בס"ד

Ohr Yerushalayim News

5th August 2026 - Volume 19 - Issue 10 - נצבים - וילך - כ"ג אלול תשפ"ו

News This Week

Kiddush

There will be a Kiddush following Davening, part sponsored by Eric and Sue Sievers, in celebration of their grandson's, Avrohom Zvi Davis, engagement to Esti Leigh, and as a Segula for a Refua Shleimo for Sue

Asher and Meira Richman invite the Kehilla for a Kiddush in honour of the birth of the daughter, Elisheva, from 11:30am. Men at Kehilas Kerestir, 19 Vine Street, ladies at their home, 132 Neville Road

Chaim Aruchim

We wish Chaim Aruchim to Vicky Krebs in honour of the Yahrtzeit of her father on Thursday, 28th Elul

Hakomas Matzeivo

The Hakomas Matzeivo of Judith Lynda Blackston, mother of Raymond Blackston, will take place at Agecroft Beis Olam on Sunday September 6th, 1.00pm

Security

With the upcoming Yomim Tovim, the Shul security rota will experience a greater burden. Please consider volunteering even for a single 30 min slot to help protect the shul. Please contact David Levine 07875 538735 for more info.

Children Activities

There will be space in the hall for children up to year 6, accompanied by a parent, to relax on 1st day Rosh Hashono (Shabbos) from 11an and 2nd day of Rosh Hashono after the first Shofar blowing (approx 11:15) until the end of Shul (approx 1:30). There will be books and limited amount of toys, so parents are asked to bring their own toys for their kids

Where Do We Begin?

Rabbi J Rubinstein

As we approach Rosh Hashonoh, it is surely appropriate to consider the words of Rav Moshe Chaim Luzzato, about this Festival, in his classic work on Jewish belief, ספר דרך ה'–"The way Of Hashem". My summary of his words would be as follows; On this day, Hashem judges the whole world, and renews the whole of existence. All the accusations against us because of our wrongdoing, are assembled.

However, Hashem commanded us to blow the Shofar. The Shofar has the effect of causing us to be judged with mercy rather than by the strict letter of the law. Justice demands that every human being should only receive good if he truly deserves it. But this very principle of justice, also gives rise to the rule that there are certain activities on our part which cause Hashem to judge us with mercy and compassion, and not be particular about every detail. The rule is,כל המעביר על מדותיו מעבירין לו על כל פשעיו –"Everyone who overlooks his own natural qualities (i.e. when somebody does wrong to him, he overlooks it and overcomes his natural instinct to retaliate) then Hashem will overlook all his sins". This means he will not be punished for what he has done wrong. But it is also in keeping with perfect justice because he is being treated as he treats others.

Rav Luzzatto then goes on to discuss how blowing the Shofar draws down from on high the qualities of mercy. But from this lofty discussion there emerges a very down to earth guideline. If we want to be judged favourably on Rosh Hashonoh, we should overlook and forgive people for what they have done wrong to us. It is very difficult to forgive, when one has been really hurt, even if it is only by something somebody said, but it can be done.

I am always reminded of the story about Rabbi Eliyahu Lopian. When he was living in London, somebody asked forgiveness for having sinned against him. Rav Lopian asked him what he had dpne. The man did not want to say, but when Rav Lopian said he could not forgive if he did not know what he was forgiving, the individual told him. Rav Lopian then said to him, "I could easily say to you I forgive you, but it would not be sincere because what you did was serious; please come back in two weeks time, and in the meantime I will study works which speak about the importance of forgiveness". Two weeks later, the person came back and Rav Lopian said, "I completely forgive you". That was a forgiveness

Davening Times

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	6.50pm
Candle Lighting	6.59pm-7.15pm
Shacharis	7.25am / 9.15am
סוף זמן ק"ש	9.46am
Ovos uBonim	5.00pm
Mincha	6.00pm / 7.35pm
Motzei Shabbos	8.40pm
Sun	6.00am / 7.30am / 8.30am
Mon / Thurs	6.00am / 6.45am / 7.45am
Tues / Wed	6.00am / 6.55am / 7.45am
Fri ערב ר"ה	6.00am / 7.15am
Mincha & Maariv	7.30pm
Late Maariv	10.00pm

