

**Insights into
Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur
by the faculty of
Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi**



**Quote on the cover from Piyut for Yom Kippur by Rabbi
Avraham Ibn Ezra.**

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וַיִּתְּנָה תִּקְוָה קְדוּשַׁת הַיּוֹם. כִּי הוּא נוֹרָא וְאֵים. וּבּוֹ תִּנְשֵׂא מַלְכוּתוֹךְ

The "Yomim Noraim" approach us in all their splendor, power, and awe. In the yeshiva, the new year takes on a special meaning as the students and rabbanim prepare not only for the days of awe, but also for the entire learning calendar. The summer has passed and now is time to begin a new cycle of Torah learning. There is no better way to approach learning than hearing the wake up call of the *shofar* blast in Ellul and greeting the world and Yerushalayim refreshed and energized.

כִּי מִצִּיּוֹן תֵּצֵא תוֹרָה וּדְבַר יְהוָה מִירוּשָׁלַיִם

This summer, in addition to preparing for the arrival of our new *talmidim*, the faculty pulled its resources to send to all our friends and family *divrei Torah* from our Beit Midrash. With great pleasure we bring you Torah from Eretz HaTzvi. Eretz HaTzvi has two connotations for us here in the yeshiva – Eretz Yisrael and Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi and these Torah insights share both meanings. In this modest volume, you will find different styles and approaches to the meaning of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur representing many of the members of the yeshiva faculty. We hope that this volume will serve you well during the upcoming season.

May you and the entire Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi family be inscribed in the book of life.

Shana Tova Umetuka,

The faculty of Yeshivat Eretz HaTzvi

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Rabbi Yehuda Susman
Rosh HaYeshiva

Bracha from the Rosh HaYeshiva

-היוצר יחד לבם, המבין אל כל מעשיהם.

The *Mishna* in Rosh Hashana introduces the well known formulation of:

בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה כָּל בְּאֵי הָעוֹלָם עוֹבְרִין לְפָנָיו כְּבָנֵי מְרוֹן,
“On Rosh Hashana all the inhabitants of the world pass before him as (*ki*) *vnei maron*

Two translations are offered for this somewhat enigmatic phrase. Most commonly it is rendered as meaning “sheep in the flock”. To understand the full significance of the metaphor, it is helpful to pay close attention to the verse in *Tehilim* that the *Mishna* provides:

-היוצר יחד לבם, המבין אל כל מעשיהם.
“He who fashions their hearts alike; who considers all their deeds”

The source itself is a somewhat surprising one, with only an oblique connection to the date of Rosh Hashana through *yetzira*, creation. Nevertheless, the choice is telling and sharpens the metaphor considerably. We are, the psalmist tells us, all created as one (*Yotzer Yachad Libam*), but still understood and viewed by the *ribono shel olam* as individuals (*Meivin el Kol Maaseihem*). True, all humanity marches before G-d, outwardly as indistinguishable one from the other as are sheep in flock, yet in the eyes of the shepherd, their unique characteristics are clear.

However the alternate translation for “*Kivnei Maron*,” takes the idea one step further. Based on the Latin word for

battalion – Numeron – the term would be translated “as (*ki*) in (*v*) formation (*neimaron*)”. This rendering sees humanity not as sheep passing before a shepherd, but as troops marching before their commander. Under the uniform, each soldier is an individual and *Hashem* sees each person for whom they are. In this regard this metaphor parallels the first. But, unlike sheep who are ultimately accountable only for themselves, the actions of one soldier impact directly on all around him. The corollary is clear - our actions, all year round and especially in these Days of Awe, are relevant not only for us as individuals but to the concentric circles that are our families, our communities, our people and ultimately the entire world.

May this year be a blessed one for all the entire Eretz HaTzvi family together with the rest of Bet Yisrael.

B'virkat Ktiva V'chatima Tova
Yehuda Susman

Rabbi David Ebner
Rosh Yeshiva

ELLUL¹

I am sailing to Tarshish,
have booked a sleeping berth cabin,
on my dream vacation,
an endless journey.

There is no penalty for overweight luggage,
of little lies and cruelties,
that are as long as the alphabet,
and the Do Not Disturb
sign hangs on my door.

Tekiah.

Ellul blows a question
at me:

Are you looking for the One;
is it that which you seek?

Or is that another small lie,
recited at onboard services?

Is Tarshish God's house?
Is your soul unto Him,
your body His work;

do you feel the terror of angels,
their silken wings trembling,
at the silent soundings of the great shofar?

¹ Reprinted with permission from: Ebner, Rabbi David, *The Library of Everything: Poems and Torah Commentaries*, (Jerusalem: ATID, 2004) pp. 84-87

Shevarim. Teruah.

Ellul is knocking at my door,
trying to wake me,
to alarm a broken shard from sleep,
disturb a fleeting dream toward dawn,
divest the flying dust of vanity,
and say:
"But You are King".

Tekiah.

