rosh Chodesh Elul, the Shofar is sounded every day in the synagogue (except on Shabbos). The blowing of the Shofar acts as a solemn reminder that the Yimay Hadin (Days of Judgment) are fast approaching.

In this Elul season, the Jewish person takes account of his spiritual life, his achievements and failures, and makes amends to G-d and man for the errors he has made during the past year. Charity is given abundantly. Thus, before the Yomim Noraim period begins, the Jewish person who heeds the Elul message experiences a great spiritual uplifting in every aspect of his conduct.

Selichos Services

During the week before Rosh Hashanah, special Selichos services are recited. Selichos prayers are for forgiveness and mercy, for the ending of Israel's sufferings and for an era of peace for all mankind.

On Erev Rosh Hashanah morning, the Selichos service is longer than usual, for this being the day preceding the new year, we devote more time to worship and meditation.

The Month of Tishrei

The month of Tishrei may be divided into two parts: The period of Yomim Noraim (The days of Awe, centering around the New Year and the Day of Atonement), and the period of the Zeman Simchaseinu (The Season of Joy), which is based of the festival of Succos.

**Days of Awe-Rosh Hashanah**

Rosh Hashanah, which marks the beginning of the Jewish New Year, is celebrated on the first and second day of the month of Tishrei. Unlike other nations that celebrate their New Year with the hilarity and boisterous gaiety, we observe our New Year as a most solemn festival. Rosh Hashanah is known in the Torah as Yom Teruah (the day of blowing). In the prayers we refer to it as the Day of Judgment, the Yom Hadin, the day on which G-d Almighty determines the future course of events for each and every individual for the coming year. There is a tradition that on Rosh Hashanah the judgment is "written down". This is to say it may still be changed during the Ten Days of

Repentance. In the last moments of Yom Kippur, however, the future of every human being is "sealed". On Rosh Hashanah night people greet each other with the words "Leshana Tovah Tikasayv Visaychosaym"- "May you be inscribed and sealed with a good year".

Holiday Customs

It is customary on Rosh Hashanah night following the services to have a regular holiday meal (challahs, wine, etc.). At this meal, one should take a piece of apple and dip it in honey and say, "May it be your will, L-rd our G-d of our fathers, to bless us with a bountiful and sweet year."



The Fast Day of Gedaliah

The day after Rosh Hashanah, the third day of Tishrei, is observed as the Fast Day of Gedaliah. The reason for the fast is as follows: When Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, destroyed the city of Jerusalem in the year 586 B.C.E., he appointed a prominent Jewish leader by the name of Gedaliah as Governor of Judah. Gedaliah made a sincere effort to save the Jewish nation. However, his rule lasted only two months. He was murdered by men who were jealous of his power. With this treacherous murder, all organized Jewish life in Eretz Yisrael came to a complete halt. When the third day of Tishrei occurs on a Shabbos, the fast is postponed until Sunday.

Shabbos Shuva

The Shabbos between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is known as Shabbos Shuva, the Shabbos of Repentance. The name is derived from the Haftarah, which begins with the word Shuvah-"Return O Israel, to the L-rd your G-d". Thus, we devote the Shabbos before Yom Kippur to the main theme of The Ten Days of Repentance-deep regret for past wrongdoings, and a profound determination to correct our ways in the future.

Erev Yom Kippur

On Erev Yom Kippur (the day preceding Yom Kippur), it is our solemn duty to seek forgiveness from people whom we harmed or offended during the past year. According to a teaching of the Mishna, "Yom Kippur provides atonement for sins between man and G-d, but, for sins between man and his fellow man, Yom Kippur does not provide atonement until he appeases his fellow man". (Yoma, Chapter 8).

The spirit of the Day of Atonement finds its supreme expression in the synagogue, where young and old are assembled to join in Divine worship, to ask G-d's forgiveness for our sins through fasting, prayer and charity.

One should not wear leather shoes on Yom Kippur. Sneakers or shoes made of man-made material are obligatory. It is a mitzvah to have a proper holiday meal prior to the fast, so that the fast will be less difficult.



Succos

The "Ten Days of Awe and Repentance" are followed by the "Season of Our Rejoicing". This is one of the names given to the holiday of Succos, for the Torah commandment to "rejoice" is mentioned more often in connection with the holiday of Succos, than for any other Yom Tov.