which engenders Hashemś forgiveness of our wrongdoings.
In the first verse of this weekś Parshah, Moshe Rabeinu said, "You are all standing, .the leaders of your tribes, your elders, your officers, every man of Israel" The Medrash Tanchumah comments, if a person takes a bundle of canes, it is doubtful whether he can break them. But a single cane-even a child can break it. Similarly says the Medrash, Israel will only be redeemed when then they are united in one group.
One could add, sometimes it is difficult to know, where or how, we should begin to improve ourselves over the Rosh Hashonoh and Yom Kippur period Perhaps this Medrash should set the tone for our approach to Rosh Hashonoh. If we are divided by resentments, which we sometimes harbour even towards those we love, or feuds among us, we are liable to be judged harshly. But if we follow the guidance of Rav Luzzato mentioned above, and begin by making an effort to forgive other people, then perhaps Hashem will also judge us mercifully, and inscribe us for a good and wonderful year.

The Ends of Heaven

Rabbi Naftali Reich (Torah.org)

Turbulence seems to be inescapable in Jewish history. When times are good, Jewish people tend to forget about the Creator and His Torah. They wander off in search of the forbidden fruit the pagan cultures dangle in front of them, thus bringing down calamity on their heads.
In this week's reading, Moses prophesies that the Jewish people will be oppressed, persecuted and driven into exile. But there would always be hope. In the throes of their misfortune, he foresees, they will think about what has befallen them, and they will repent. Then Hashem will gather the exiles from the nations among whom they have been scattered. "If your castaways will be at the ends of heaven," Moses assures the Jewish people, "Hashem, your Lord, will gather them in from there."
The commentators are puzzled by the strange language of this last verse. You would normally expect to find castaways at the ends of the earth, not at the ends of heaven. In what sense will Hashem gather the castaways from the ends of heaven?
Some commentators resolve this problem by interpreting the verse in an allegorical sense. Every person, they point out, is a paradoxical hybrid, an improbable fusion of the spiritual soul and the material body. The soul is a spark of the divine, a fragment of Hashem's heavenly throne sent down to the earth to dwell in a beautiful clot of matter called the human body. The soul yearns to be reunited with its celestial Source, while the body is drawn to the pleasures of the material world. The tensions generated by this internal conflict defines the dynamics of human existence. Who will emerge victorious the body or the soul? The answer to this question determines success or failure when all is said and done.
This then is what Moses was telling the Jewish people. When will Hashem bring the castaways back to the Holy Land? If they are "at the ends of heaven." If their striving is for spirituality, if they reach out to grasp the fringes of heaven so that they can pull themselves ever upward. But if they are "at the ends of the earth," if they reach out for the illusory enticements of the material world, they will not be worthy of redemption.
There was once a sage who had only small group of disciples, but he was exceedingly wise. After a while, his fame spread, and he began to receive many requests for admission to his academy.
The sage called a meeting of his disciples to discuss the situation.
"We don't want to let in just anyone," he said. "We want only the best and the finest. But how do we determine who they are? By what standards shall we measure our applicants?"
"Honesty," said one disciple.
"Piety," said another.
"Intelligence," said yet another.
The sage shook his head. "None of these are critical. We can accept devious and make them devout, the sinful and make them sincere. But we must have someone who has a genuine desire to grow, someone whose heart and mind are attuned to higher aspirations. That is more important than anything else."
In our own lives, as we approach the High Holidays with a sense of awe and trepidation, we make all sorts of resolutions about how we intend to improve ourselves. We resolve to be kinder and more considerate to others. We resolve to pray with greater concentration. We resolve to devote more time to Torah study. All these things are good and well. But these are not the most critical things on which we should focus. Rather, we should focus on fanning the flames of the divine spark that dwells within so that we should be consumed with a desire to reach out and touch the heavens. That desire will energize and inspire us and guide us down all the right paths to fulfillment. Someone once asked a sage, "I can only spare five minutes a day for Torah study. What should I choose to learn?" The sage smiled and said, "Study works of spiritual inspiration, and you will discover that you can spare far more than five minutes a day."