A siren song of truth,
calling me to untie myself from the mast,
to desert this ship of fools,
and search for the One;
in the land of Moriah mountains,
through Nineveh the great city,
at the lepers' gate of Rome;

to bind the wounds,
feed the hungry,
and clothe the naked,

to raise my voice as a shofar,
and cry aloud:

HaShem hu HaElokim,
HaShem hu HaElokim,
HaShem hu HaElokim,
HaShem hu HaElokim,
HaShem hu HaElokim,
HaShem hu HaElokim,
HaShem,
hu,
HaElokim.

and blast
Tekiah Gedolah,
next year,
in Jerusalem.

"Ellul": Notes

Rabbi Moshe of Kobrin once asked: Why do we recite the great confession of sins on Yom Kippur according the order of the alphabet? His answer: There is no end to our sins of omission and commission. But there is an end to the alphabet. And in this we find hope.

On Yom Kippur, the Book of Jonah is read as the afternoon's *haftorah*. The climactic end of *Neilah* in its powerful seven-fold cry: *Hashem...* (the Lord, He is God); the final *shofar* blast in the series which had begun in Ellul; and the longing of "Next year in Jerusalem" are bound up with the story of Jonah. It is one of the prophet who seeks to escape his mission to rescue frail humans deserving of our compassion as God grants them His. Jonah's escape leads him to book passage to Tarshish and once boarded to hide in sleep in the "belly" of the ship. Indeed, this is the theme of the *shofar* itself according to Rambam's *Hilchot Teshuvah*, 3: 4: "Awake, you sleepers from your sleep... examine your ways... repent. These are the people who forget the truth in the vanities of time... "

The series of shofar blasts – *tekiah*, *shevarim*, *teruah*, *tekiah* and the *tekiah gedolah* – are all wake-up calls; They are all posing the question of returning to God and what He wants of me. They ask me to rise from my couch of fantasy and embrace God who is knocking at my door (see *Song of Songs* 5:2-6):

They call me to follow the path God would have me take, even into the land of Moriah, even to a life of sacrifice which we read about in the Torah on the second day of Rosh Hashanah.

They call me to the gates of Rome where the Messiah is waiting and binding wounds. (*Sanhedrin*, 98a) From the beginning of *Ellul*, Ashkenazim blow the *shofar* daily and recite *LeDavid* (Ps. 27) with its stirring words of dedication: "*One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the graciousness of the Lord, and to visit early in His temple.*"

They call me to the fast of Yom Kippur and the words of Isaiah (Chap. 58) which we read as the *haftorah* of Yom Kippur morning:

"Is such the fast that I have chosen? the day for a man to afflict his soul? Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the fetters of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him, and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?" (Isa. 58:5-7)

The *shofar* calls me at it summons the angels in heaven in the *Netaneh Tokef* prayer: "*The great shofar will be blown and a sound of fine silence will be heard. Angels will hasten and trembling and fright will seize hold of them and they will say: Behold, it is the day of judgement....*"

It calls me to recognize the essential human condition: "It is true that you are their creator and know their inclination for they are flesh and blood. Man's foundation is from dust and

dust is his end; it is with his soul that he brings his sustenance. He is like unto a broken shard, withering grass...blowing dust, and a passing dream. "

It calls me to proclaim the ultimate truth: "*But You are King, O living God.*"

From at least four days before Rosh Hashanah, we begin the recitation of *Selichot* in which we affirm: "*HaNeshamah lach /...Husah al amalach/* The soul is Yours / the body is Your work / take pity on Your toil." Note well the terms *husah* and *amal* which are the key terms in God's lesson to Jonah about compassion and repentance and are the focus of the last two verses of the Book of Jonah.

All of these *shofar* calls in their various permutations are expressed in the passages from the readings and liturgy of Ellul and the Days of Awe. They should be the ship in which we are now sailing.

Rabbi Aviad Tabory
Ra"m

Why did God create the world?

In ancient Greece the philosophers debated over whether or not the world was created *ex nihilo*. Whilst Aristotle claimed that the world was not created but has existed eternally; the Rambam (Maionides), who was in fact a great admirer of Aristotle, disagreed¹. Basing himself both on the fact that the philosophers themselves were not adamant about their theory and on the Torah's description of the creation of the world in Beresheit, he claimed that our world was created.

Is Rambam's argument a merely technical one? Claiming that the world has always existed allows us not to question the reason for creation. Conversely, claiming that the world was created leads us to question – why G-d created the world? The fact that the Torah begins with the creation of the world opens the immediate question of why was the world created and moreover what is man's role within this creation.

Chassidic philosophy attempts to answer this question by stating the following: "אין מלך בלא עם" which means – "there is no king without subjects".

In order to explain the above concept, I will quote from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's *The Little Prince*. The "Little Prince" is an imaginary boy who travels from a distant planet and questions and challenges societal norms. In the following paragraph he meets up with a King who rules a planet, but there is one problem – there are no subjects to rule over.

