



Ohr Yerushalayim News

ראש השנה תשפ"א – 19th September 2020 - Volume 13 - Issue 11

News This Week

Seats over Yomim Noroim

Seats are only available to those who have pre-booked. If you have not done so, please be aware there are no spare spaces.

The seat you have been allocated is for ALL tefillos over Rosh Hashono. The 8am Shacharis will take place in the marquee and the 9am Shacharis in the Main Shul.

Rosh Hashono Davening

There will be changes to which Piyutim we say in Shacharis on both days, a list of changes will be next to each seat. We expect the 1st Minyan to finish at 12pm approx and second Minyan at 1pm approx.

Keep Safe

In line with recent guidance members are reminded not to congregate outside the building before and after Davening. Masks are mandatory while Davening except for those who have a medical exemption.

Tekias Shofar

There will be 4 separate times for ladies of the Shul to come and hear Tekias Shofar:

10am approx - please stand in the area between the Marquee and the Shul as these Tekias will be part of the 8am minyan in the marquee.

11am approx - please come up the driveway at the back of the Shul.

This will be part of the 9am minyan being held in the Shul.

1pm and 6pm will be for ladies only and will take place in the marquee.

Please use the whole of the marquee for this and use the seats and tables appropriately so people remain socially distanced at all times.

Masks should be worn at all times. Please note 1pm is approx as it is following the second minyan.

Disabled WC

The disabled WC will be for the use of ladies only over Yom Tov

Shul Burial Board

The Rov strongly encourages all Shul members who are not yet a member of a Burial Scheme to join the scheme. For full details of the Shul Burial Board please be in touch with Avi Stern - office@ohryerushalayim.org.uk or 07813 326423.

Rov's Yom Tov Collection

This fund is for top-ups to help members of our Kehilla with extra Yom Tov expenses. This year especially, with financial difficulties being experienced by many. Every donation is important, however small or large and will be gratefully accepted.

Bank transfers can be made to ZY Gemach, sort code 77-19-09, A/c 29350768 reference R.H.C.

Vouchers and cheques made payable to "ZY Gemach" and cash can be left in the office or give to the Rov in Shul or home.

Thank You Ladies

Thank you to the members of the ladies committee who so kindly spent time cleaning the Shul silver in preparation for Yom Tov.

A Final Note For The Year

The editor would like to take this opportunity to wish the Kehilla a טובה וחתימה and ask מחילה for any offence caused by, or for omissions from the newsletter during the past year.

From the Rov & Rebbetzen

At the beginning of the new year the Rob and Rebbetzen Daven to the הקב"ה for all the members of the kehilla and their families to give you all a year full of good health and Simchas, a year full of גמילת חסדים and עבודה, תורה and נחת and pamossoh and a year full of תורה, משיח צדקינו, במהרה בימינו to welcome.

Mishenichnas Elul Marbim b'Simcha?' **Joseph Rosenhead**

Rosh Hashonah. For me, just hearing these words triggers so many memories from years gone by. In particular, at this time of the year I find myself looking back on my years in yeshiva. I can vividly recall the sombre mood that enveloped Gateshead Yeshiva from the start of Elul zman. You could just feel it was different - it was soon going to be Rosh Hoshanah. There was a longer mussar seder in the afternoon; there were extra tehillim recited after mincha; and of course, who can forget the Mashgiach's passionate recitation of Orchas Chaim l'Rosh after shacharis? This was what preparing for Rosh Hoshanah was all about - being serious and introspective - or so I thought. When I later moved on to Yeshivas Toras Simcha in Yerushalayim, the Rosh Yeshiva - Rabbi Osher Zelig Rubinstein

Davening Times

ראש השנה ליל א

Mincha & Kabbolas Shabbos	7.01pm
Candle Lighting	No later than 7.01pm

ראש השנה יום א

Shacharis - 1st Minyan	8.00am
Shacharis - 2nd Minyan	9.00am
Mincha followed by Seder HaLimud	6.50pm