Four "Atems" Teach That Our Continued Existence is the Biggest Miracle

Rabbi Yissocher Frand (Torah.org)

The pasuk in Parshas Nitzavim says, "Atem nitzavim hayom kulchem... kol ish Yisrael." There is a wonderful sefer, to which Rabbi Kulevsky, zt"l, introduced me, called Hadrash V'ha'iyun, written by Rav Aharon Lewin, the grandfather of the famous attorney, Nat Lewin. He wrote a sefer on Maseches Brochos. The seferI am referring to is on Chumash.
The sefer quotes a Baal Haturim (Shemos 19:4), which notes that there are four pesukim in Tanach that begin with the word "atem" (you). They are "Atem k'chu lachem teven..." (Shemos 5:11); "Atem re'isem asher aseesi l"Mitzrayim..." (Shemos 19:4); "Atem nitzavim hayom kulchem..." (Devarim 29:9); and "Atem Aydie neum Hashem" (Yeshaya 43:10). The Baal Haturim, as is typical, does not provide an explanation regarding a connection between these seemingly disparate pesukim.
The Hadrash V'ha'iyun suggests a beautiful pshat: In world history, there seems to have been a sea-change as to how Hakadosh Baruch Hu deals with Klal Yisrael and the world. Up until a certain point in history, Hashem would perform nissim geluyim (open miracles) on behalf of Klal Yisrael. Throughout the Torah and into Neviim Rishonim, changes to nature miraculously occur for the salvation or benefit of Klal Yisrael. Then, suddenly, the nissim stopped. It seems that there are no longer nissim.
The four pesukim that all begin with the word "atem" are coming to dispel that myth and to proclaim that there are still nissim geluyim even today. The first of these "atems" was when Klal Yisrael was suffering in Mitzrayim. They didn't see any hope when their situation deteriorated with the command from Pharaoh: "Atem will need to gather your own straw to make bricks." Consequently, the Ribono shel Olam brought about the nes called Yetzias Mitzrayim (the Exodus from Egypt) to rid them of that travail. The Ribono shel Olam reminds Klal Yisrael of that nes with the second "atem": "Atem re'isem asher aseesi b'Mitzrayim" (You saw what I did to Egypt.)
That was during the period of nissim geluyim. But don't think that nissim have stopped. Do you know why? It is because "Atem nitzavim hayom kulchem" (You are standing today, all of you). Because Klal Yisrael is still around. "Atem nitzavim hayom kulchem" is not merely referring to Moshe Rabbeinu's conversation with Klal Yisrael on the last day of his life. "Atem nitzavim hayom kulchem" is referring even to us in the 2020s after all that we have experienced up until this point in history.
That is the point of the fourth "atem": "Atem Aydie neum Hashem." (You are My witnesses says Hashem). Your mere existence is the greatest proof! As great as the nes of Yetzias Mitzrayim was, there is an even greater nes. The greater nes is "Atem nitzavim hayom kulchem." That is the message of the pasuk in Yeshaya: "Atem Aydie neum Hashem." You — the existence of Klal Yisrael — are proof that there is a Ribono shel Olam.
The sefer Yismach Yehudah brings basically the same idea from Rav Chatzkel Levenstein (the Mashgiach Ruchani of the Mirer Yeshiva in Europe and in Shanghai). He said an amazing thing: The fact that the Mirer Yeshiva survived World War II was, in fact, a bigger nes than the nes of Purim. That is an amazing statement.
Consider one relatively minor part of their experience. The travel from Kobe, Japan to Shanghai was an ocean voyage. They got hold of an old rickety boat which could not take all the talmidim at once. They had to make several trips, under hazardous conditions, in what was basically a floating tub. When the last group of talmidim arrived in Shanghai, the boat headed back to Kobe, and it sank on the way! Their survival is a miraculous story.
However, Rav Yakov Emden made an even bolder statement in the introduction to his siddur. "I swear to G-d, when I contemplate about the continued survival of the Jewish people, it is equivalent in my eyes to events greater than Yetzias Mitzrayim and all the Biblical miracles of that era, for the nes of the survival of the nation is not a one-time nes, but it is an ongoing and constant nes, because in each and every generation, they rise up against us to destroy us, and only Hakadosh Baruch Hu saves us from their hands."
Therefore, yes, "Atem gather straw..." and yes "Atem saw what I did to Mitzrayim..." refer to the nes of Yetzias Mitzrayim, and "Atem are all standing here together..." and "Atem are My witnesses says Hashem" refer to the nes of our continued survival, which is no less of a nes, if not even more of a nes. This explans the connection of all four "atems."