"Ah! Here is a subject," exclaimed the king, when he saw the little prince coming. And the little prince asked himself: "How

¹ Rambam, Moreh Nevuchim section b chapter 25

could he recognize me when he had never seen me before?" He did not know how the world is simplified for kings. To them, all men are subjects. "Approach, so that I may see you better," said the king, who felt consumingly proud of being at last a king over somebody. ... But the little prince was wondering . . . The planet was tiny. Over what could this king really rule? "Sire," he said to him, "I beg that you will excuse my asking you a question--" "I order you to ask me a question," the king hastened to assure him. "Sire--over what do you rule?" "Over everything," said the king, with magnificent simplicity. "Over everything?" The king made a gesture, which took in his planet, the other planets, and all the stars. "Over all that?" asked the little prince. "Over all that," the king answered. For his rule was not only absolute: it was also universal. "And the stars obey you?" "Certainly they do," the king said. "They obey instantly. I do not permit insubordination."

The absurdity in this paragraph is self evident. The King's reign and status have no significance without any subjects to rule. The subjects create the King's Kingship. It is impossible to understand exactly why God created the world, but the fact is that he did create it. The concept of creation informs us that there is a place for us; there is a mission for us. This mission is the responsibility to recognize that our world has purpose; there is no ramification for Hashem to be King over the whole world if there are no subjects over which he rules. Hashem needs us, as it were, in order for Him to be able to rule over the entire world. This need instills the significance of our lives.

The world that we live in today, is a world in which it is very difficult to recognize God's existence; however, every time that we do so we are recognizing that God is King of the world.

Rabbi Alex Israel
Ra"m, Tanach

Rosh Hashanah: **Coronation Day.**

Is Rosh Hashanah a day of joy or a day of awe?

On the one hand, we celebrate this day as a Yom Tov with sumptuous meals and festive dress. On the other hand, we experience the "dread of Judgement" as we pray for long hours on this Judgement day. How do these contradictory emotions; celebration and Judgement coalesce¹?

I have a feeling that of these two emotions, the better understood dimension of Rosh Hashana is the "fear" aspect. Indeed it is the aspect of "Judgment" for which we prepare with our selichot and our Hatarat Nedarim. For many, the "highlight", the most emotive prayer of the Rosh Hashana service is "*Unetanne Tokef*" that thrusts us into the courtroom of God, with all the associated emotions; the sense of awe, uncertainty, helplessness and trepidation.

And so, where does the Joy come from? What creates the Yom Tov aspect of Rosh Hashana?

THE SHOFAR: THREE APPROACHES.

We shall attempt to answer our question by probing the effects, the function of the Shofar on Rosh Hashana. The shofar, certainly the most central ritual of Rosh Hashana should give us some clues as to the character of the day².

¹ The duality that we have raised here is clearly evident in the first recorded Rosh Hashanna in Tanach. There, we read of an assembly called on Rosh Hashanna by the great leader, Ezra. See the book of Nehemia 8:1-11.

To confirm this reading of Nehemia, we should remember the Gemara in Beitza 15b that brings this source as a proof text that Yom Tov should be "half for God, half for man."

² In fact the ONLY description of Rosh Hashana in the Torah is in the context of Shofar; see Vayikra 23:24 "Zichron Teruah," Bamidbar 29:1 "Yom Terua".

1. The Alarm Bell:

Let us begin with the Rambam in Hilchot Teshuva:

"Even though the sounding of the *Shofar* is mandated by the Torah, it contains a hidden message, namely: Wake up! Awake from your slumber! Emerge from your state of drowsiness and examine your life! Do Teshuva! Remember your creator! Here we address people who lose sight of the Truth in the frantic rush of life, always busy with one thing or another; things that in the final analysis are insignificant..." (Hil Teshuva 3:4)

This is one of the classic understandings of the Shofar. It is a wake up call, an alarm bell. It is there to shake us out of our complacency, to prompt us to take stock of our lives, to pay attention to the things in life that are "important but urgent." We are fully aware that "Three books are opened on Rosh Hashanah one for the righteous, one for the completely wicked, and one for the average person. The completely righteous are immediately inscribed in the book of life. The completely wicked ... in the book of death." The *Shofar* heralds the start of the Ten Days of Penitence, calling the entire nation to break our routine, to shake of our complacent demeanor and to focus on our *Avodat Hashem*.

2. Inducing Mercy. Invoking the Akeida.

"Rabbi Abahu taught: Why do we sound a *Shofar* that is a ram's horn? The Holy One said: Sound a ram's horn before Me in order that I may remember favorably the binding of Yitzchak, the son of Avraham,

and I shall consider it for you as though you have bound yourselves before Me." (Rosh Hashana 16a)

In this *Gemara*, the effects of the *Shofar* are directed at God, not at man. The *Shofar* is sounded by *Am Yisrael*, "to recall *Akeidat Yitzchak*" thereby inducing God's compassion, the *Midat HaRachamim*, God's "soft side" if you will.

How does this work? It would appear that the invocation of the Akeida highlights Jewish self-sacrifice. This sense of self-sacrifice begins with the ultimate sacrifice, the Akeida, but continues throughout Jewish history, throughout a history of exile, expulsion and persecution. By focusing upon the Akeida, we are bringing before the Almighty the extent of Jewish commitment through the course of History. It is as if to say, "We have remained faithful to you, please recognize that dedication." Mercy in the courtroom is always about seeing the personal distress, the implications of the harsh punishment upon the plaintiff. Raising the memory of the Akeida serves to put our dedication to God at the forefront, thereby ensuring God's compassion.