ראש השנה ליל ב

Maariv	8.03pm
Candle Lighting	Not before 8.03pm

ראש השנה יום ב

Shacharis - 1st Minyan	8.00am
TeKias Shofar	Approximately 10.00am
Shacharis - 2nd Minyan	9.00am
TeKias Shofar	Approximately 11.00am
Extra TeKias Shofar	1.00pm / 6.00pm
Mincha followed by Shiur by R' Asher Richman	6.50pm
Maariv & Motzei Yom Tov	8.01pm

צום גזליה

Ta'anis Starts	5.08am
Selichos	6.00am / 6.30am / 7.45am
Mincha & Maariv	6.45pm
Ta'anis Ends	7.52pm

עשרת ימי תשובה

Tues / Wed / Fri	6.00am / 6.40am / 7.45am
Thurs	6.00am / 6.30am / 7.45am
Mincha & Maariv	6.45pm
Late Maariv	8.00pm

zt"l - once stood up after shacharis and announced: "Today, one of the bochorim in our yeshiva is getting married. It is a big inyan to be b'smicha before Rosh Hashanah, so make sure you dance tonight like you've never danced before!" After hearing this, I remember thinking: "What does he mean, 'it is a big inyan to be b'smicha before Rosh Hashanah'?! What happened to being more serious and introspective? Saying extra tehillim? Learning more mussar?" In fact, there's a machlokes between the Rambam (Hilchos Chanukah 3:6) and the Hagohas Maimoniyos (cited by the Mogen Avrohom in Hakdomoh to Orach Chaim: Siman 597) as to whether or not there is even a mitzvah to be b'smicha on Rosh Hashanah itself [and even the Rambam who says there is a mitzvah, concedes that the simcha experienced should not be excessive due to the seriousness of the Yom Hadin]. Therefore for Rabbi Osher Zelig zt"l to say that one should particularly approach Rosh Hashanah with feelings of simcha, took me somewhat by surprise.

However, I would suggest a resolution to this apparent contradiction can be found in the beginning of last week's sedra. The sedra begins: 'You stand this day all of you before Hashem your G-d - your tribal heads, your elders and your officials, all the men of Israel; your children, your wives, the convert in the midst of your camp - from woodchopper to water drawer; for you to enter into a covenant with Hashem...' (29:9-11). There are three glaring questions on these possukim that are addressed by the meforshim. Firstly, what is the meaning behind the seemingly superfluous term, "hayom" - "this day"? Secondly, why was this additional covenant necessary after Hashem had already established a new covenant with the Bnei Yisrael, as stated at the end of Parshas Ki Sovo (28:69)? Finally, why did the Torah delineate the various different groups in Klal Yisroel, when the all-inclusive description "all of you", was already stated beforehand? A recurring answer given by the meforshim to the first question (citing the Zohar Hakodosh), is that in Sefer Iyov it is written: "One day ("hayom") the divine beings presented themselves before Hashem" (2:1). The Targum translates "hayom" as "the great day of judgement" i.e. Rosh Hashanah. Hence, likewise in last week's sedra, when it was the Bnei Yisroel who presented themselves before Hashem, the term "hayom" also acts as an alternative expression for Rosh Hashanah. However, with this explanation another question naturally arises. Why did this mass gathering specifically occur on Rosh Hashanah? The answer to the second question above provides the justification for this.

What was different about this bris? The Ohr Hachaim explains that this bris introduced the concept of 'arvus'. Hashem was now requesting that every person should be concerned for the welfare of his fellow Jew. Every person should try to prevent his fellow Jew from transgressing the Torah; whereas the previous bris mentioned in Ki Sovo, only obligated each individual person to ensure that they keep the Torah themselves. Hence, Rabbi Gedaliah Schorr zt"l (Ohr Gedalyohu) suggests that the commandment of 'arvus' was specifically given on Rosh Hashanah, in order to establish that our success at fulfilling this obligation is a key aspect to our judgement on Rosh Hashanah. Yet, Rabbi Gedaliah Schorr zt"l notes that there is in fact, a positive and negative connotation to the concept of 'arvus'. On the one hand, there is the advantage of communal support. However, conversely there is also the disadvantage of a lack of personal identity. For example, in life, we can be guilty of relying too heavily on the virtue of 'arvus', on the virtue of being a 'klal'. We ensure that we live in an established, "Torah-dik" environment so that we have access to the optimal communal support and influences; yet we do not actually live up to these communal standards in our individual lives.