Succos begins on the fifteenth day of Tishrei, at the time in Israel of the ingathering of the crops—a further cause for rejoicing as one looks with a sense of pride and accomplishment upon the fruits of one's labor of the previous months.

The seven-day holiday of Succos is one of the Sholosh Regolim, the three festivals when all Jewish males over the age of thirteen were commanded to come and celebrate the Yom Tov in the proximity of the Holy Temple. (The other two Sholosh Regolim are Pesach and Shavuot).

The Temple celebration during Succos was highlighted by the ceremony of water-drawing. The ceremony was unique in that all year the libations on the Altar were performed with wine, but on Succos, water was also used. Our sages have stated that "whoever has not seen the joy at the place of water-drawing has never seen true joy in his life!" (Succah 51). The joy expressed in this ceremony was the joy of a simple and pure acceptance of G-d's will as symbolized by clear water, as opposed to the acceptance that is based on understanding, symbolized by wine.

The dominant mitzvah, of course, is the Succah. The Succah is built before the holiday begins. Almost anything can be used for the walls, but the roof covering must be s'cach, which is plant-life material meeting certain specifications. Evergreen branches, cornstalks or bamboo are popularly used. During the entire festival we live in these temporary dwellings as much as possible. It is the practice to pronounce the blessing for the Succah whenever eating a meal there.

The Succah is symbolic of the clouds of glory which protected the Jews during their forty years in the wilderness. These clouds of glory, serving as shade and shield, were an

ever-present reminder of G-d's kindness and love for His children. As we sit in the Succah, we too are aware of the need to be grateful for G-d's protection.



A most beautiful and meaningful mitzvah of Succos is the "taking of the four species". The four plants enumerated in the Torah are the esrog (citron), lulav (palm branch), haddassim (myrtles), and aravos (willows). Much energy and money is expended in acquiring the most beautiful ones possible. This mitzvah should be done early in the day, but it is permissible until sunset. The lulav, hadassim and aravos are taken in the right hand and the esrog is in the left hand and held next to the other three species. All are swayed together, in accordance with various customs.

A left-handed person takes the lulav and other species in the left hand and the esrog in the right hand. While women are not obligated in this mitzvah, they have generally taken upon themselves to perform it throughout Succos.

This mitzvah has extraordinary relevance to our lives today. In our oral tradition, it is explained that each of these four kinds corresponds to a different type of person, from the esrog which has both refreshing taste (Torah learning) and delightful fragrance (good deeds), to the aravah, which has neither of these qualities. Despite their difference, the Torah instructs us to take these four and bind them together, for they compliment one another, and only when there is true harmony among the Jewish people can we hope for an ideal existence.



Hoshana Rabbah

Hoshana Rabbah is the name of the seventh day of Succos. It is the final day of Chol Hamoed Succos (the Intermediate Days), and is the last day on which we can make the blessing on the lulav. Special prayers, called Hoshanas are said towards the end of the morning services. These prayers are accompanied by the beautiful ceremony in which everyone circles the Shulchan seven times, lulav and esrog in hand.

Hoshana Rabbah is the final day on which G-d might change our inscription for a good year. Although the gates of heaven have officially been closed at the conclusion of the Yom Kippur service, it is still possible for G-d to open them one last time on Hoshana Rabbah, as we ask him to do in our prayers on this day.

Shemini Atzeres

Shemini Atzeres corresponds to the eighth day of the holiday of Succos, but it is a separate and complete Yom Tov in its own right. The Medrash likens Shemini Atzeres to the special feast of a king for his beloved son. For a full week, the king celebrated with all his kingdom. After the festivities, the king said to his son, "It is difficult for me to part with you. Please stay another day to celebrate". For seven days of Succos we brought seventy sacrifices to the holy Temple on behalf of all the nations. ("If the nations of the world would have known the value of the Temple for them, they would have surrounded it with fortresses in order to protect it".-Midrash Raba). G-d set aside an eighth day of celebration on which only one holiday sacrifice was offered, this one on behalf of the Jewish nation, and it became a day of unique celebration between G-d, and his loyal children, the Jews.

The above parable can be linked to the name of the holiday itself. Atzeres means holding back, referring to the king who held back his son from leaving with the rest of the celebrants.

Outside the Land of Israel, we eat in the Succah on Shemini Atzeres. However, the blessing for "dwelling in the Succah" is not recited.