So here are two approaches to the Shofar. Both revolve around the notion of Rosh Hashana as a day of Judgment, a day on which human fate, personal and collective, lies in the balance. The first approach sees the Shofar as functioning as a wake-up call to man. The second approach sees the Shofar as a method of reaching out to God.

The Third Perspective: Tehillim Chapter 47

But I believe there is a third approach to the sounding of the Shofar. This approach reveals a fundamental underpinning to Rosh Hashana, and suggests a radically different perspective to our entire day.

The source for this approach will be the perek of Tehillim that we recite, seven times, before the Shofar is sounded³. The perek mentions the Shofar explicitly (v.6) but also alludes to the Shofar being sounded in the course of the multiple references, in noun or verb, to the Terua. Our seven-fold repetition of the chapter creates a meditation of sorts upon the words and themes of this perek⁴. Let us take a closer look.

1. For the Chief Musician. A Psalm by the sons of Korach.
2. Oh clap your hands, all you nations. Shout to God with the voice of a Terua!
3. For the LORD Elyon is awesome (nora). He is a great King over the Earth.
4. He subdues nations under us, and peoples under our feet.
5. He chooses our inheritance for us, the glory of Ya`akov whom he loved. Selah.

6. God has ascended with a Terua, The LORD with the sound of a shofar.
7. Sing "Elokim!" Sing! Sing to our King, Sing!
8. For God is the King of all the land. Sing praises with understanding.

9. God reigns over the nations. God sits on his holy throne.
10. The representative of the nations gather together, The people of the God of Avraham. For the shields of the land belong to God. He is greatly exalted!

³ Massechet Sofrim 19:2 is the earliest place in which this perek is linked explicitly to Rosh Hashanna.

⁴ Agnon, in his book, Days of Awe, writes that the seven-fold repetition is designed to penetrate the "seven heavens." (Agnon must have had a source for this but he doesn't quote the source.) Is the seven-fold repetition to "break through" to ourselves, or to "break through" to God?

What is this Perek about? In short, it is a Perek that calls for rejoicing – song, clapping hands, sounding the Terua. But why? What are they rejoicing about? We shall claim that the perek describes God being proclaimed as king of the world. This is the song of God's coronation. Drawing upon the imagery of real kings, human kings, and the pomp and ceremony of their coronation procession, this perek tries to apply that image to Hashem.

Now where is the image of a coronation? If you read the perek closely, you will discern a sense of movement. After proclaiming God's majesty, we then state the fact that "God has ascended." Ascended what? Where? Later, we read: " God sits on his holy throne." Apparently, the perek visualises an image of God, obviously a metaphorical image, but one modelled upon the world of real-life royalty. We view God in a coronation procession as He slowly makes His way to His royal throne, being installed there in a state of absolute power and control over the world.

Many of the phrases here are clearly reminiscent of Biblical coronation ceremonies:

"clap your hands"	"They clapped their hands and proclaimed: Long live the King!" (II Kings 11:12)
Song and music at a coronation "sing" "sound the Terua"	"and all the people followed playing flutes, and with great festivities the earth exploding with the noise." (I Kings 1:40) – at Solomon's coronation.
"the voice of a Terua!"	"Teruat Melech" - The Terua of a king (Bamidbar 23:21)

"God has ascended with a Terua, The LORD with the sound of a shofar"	"When you hear the sound of the Shofar, proclaim: Absalom is King!" (II Sam 15:10) "Sound the Shofar and say, Long live the King!" (I Kings 1:34) "They sounded the Shofar and proclaimed : Yehu is King!" (II Kings 9:13)
"God sits on his holy throne"	"Come and sit on my throne" I Kings 1:35

All of these textual parallels should convince us beyond doubt that the language of the Perek is transcribing the imagery of a coronation of the King of Kings.

The theme of God's majesty, His rule over the universe, is as I perceive THE central theme of Rosh Hashana. In our prayers, we acclaim God repeatedly as "Melech al kol Haaretz," "Hamelech Hakadosh." The entire environment created by our prayer book states clearly that the significant and dominant event of the day is God's rule, his control over the universe.

By reading through this chapter⁵ focusing on certain phrases and by amplifying them, we shall illustrate the latent energies within this powerful perek.

THE NATIONS

Who is being called to declare the majesty of Hashem? "Oh clap your hands, ALL YOU NATIONS. Shout to God with the voice of a Terua!" The Jewish people call to the nations of the world to recognise Hashem. This is a universal call. The

⁵ My reading is highly influenced by Prof Meir Weiss's article in his book Mikraot KeKavannatam which I strongly recommend to you all.

people of Israel call the nations of the world to rally around God and to accept His majesty over the entire world.

It is here that we turn our attention to the unusual name of God that is utilised in this Perek – the term ELYON. I believe that this name is not brought here indiscriminately. I quick search through Torah finds this name in an episode from the life of Abraham.