Therefore, in light of this enigma, Rabbi Gedaliah Schorr zt"l proves - by answering the final question above - that ultimately, fulfilling the bris of 'arvus' is a delicate balancing act. In using a broad description for the Bnei Yisroel, as well as specifying their individual groups, the Torah is teaching us a vital lesson. The Torah is telling us that on Rosh Hashanah, not only is it essential that we are prepared to stand united before Hashem as a 'klal' - "areivim zeh b'zeh" - but as individuals as well. On Rosh Hashanah, our judgement is not based solely on our communal allegiance to Klal Yisroel, but also on our individual actions.

I would like to suggest another answer to the final question above, which in turn, addresses a further balancing act that is required due to this duality within 'arvus'. In addition to a lack of personal accountability, there can equally be a conflict between prioritising the objectives of the 'klal' and our individual aspirations. If the bris of 'arvus' - championing the progress of the 'klal' - is so crucial, surely this negatively impacts on our

capacity to succeed in our personal goals in life? I would suggest it is this dilemma that the possukim come to address. Not only do the specific words in these possukim teach us a vital lesson, but even the precise order in which they were written, is significant. Perhaps, the Torah first uses a broad description for the Bnei Yisroel, before then specifying their separate factions, to stipulate that if on Rosh Hashanah, we all come together as one unit - with sholom and achdus - i.e. we demonstrate the positive element of 'arvus', then Hashem will subsequently judge each of us as individuals. Meaning, on Rosh Hashanah, rather than being bound to the negative element of 'arvus', which seemingly impedes on personal expression, we are all able to stand before Hashem with our individual hopes for the coming year. The Torah is telling us that, in fulfilling our communal responsibilities, rather than this being incompatible with fulfilling our individual aspirations, this is in fact, the very catalyst for us being able to also achieve our individual goals.

Perhaps it is this idea that Rabbi Osher Zelig Rubinstein zt"l was alluding to. Of course, the build-up to Rosh Hashanah is a serious time of the year. Yet, it is not a contradiction to say that we should also be b'simcha at this time as well. If we can demonstrate our feelings of simcha - or more precisely - our feelings of simcha for others, specifically in the days leading up to Rosh Hashanah, then this is a clear illustration of our commitment to each other. It is a clear illustration of our commitment to the bris of 'arvus', which can therefore act as a z'chus for each of us to ultimately receive a 'k'siva v'chasima tova'.

In fact, I would suggest with this understanding of the significance of 'arvus' for Rosh Hashanah, we have a greater insight into why from the start of Elul, we begin wishing each other a "K'sivah V'chasimah Tovah. Perhaps, we start saying this phrase, because this initial gesture is in fact a fundamental prerequisite for standing in front of Hashem with our personal aspirations for the year. We begin our preparations for Rosh Hashanah by explicitly expressing our desire to witness other people experiencing a 'shona tova'; for through firstly demonstrating our united concern for each other, we can confidently daven on Rosh Hashanah to also be granted a 'shona tova'. Hence, by the time the Yom Hadin arrives it is understandable why, "we should walk unhurried and relaxed, happy and cheerful, confident that Hashem has heard our tefillos" (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch- Hilchos Rosh Hashanah 129:20). We can feel confident that after having spent the past month explicitly and repeatedly acknowledging that we are "areivim zeh b'zeh", we are now ready to individually stand in judgement before Hashem.

Finally, I would say that this message of 'arvus' is possibly more relevant this year, than any other previous year. Although we may physically, be more distant from each other this year, we should recognise that really, physical proximity presents only an external image of unity. What is more important is that we are "areivim zeh b'zeh". We need to appreciate that no matter how far apart we are physically, ultimately the key to each of us having a "successful" Rosh Hashanah, is proving our commitment to each other, our commitment to the bris of 'arvus'. Showing consideration for each other, concern for each other and happiness for each other is what ultimately brings us all together, which in truth, can be done irrespective of any 'social distancing' restrictions.