Simchas Torah



Simchas Torah is celebrated the day after Shemini Atzeres, making a total of nine consecutive days of festivities. "Simcha" denotes joy and great rejoicing. That is certainly the case on Simchas Torah. All the Torah scrolls are brought out from the Ark, and everyone, scholars and laymen alike, dance around the shul, proudly taking turns clutching the holy Torah scrolls to their hearts. Everyone present becomes passionately involved in the hakafos, as these dances are called.

Holiday Schedule

2011 - 5772



Erev Rosh Hashanah – Weds, Sept 28

Eruv Tavshilin

6:10 am Selichot
7:00 am Shachris
7:20 pm Mincha
7:12 pm Candle Lighting

Rosh Hashanah Day 1 – Thurs, Sept. 29

8:30 am Shachris
7:15 pm Mincha
Light Candles after 8:30 pm

Rosh Hashanah Day 2 – Fri, Sept. 30

8:30 am Shachris
7:10 pm Mincha
Candle Lighting 7:09 pm

Shabbos - Shuvah – Oct. 1

9:00 am Shachris
7:00 pm Mincha
Shabbos ends no earlier than 8:27 pm

Fast of Gedaliah – Sun, Oct. 2

6:29 am Fast begins
7:45 am Slichos
8:30 am Shachris
7:00 pm Mincha
Fast Ends after 8:17 pm

Erev Yom Kippur – Fri, Oct. 7

6:45 am Slichos
7:00 am Shachris
4:00 pm Mincha
7:00 pm Kol Nidre
6:50 pm Light Candles

Yom Kippur – Shabbos, Oct. 8

Yizkor

9:15 am Shachris
5:15 pm Mincha
Yom Tov ends no earlier than 8:16 pm

Erev Succos – Weds, Oct. 12

Eruv Tavshilin

7:00 am Shachris
6:55 pm Mincha
6:50 pm Candle lighting

Succos - Day 1- Thurs, Oct 13

9:15 am Shachris
6:55 pm Mincha
Light candles after 8:08 pm

Succos - Day 2 – Fri, Oct 14

9:15 am Shachris
6:50 pm Mincha
Candle Lighting at 6:47 pm

Shabbos - Chol HaMoed – Oct 15

Koheles

8:45 am Shachris
6:40 pm Mincha
Shabbos ends 8:05 pm

Hoshanah Rabbah – Weds, Oct. 19

Eruv Tavshilin
6:47 am 1st Shachris
8:15 am 2nd Shachris
6:45 pm Mincha
6:39 pm Candle Lighting

Shemini Atzeres - Oct. 20

10:45 am Yizkor
9:00 am Shachris
6:30 pm Mincha/Maariv &
Simchas Torah Hakofos
Light candles after 7:58 pm

Simchas Torah - Oct 21

8:45 am Shachris
6:40 pm Mincha
6:37 pm Candle Lighting

Shabbos – Bereishis-Oct 22

9:00 am Shachris
6:30 pm Mincha
Shabbos ends 7:55 pm



The next Executive Board Meeting will be Wednesday, Oct 26, 7:30 pm

The next Regular Board Meeting will be Sunday, Oct 30, 9:30 am

Mazel Toy

To Mrs. & Mrs. Robert Miller upon the birth of a new granddaughter

To Rabbi & Mrs. Rotstein upon the birth of a girl, Aliza Bracha

To Rivka & Tzvi Mordechai Cohen upon their anniversary

To Rabbi Yisroel and Naomi Homnick upon moving into their new home

To Hart & Simona Hasten upon their 50th Wedding Anniversary

To Rabbi & Rebetzin Gettinger upon the birth of a granddaughter to their son and daughter-in-law
Aron & Gila Gettinger of Los Angeles

To Rabbi & Mrs. Michael Hasten upon the recent birth of a grandson

To Mark & Anna Ruth Hasten upon the recent birth of a new great-grandson

To Mark & Andrea Solzman on their new home

To Helen and Milton Goldstein upon the birth of a great-grandson in Israel

Mazel tov to Rick and Caryn on the recent engagement of their daughter Lizzy (Sarah Elisheva) to Avi Ravinsky, son of Rabbi Michael and Selina Ravinsky from St. Louis.



Congregation B'nai Torah

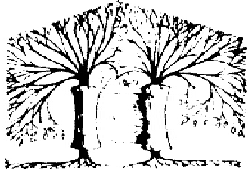
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Rabbi Yisrael Gettinger



בני תורה

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Please be sure to
place your Lulav
and

Esrog order by
Monday

September 26th