'And Malki-Tzedek, King of Shalem brought out bread and wine; he was a priest of the Supreme God (EL ELYON). He blessed him saying; "Blessed be Avraham to EL ELYON, creator of heaven and earth. And blessed be the Supreme God, who has delivered your foes in your hand." Bereshit 14:18-20)

Let us remind ourselves of the scene. Avraham had set out to battle in order to rescue his nephew Lot. Avraham was victorious, defeating the enemy and thereby saving the inhabitants of Sedom. The King of Sedom, the evil city, offers Avraham an alliance. But Avraham refuses to associate with Sedom preferring instead to build an association with a very different king, the king of Shalem (which traditionally is identified with Jerusalem.) The King of Shalem is named Malki-Tzedek – my King is righteousness – and he talks of an EL ELYON, a single Supreme God. In Malki Tzedek Abraham finds an ally. He shares Abraham's two groundbreaking principles; that of monotheism, and that of Justice and Kindness⁶.

Avraham clearly finds his religious partner in Malki-Tzedek as we hear Avraham talk adopting Malki-Tzedek's terminology in his speech. Here as Avraham refuses the proposal by the King of Sedom.

⁶ Cf. Bereshit 18:19

"I swear to the Lord (YHVH), EL ELYON, creator of heaven and earth: I will not take so much as a thread or a sandal strap of what is yours; you shall not say, 'It is I who make Avraham rich.'"

Note how Avraham combines his own connotation for God – YHVH – with Malki-Tzedek's EL ELYON!

Why does our Perek in Tehillim use the phrase ELYON? Because we are inviting the world to recognise God! If we want to invite the nations to proclaim God's majesty, then we should use THEIR terminology. And the terminology of gentile monotheists is ELYON!

THE NATIONS RESPOND

We have clearly established that this perek sounds a clarion call for all peoples to recognise God. Do they accede to the request?

In verse 5 we speak only of Israel as "chosen" by God. In verse 7 Hashem is still spoken about as "our king," Israel's king. Apparently God is still at this stage, unrecognised by the world. And yet, the perek ends with a sense that the world unites with Israel in their faith:

9. God reigns over the nations. God sits on his holy throne.

10. The representative of the nations gather together, The people of the God of Avraham. For the shields of the land belong to God. He is greatly exalted!

Clearly, the gathering of the "dignitaries of the Nations" to hail God, is indicative of their change of heart. The world has

seen the light! But there is a second group in this verse; "The people of the God of Avraham." Who exactly are this group? Some commentators (Rashi, Radak) say that this refers to the Jews. In which case, we have two groups, the Nations and the Jews proclaiming God's majesty. But Ibn Ezra has a more radical reading. Ibn Ezra believes that this venerable title - people of the God of Avraham - refers to ALL the nations⁷. Avraham was the founder of a faith, who called upon all humankind to recognise God. Here we return to Avraham and EL ELYON. And now we have a far more dramatic end to the Mizmor. At the end of the perek ALL MANKIND is united in God's family, and Israel is subsumed in the more universal family of nations! As the nations too convene of their own volition to herald God as King, they become children of Abraham, "the father of all converts." At the end of the perek, Hashem is "God of Abraham," God of Everyman.

UNIVERSALISM AND PARTICULARISM

But here, we should note a certain tension. After all, Avraham is the founder of our nation. He is not simply the father of all monotheists. This tension echoes throughout the perek. On the one hand, we call upon "all nations" (2) to clap and hail Hashem as King, and we talk of (v.10) "representatives of all nations" gathering together to salute God. We perceive God's rule and the awareness of God's majesty as a universal issue.

And yet, the chosenness of Israel, God's love for Israel, how God "subdues nations under us, and peoples under our feet" (v.5) gives prominence to the unique place that Israel hold in this drama. The nations are invited, but to play what role? What exactly is the nature of the relationship between Israel and the nations here?

⁷ See also the Gemara in Chagiga 3a which sees "Avraham" here is the archetypal convert.

Ironically, if we read our perek closely, it would appear that the nations' acceptance of God's rule will take place only after God has subdued "nations under us, And peoples under our feet." It would appear that there will NOT be some automatic understanding of God's presence. The nations will have to realise God's power the hard way. This rather pessimistic prognosis of world history suggests that until the day in which God reveals Israel as victorious in some manner, no nation will truly accept God's majesty. And yet, there WILL be a day when the world nations will join Israel, sharing our view of God and morality, and indeed, we pray for this day of universal unity with which the chapter concludes. Here is a universalistic⁸ vision in which the entire world will join us as a single family of Abraham, in recognising the Almighty as King.

Now this theme – ultimate Ouniversal realisation of God amidst the centrality of Israel - goes to the very heart of Rosh Hashana. Our special additions to our Amida revolve precisely around this theme: that God be accepted as master over the world, through the understanding of the status of the Jewish nation, and that this will inaugurate a new world order which fights evil and nurtures morality and goodness:

"And so, God, cast fear into all your creations ... let all creations fear You....let them unite into a single collective to perform Your will with a complete heart
...