Back To The Source

Avi Schwartz

This is a Rosh Hashanah like no other. More than ever, given the present circumstances we find ourselves in, some might struggle to connect to what in the past would have been easy. As such, it would behoove us to investigate the origins of the Shofar in order to better connect to this deep and insightful mitzvah.

The Rabbis teach us that to properly understand something, we must go back to the first time it is mentioned in the Torah, and that will inevitably shed some light for us. So let's take a look at the story of the Akeidah. After 9 previous tests, H-shem commands Avraham to take his son to sacrifice him. That commandment itself is unusual. Let me paraphrase according to Rashi (Bereishis 22:2)...

H-shem: Take your son...

Avraham: Which son?

H-shem: Your only son...

Avraham: Which only son? The one by Sarah or the one by Hagar?

H-shem: The one you love...

Avraham: I love them both!

H-shem: Yitzchak!!!

We already know that there aren't any extra, redundant or superfluous words in the Torah. So why this whole dialogue? Why doesn't H-shem just command Avraham to take Yitzchak? Rashi explains that H-shem specifically set out this dialogue so as not to confuse Avraham. H-shem wanted Avraham to receive maximum s'char (reward) for his action. He could only do so if he had the proper kavanah (intent) throughout the commandment. This way, H-shem was sure that Avraham would be able to think through the command and make a properly informed decision. Avraham adheres to all of H-shem's instructions to the letter. In fact, passuk gimmel tells us that "Va'Yashkem Avraham baboker...", Avraham got up early in the morning to perform this task. Even though it must have been the most difficult thing H-shem had ever asked of Avraham, he still got up early to do it. And that is so hard for us to connect to today. On the one hand, we have Avraham, eved H-shem, willing and able to do whatever H-shem commands in order to build his connection with the Almighty. On the other hand, you have Avraham, a father, who waited decades for Yitzchak to come into his life. These two contrasting aspects of his self must have been in constant conflict, and yet Avraham was able to navigate these troubled waters because he knew that H-shem would only command him to do what was good and right, even if he couldn't understand how.

He continues and leaves Yishmael and Eliezer behind, bringing Yitzchak up Har Moriah. And let's call a spade a spade. Yitzchak knew very well what was happening and just as Avraham had come to terms with H-shem's command, so did he. Now the climax of the story. And the Torah really paints us a picture of what was happening. Pesukim tes and yud give us all the details of Avraham reaching for the knife and bringing it up over Yitzchak. In a scene that would make most Hollywood producers envious, just as the drama reaches its peak, an angel stops Avraham mid arc and commands him to stop.

In that moment, in that specific, precise moment that Avraham has his world turned upside down, that he no longer is the instrument of Yitzchak's demise, what goes through his head. As an eved H-shem, surely he must be disappointed. He had the ultimate opportunity to express his emunah and bitachon in H-shem. He was going to be able to physically demonstrate his spiritual connection with the King of Kings. Then it was taken away. Surely as an eved H-shem he was disappointed. But as a father to Yitzchak, he must have been elated! On the one hand, Yitzchak is now able to be Avraham's legacy, to bridge the gap to future generations and imbue in them parallel paths in worshiping H-shem and on the other hand, Avraham will not have to live with the fact that he would have taken his own son's life. But which emotion was stronger? The disappointment or the relief?

When Avraham lifts his eyes (passuk yud gimmel), he sees a ram, takes it and offers it as a sacrifice to H-shem. Why? As a thank you to H-shem for sparing Yitzchak, or is there a deeper reason?

The Torah says at the end of passuk yud gimmel that Avraham takes the ram "tachas b'no", in place of Yitzchak. Rashi there explains that there are no extra words in the Torah and the Torah is emphasising the fact that Avraham feels disappointed. Cheated. Here he had this ultimate opportunity to connect to the Almighty. He was asked to do something that no one else would be able to do. And that opportunity was taken away from him. So when he sees that ram, he asks H-shem to allow him to sacrifice the ram "tachas b'no", as if he were sacrificing Yitzchak. That he should receive the s'char for himself and for all future generations as if he had sacrificed his son.