And so, give honour to your people, praise for those who fear you, hope for those who await you, ... joy to your land, happiness to your city...

⁸ This is not the only place in which our dream for the future hopes for the unification of all mankind. See the closing chapters of the Book of Yishayau, Zecharia, Yoel.

Indeed let the righteous see and rejoice, let those who are moral be happy ... let all wrongdoing lose its voice, and all evil immediately disappear, for the reign of evil will vanish from the world.

And you - God - will reign alone over all your creations, in Mt. Zion your dignified abode, and Jerusalem your holy city..."

The vision of Rosh Hashana is God establishing a rule of TZEDEK and MISHPAT⁹ in the world, eradicating evil and supporting truth. The entire world will be affected by this. But the Jews, faithful to God throughout history will be especially joyous as they see their faith come to fruition. And indeed God will rule the world from the epicentre of Jerusalem.

"NORA"

In verse 3 We use the phrase: "Ki Hashem Elyon Nora." We have already focussed upon the name "Elyon." But let us also pay attention to the term, "Nora" that we use to depict God. Try to translate it. What do you come up with? It clearly derives from the same root as Yirah – fear. Is the use of the word "nora" informing us that God should be inducing feelings of dread. And how does that emotion square with the

⁹ In our Amida, God's majesty is mentioned many times particularly in reference to the virtue of "mishpat" (Hamelech Hamishpat) – See the passuk we quote in our tefilla, containing both Tzedek and Mishpat as key factors in God's malchut: Isaiah 5:16 (and the context there.)

Interestingly, Tehillim 47 mentions the notion of God' holy "throne" (v. 9). There is only one place in Torah, in which we hear about the throne of God. It is in the war against Amalek (Shemot 17). There we read: "Hand on the throne of God! The Lord will be at war with Amalek throughout the ages." This phrase gives an image of an oath – see Rashi there -whereby the hand on God's throne expresses a pledge for all time that God and evil are diametrically opposed. God's throne is the antithesis of Amalek. It represents integrity, justice and kindness.

joyous temperament of our Mizmor. If God is frightful, then why are we so happy?

Prof. Meir Weiss offers a different understanding of this word based upon a verse in Shemot 20:17. To understand the context, the nation are assembled at the foot of Mt. Sinai. They hear God's voice and they flee, terrified by the intensity of the experience. Moses tries to reassure them:

"Do not be afraid (al tira'u) for God has appeared in this manner in order to put you to the test and in order that His "Yirah" will be forever with you, so that you do not sin."

How does one translate the word Yir'ah? If it should be translated as "fear" then why is Moses saying, "Do not be afraid!" In fact if this is the correct reading Moshe should be saying: Great! That is wonderful that you are afraid. Now remember that feeling every time you wish to sin. But he doesn't say that. He says that we should not be afraid, but rather have Yir'ah. What is that.

Weiss suggests that Yir'ah is closer to awe. When we sometimes encounter a truly great person, or an individual of immense importance, we might experience an emotional nervousness of great proportions, bordering on fear, or fright. And yet at the same time, we might feel attracted and drawn to that powerful individual. We might describe this by talking about a feeling of awe – a mixed emotion denoting greatness and distance while simultaneously experiencing attraction and admiration. This is Yir'ah, and this is the title of God as NORA! His coronation induces intense joy, at the same moment as we feel a sense of trepidation at God's magnitude and power. Here we have the apprehension of fear mixed with a feeling of attraction.

IN SUMMARY

Tehillim 47 describes God's coronation. As we blow the Shofar this Rosh Hashana we salute God, proclaiming, heralding our acceptance of God as King¹⁰. We call the entire world to join us in this task. On the one hand, God's presence is a fearful one. On the other hand, the thought of a world-order that represents truth and justice prevailing over a world of tyranny and evil, is a heart warming thought. The understanding that God will take charge of his world is a vision that fills us with inspiration, hope and joy.

And so, we are excited, and also nervous. Joy and fear mixed in a strange hybrid that is unique to Rosh Hashana.

Our prayer then is precisely the prayer that we will be reciting in shul this Rosh Hashana. That we be written and sealed for life, and be granted a good year – spiritual and material. That God will indeed rule our planet raising the banner of truth, goodness and life and that we will see an end to the forces of evil and suffering in the world.

May God bless all Israel with a year of peace!
Shanna Tova!

¹⁰ I have already said that Malchut is the dominant theme of Rosh Hashanna. My belief is that this is the basis for visiting springs of natural water on Rosh Hashanna (known as Tashlich.) Rather than throwing sins into water, see I Melachim 1:9, 38 where the spring was the place of royal coronations. We go to a spring to crown God as king!

Rabbi David Ebner
Rosh Yeshiva

Turning Sounds¹

Rabbi Moshe calls me
at year's turning,
transcribing *shofar* music
into amnesiac allusion.
Dispersing illusion clouds
 of
dust and dreams,
 of
shadows and shards,
With the sharp blast
 of
Truth.