Knowing this about the origins of the first shofar, I believe we can extrapolate that scenario to help enhance our own Rosh Hashanah experience. Each year, we take a cheshbon hanefesh leading up to the Yamim Noraim. And yet, how often do we repeat the same goals each and every year? How often do we endeavour to work on big, general, vague ideas, instead of smaller and specific ones? And because of this, do we not find that we repeat these them year on year? But why?

Let's take a practical example...shalom bayis. Mr. Joe Cohen decides to make a real effort to have a date night with his wife each week. Things start off well after Sukkos, but by Chanukah the busyness of life has gotten in the way. What does Joe do? Gives up. The yeiush (despair) he feels pushes him to give up. So next Rosh Hashanah what does he do? He convinces himself that this year will be different. That life's challenges and obstacles are different, and that he is better equipped to handle them this year as opposed to last. And yet we already know the result.

Giving up again. So year 3 comes around and he once again convinces himself that this year is THE year. This time he'll get it right....And that is the flaw of our Avodah come Rosh Hashanah. Whether it's shalom bayis, or avodas H-shem, or being koveah itim l'Torah, we tend to view it as an all or nothing scenario. I'll do the daf, but once I miss two days, I'm done. Avraham's experience with the Akeidah teaches us to act and expect differently. Avraham was ready, raring and able to offer the ultimate sacrifice, Yitzchak. But once that's taken away, he doesn't fold up shop. He doesn't give up and hope for another once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to present itself. He does the next best thing. He takes the initiative and sacrifices the ram "tachas b'no". And that is the lesson of the shofar. No matter what changes we try to make in our lives that don't work out, don't abandon them! Take a lesson from Avraham's book and instead do the next best thing. Weekly date night not working? Do it fortnightly or even monthly! Daf yomi too much? How about amud yomi! There are always ways to connect to H-shem, even if it isn't what was ideal to begin with. The lesson of the shofar is that things don't always work out how we want them to, but that is no reason to give up, chas v'shalom. If anything, it's a real beracha to be given the opportunity to re-think, re-do and recharge ourselves in order to connect to the Almighty.

Now more than ever it may seem hopeless that our avodas H-shem isn't what it was in past years because of The Virus. But instead of giving up, let's rally and see this as yet another opportunity to improve our own relationship with the King of Kings. Wishing you and yours a ksiva v'chasima tova!

The Power Of Our Tefilo On Rosh Hashona Dr Zev Davis

The Gemora (Bava Metzia 106a) asks what the halocho is in the following scenario: The owner of a field said to his tenant farmer: "Plant the field with wheat", but he went and planted it with barley (to the detriment of the owner). So the tenant farmer should have to pay the losses of the owner.

But then the entire area was wind blasted (ie devastated) and these fields of his with barley were also wind blasted. All crops were ruined. What is the Halocho?

Either that the tenant farmer can say to the owner: Even if I had planted it with wheat it would likewise have been wind blasted, as all the surrounding fields suffered the same fate, so I'm not liable!

Or perhaps the owner can say to him: Had you planted it with wheat, the following would have been fulfilled for me:

"And you shall decree a matter and it will be established for you..." i.e. We would have merited success if you hadn't planted the 'wrong' crop.

Rashi explains as follows:

"ותגור אומר ויקם לך"

מה שתבקש מן היוצר יעשה, ואני לא ביקשתי מן השמים בתחילת השנה שיציליני בשעורים אלא בחיטין

This means - that which you request from the Creator on Rosh Hashona, He will do!

And the owner of the field says: "I davened on Rosh Hashona for success with a field of wheat, not barley". (ie the worker is liable for rendering the owner's tefilo ineffective)

Isn't this astonishing! The owner claims that his Tefila on Rosh Hashona would have saved his field even against all the odds, where all the other fields were destroyed!

Yet the gemora accepts this argument, and decides in favour of the landowner!

And this is halocho in Shulchon Oruch: we accept his claim that Hashem would have changed the decree since he asked for it on Rosh Hashanah! There are a number of important lessons we need to take from here.

1. First and foremost, the power of our prayer on Rosh Hashanah, and that it can influence in our favour what is decreed for the coming year, even against all odds. This is pretty mind-blowing but we need to know it's the absolute truth and Halocho.