Memory lies baldly in somnolent fantasy.
 All yields to pride's denial.
Truth is cast down in soporific forgetting.
 None stoops to raise it.

Wake me, Rabbi Moshe.
Blast *teruah* truth
through me
And
 through me.
Remind a sleepwalker
 of
spirit sold for fad,
 of
soul squandered for bread.

¹ Reprinted with permission from: Ebner, Rabbi David, *The Library of Everything: Poems and Torah Commentaries* (Jerusalem, ATID, 2004) pp. 57-59

Wake me, Rabbi Moshe, wake me.
Whisper *teruah*-whimper
through me
and

through me.

Remind a dreamer
of
Love's memory;
of
His embrace.

At year turning.
As grass withers.
Through truth allusion.

At year turning.
As flower fades.
In *shofar* sound.

"Turning Sounds": Sources

Although the blowing of the *shofar* on Rosh Hashanah is a decree of the Torah, it contains an allusion (*remez*), to wit: "Sleepers, awake from your sleep...examine your ways, repent, and remember your Creator." (The sleepers) are those who forget the truth in the vanities of time and are passionately involved all their year in vanity and emptiness... "Look out for your souls, better your ways... abandon, each of you, his evil path..." (Rambam, *Hilchot Teshuvah*, 3:4).

Yesterday this (sinner) was hateful, disgusting, distanced, and abominable unto God. Today he (the penitent) is beloved, desired, near, and befriended (Rambam *Hilchot Teshuvah* 7:6).

It is true that You are their Creator... for they are flesh and blood. Man's foundation is of dust and his end is in dust. With his soul he gains his bread. He is as a pottery shard, withered grass, a fading flower, a passing shadow, a dissolving cloud, a blowing wind, flying dust, and a fleeting dream. (*Musaf of Rosh Hashanah*).

Memory says; "I did..."
Pride says: "I couldn't have..."
In the end, memory yields to pride. (*Nietzsche*)

The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Israel: "My children, open for Me one opening of repentance as a needle's eye..." (*Shir HaShirim Rabbah*, 5:2)

"A needle's eye" is an opening in metal; an opening that will never close; through and through, *durch und durch* (*R. Mendel of Kotsk*)

(God) cast truth down to the earth (*Bereishit Rabbah*, 8:5)

Why, then, is truth so scarce?
Because none stoops to raise it up. (*R. Mendel of Kotsk*)

Wherever a Jew falls, he falls into God's embrace. (*R. Mordechai Yosef of Izhbitz*)

The Call of the Child

The scene: A hushed silence fills the shul. Everyone is standing and the children gather round the בימה, eyes open wide with anticipation and excitement. The תפלות are uttered with intense כוונה, the שופר is raised, and then – suddenly, comes the unwelcome cry of an infant from somewhere in the room. All eyes turn glaringly at the offending infant and parent, waiting impatiently for them to exit the room so the sound of the שופר can pierce the heavens.

I've always been uncomfortable with that glaring look. Not because the child was so innocent, not out of sympathy for the embarrassed parent and not even because the cry of the child emanated from a source so deep and pure that it far overshadows the visceral wail of the שופר – but because the infant's weeping touches one of the fundamental themes of ראש השנה.

Starting with ראש השנה and continuing through יום הכיפורים our תפלות are suffused with a dual theme, perhaps best represented by the אבינו מלכנו. On the one hand we feel completely overwhelmed by God's might and royalty, so awesome is He that in His role as מלך we cannot even dream of drawing close and cleaving to Him. On the other hand, ה' is also portrayed as a loving and doting father in whose טלית we can wrap ourselves and in whose arms we can be wrapped, feeling safe and secure.

This dual theme of ה' as King and as Father weaves its way throughout the תפלות of the ימים נוראים and poses no difficulty for ה', as the Oneness of God can unite seemingly contradictory qualities reflected through the way He relates

to Mankind. For us, however, the story is quite different. We may be able to relate to 'ה' as either *אבינו* or *מלכנו*, but not as both simultaneously – and so we must constantly bounce back and forth between one and the other, resulting in a schizophrenic kaleidoscope of feelings and emotions. Objectively, 'ה' is *מלכנו*; to us mortals who can grasp only one image a time, however, to borrow from the language of *היום הרת עולם*, we must choose between being either *בנים* or *עבדים*.

While the *תפלות* and the *תקיעת שופר* are designed to help us comprehend the profundity of these ideas and the *שליח ציבור*'s task is to guide us in feeling them, somehow the experience tends to drift to being cerebral, or even worse, a hollow and rote performance. Enter the piercing call of the child. Philosophy goes out the window. At that moment we are reminded that we are – or at least should be – that child. That child truly understands prayer, crying out in real need.

Even more than that – we know that ultimately, none of us can resist that cry. There isn't a soul among us who doesn't want to soothe the pain of that baby. And so we turn to God, knowing that as *אבינו מלכנו*, He cannot resist our cries. While we may not be able to comprehend the complex nature of our relationship with 'ה', we know what it feels like to be children, and to be parents moved by their pain. That wail coming from the back of the shul not only shatters the silence but has the power to transform us, so that each one of us is a frightened little child calling for a daddy. Gone are the struggles to concentrate on the awe of *ימים נוראים* or to find some meaning in the seemingly endless *תפלה*. They are replaced with a single image – a self image – of a little boy or girl. And what Father could resist the plaintive cries of millions of His children?