2. It's important to note that this Gemora was not talking about the awesome power of prayer of a tzadik (צדיק גורו והקב"ה מקיים).

We talking about a landowner who is an 'ordinary' person. And that the Halocho acknowledges that his prayer on Rosh Hashanah can change a decree to turn out in his favour.

3. It's equally important to note that the owner of the field clearly believed in the effectiveness of his Tefila, and that the gemora accepts this in its verdict.

Whilst the general theme of the entire davening on Rosh Hashanah is the Malchus of Hashem and our acceptance of that, we do know that we have opportunities to daven for our needs, and indeed we should, since everything for the entire year is decided on Rosh Hashanah. And we see from the above, how much we can influence that for good, as long as we believe in it ourselves.

Perhaps the connection of these two themes - that Hashem is our king and that we have an amazing power of Tefila on Rosh Hashana, is simply that if we sincerely "crown Hashem", then it is an opportune time to ask our King for what we need, and He will accept our tefillois.

This year, with the first day Rosh Hashana being on Shabbos, there is a very important point to be made here.

We didn't mention above that the obvious places we can and do ask Hashem for our personal needs are in מלכנו ואלוהינו של עולם (when taking out the Sifrey Torah). However, we omit these when Rosh Hashana occurs on Shabbos; because on Shabbos we don't ask Hashem for our personal needs.

This means that we are foregoing this amazing opportunity to ask for our needs on the 1st day (which is **יו"ט דאורייתא**), in honour of Shabbos!

In other words we are saying to Hashem: the kedusha of Your holy Shabbos is more important than our personal needs.

In this zechus may H' shower all of klal Yisroel with all His abundant brochois

As if to prove that Rosh Hashana is indeed a good time to ask Hashem for our needs, the gematria of the 2 key words from the above posuk

863= **בראש השנה**, ותגדר אומר

בתיבה וחתימה טובה לנו ולכל ישראל

Knock, Knock!

Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky (Torah.org)

The repetitive nature of everything associated with Rosh Hashanah is noteworthy. During the entire month of Elul, we blow the shofar at the end of shacharis (morning prayer). Unlike Matzo, where many have a custom to abstain during the month of Nissan – 15 days before the festival of Passover – and others will not eat Matzo for a month in joyous anticipation of the spiritual crunch, anticipating Rosh Hashanah seems different. Instead of creating excitement by not blowing the shofar, we diminish the level by becoming accustomed to it. Of course, we must prepare ourselves. There is a lot at stake on Judgement Day, but wouldn't an extemporaneous and unrehearsed blast of the shofar send more of a shiver down the spine and more forcefully a call for repentance, rather than a shofar-sounding ritual performed for 30 days prior that may by now feel quite rote?

The Selichos services are also a lead-up to the great day. Sefardic Jews have the custom to recite the pre-dawn prayers for the entire month of Elul. Moreover, Ashkenazic Jews can recite the selichos for more than a week before Rosh Hashanah. Would there not be a consideration that many Jews would get prayed-out from the pre-holiday supplications? Isn't there a chance that they would get blown-away by the repetitive nature of the month-long shofar exercise?

In the Selichos service, we beseech the Almighty as if we were destitute. "Like beggars and paupers we knock on Your door. On Your door, we knock, Merciful and Compassionate One" (from the first Selichos prayer L'cha Hashem hatzedaka). Again, we knock – not once, but twice! Isn't once enough? Surely G-d is not in the kitchen. He can hear us the first time!

My brother-in-law, Rabbi Simcha Lefkowitz, Rabbi of Congregation Toras Chaim in Hewlett tells the following story:

A meshulach (a man who raises funds for charity) came one sunny Sunday morning to a large home in the Five Towns of Long Island. Eagerly he rang the bell, and simultaneously knocked on the door. A woman, quite displeased, swung open the ornate portal to her home and, knowing the man's intent, she began to shout.

"What do you want? I never met you in my life! How do you expect me to give charity to someone I have never seen? I'm sorry, but this is my policy and I just can't give you!"

The meshulach was not perturbed. Slowly, he walked around the block and fifteen minutes later he was back at the same door. Again he rang the bell, and again the woman came out shouting. "I told you I never met you in my life! How do you expect me to give charity to someone I have never seen! Didn't I clearly explain my policy to you?"

The meshulach just smiled as he replied. "You are absolutely correct.

However, you forgot one small thing. You know me already! After all, we met ten minutes ago!"

The weeks before Rosh Hashanah we must be wary that we may have to knock a few times to get into the big door. Of course, Hashem knows who and what we are, but we may be a little foreign to him. The daily shofar blasts, the recital of chapter 27 of Tehillim, L'Dovid Hashem Ori, twice daily in our prayers and the recital of daily selichos are all summarized in the words we recite, "like beggars we knock...we knock on Your door, Merciful One."

We realize that we must reacquaint ourselves with the commitments and the great resolutions that we accepted upon ourselves one year ago. But if we knock once and knock again, ultimately we, too, can smile at the One standing at the door and ask for all our desires. After all, we were just there. And He knows us already!

Giving to HASHEM Tzedaka

Rabbi Label Lam (Torah.org)

And He took him outside, and He said, "Please look heavenward and count the stars, if you are able to count them." And He said to him, "So will be your seed." And he believed in HASHEM, and He accounted it to him (Avraham) as (Tzedaka) righteousness. (Breishis 15:5-6)

There is something we can do for HASHEM that even HASHEM cannot do for Himself. Sounds almost like a heretical proposal but if I did not hear it from a great person, Reb Ezriel Tauber zt., and with my own ears, I would be intrepid to say it myself.

How is it that Avraham Avinu was credited with Tzedaka? He believed in HASHEM! HASHEM is the essence of KNOWLEDGE. How can HASHEM then believe in Himself, or force others to believe in Him?! That would not be belief but coercion. That would not make HASHEM a King but rather a dictator.

A king, by definition rules with the consent of his subjects. That Talmud says, "There is no king without a people." His reign is dependent upon the consent of the nation that pledges loyalty to him. A dictator must rule his subjects, even for their own good, by force. He can be a benevolent despot but it is with or without their approval. King David writes in Tehillim, The Kingdom is HASHEM's and he is ruler over all the nations. (Tehillim 22:29). It is HASHEM's desire to be a King and not a ruler. Who are His people? When is the election?

Election Day in Israel is called, "Yom Bechira" - Day of Choosing! We know that every day is "Yom Bechira" but some days are bigger and more important than other days. Rabbi EE Dessler ztl. writes that there are two types of Bechira –Free Choice. One is Bechira Pratis (detailed) and the other is Bechira Klalis (general).. One style of free choice is made up of the miniature moment by moment decisions we make daily.

They are not to be minimized because each moment of life is a slice of eternity and is cosmic in its impact. However, sometimes, it's obvious when we reach a giant fork in the road that the choice we make will effect a whole year or the entirety of our lives. That's called, "Bechira Klalis".

When someone accepts to do a job and agrees to a salary then he is locked into that position. Each and every day and throughout every day he makes decisions that will impact whether or not that job or another job will be available for him next year. That first choice though is a grand and general choosing. Rosh HaShana is literally "The Head of the Year"! Everything in the year is contained in the head of that year! It is Election Day. The Shofar is campaigning and reminding, and urging, and encouraging we the Jewish People to get come to Shul and vote. This "voting" is much different than that democratic method of making voices heard.

My in-laws bless their souls were Holocaust survivors and they both became naturalized citizens. On Election Day they took their duty seriously. They made the great effort to come to the local polling station even when it was difficult. Now one was a republican and the other was a democrat. They each voted for the opposing candidate. When I heard about this, I wondered why they didn't just stay home?! They effectively cancelled each other's vote. Oy Vey!

When voting for HASHEM to be King over the World and the details of our lives, nothing, and no one can cancel our vote. It's absolute and real. Not only that! In a regular election you simply pull a lever but when electing HASHEM, as the Talmud tells us, "HASHEM wants the heart". Each vote is extremely private and has endless depth. This is what we can do for HASHEM that even HASHEM can't do for Himself, and we are credited with giving to HASHEM Tzedaka!