Rabbi Shlomo Dov Rosen
Ra"m Machshava

Symbolism, Images and Life

The philosopher Whitehead pointed out that although people usually use words to symbolize things in the world, we sometimes invert the relationship: we can relate to 'things' as symbols for words. He claimed that while readers of poetry read about nature, and that helps them envisage it - the words of the poem acting as symbols for nature - poets work the other way round. They look at nature and think of words; for them nature is a symbol for the words they are trying to think about. I think his idea is fascinating, and very helpful for religious thought.

We all have symbols we idealize. These help us grow, and develop our latent potential. Ideals are symbols, very often-abstract concepts we acquired from our parents, society, or books. We translate these ideas into our own lives, and dress them in our particular personalities and life stories. But a danger lurks: we sometimes invert the relationship. Instead of the ideals acting as symbols to assist us in aspiring towards our own development, we sometimes aspire towards the symbol itself. We aim at realizing some abstract image-symbol, rather than its fulfillment in our own lives.

Who doesn't yearn to be a perfectly kind person to those one loves? No one succeeds because we are aspiring towards an abstract image: few ever work out how exactly this would translate into their own lives. We all want to live the symbol we idolize of praying with fervor and contemplation. Yet every time we finish the *amida* (over 700 words) within three minutes we surprise ourselves in missing our daily goal. Did we ever actually formulate what it was we were trying to do? We adore beautiful symbolic images. We aspire towards them, mistaking them for reality, instead of realizing that they are mere symbols of reality.

Symbols have to be translated into lives, rather than idolized as illusions.

My father said that the difference between a dream and an illusion is that the latter is an escape from reality, while the former enhances it. We can continue his idea by saying that when we aspire towards our symbols, as if they were our lives, they become illusions. When we manage to interlock them into our lives they become creative dreams.

People search for inspiration. But the danger is that while it could ignite excitement, any true spiritual growth may be momentary. Such agitation is often a mere mirage. We thrill ourselves in imagining we have attained an ideal. But we often mistake the symbol for reality, and flatter ourselves in living up to an image that is a mere escape - with no anchor in our real lives. It's a great adventure: rise to the occasion on Rosh Hashanah, do 100% *teshuva* just on time for Yom Kippur, enjoy spirituality on Sukkot, and come down to precisely where you were before - unscathed - just on time for your reentrance into your normal life, upon repackaging the *sukka*. My grandfather used to say: "it's not how you fast - it's how you break your fast."

Let's not be too cynical: we all know the difference between having ideals we never live up to, and not having ideals at all. And, as we all know: the experience itself leaves its mark. Yet, if we want to grow, the first step may be a translation of symbols into reality. Rather than trying to act-the-part we imagine when thinking about *teshuva* - a mere symbol we cherish in our mind's eye - we should think what it would mean in our own lives. If we try to live up to that, we may get less impressed with ourselves, and it'll certainly be a lot harder, but we might become better people. The secret to living an authentic existence (as against foolery) may simply be in taking one's ideals to be symbols for reality, rather than the other way round.

Rabbi Todd Berman
Associate Director

An Historical Introduction to "אמת מה נהדר / כאהל הנמתח"

A few years ago, some friends on sabbatical spent their first Yom Kippur in Eretz Yisrael. Responding to my inquiry of "how it felt" to celebrate the Yomim Noraim here, one remarked "Israelis really love the Kohen Gadol." She was overwhelmed by the emotional outpouring during the piyut "אמת מה נהדר" at the end of the *Avoda* section of the *mussaf Amida*.

אַמֶּת מֵה נִהְדָּר הִיָּה כִּי הָיָה גָדוֹל בְּצֵאתוֹ מִבֵּית קֹדְשֵׁי הַקֹּדְשִׁים בְּשִׁלּוֹם בְּלִי פִגְעַ	
מִרְאָה כִּי הָיָה	כָּאֵל הַלְנִמְתַּח בְּדַרְי מַעֲלָה
מִרְאָה כִּי הָיָה	כְּבִרְקִים הַיּוֹצֵאִים מִזֵּי הַחַיּוֹת
מִרְאָה כִּי הָיָה	כְּגִדְלֵי גְדִילִים בְּאֶרְבַּע קְצוּוֹת
מִרְאָה כִּי הָיָה	כְּדַמוֹת הַקֹּשֶׁת בְּתוֹךְ הָעֵנָן
מִרְאָה כִּי הָיָה	כְּהוֹד אֲשֶׁר הִלְבִּישׁ צוּר לַיְצוּרִים
מִרְאָה כִּי הָיָה	כְּנֹרָד הַנִּתּוֹן בְּתוֹךְ גִּנַּת חֲמֹד
...	
מִרְאָה כִּי הָיָה	כְּרוֹאֵי זְרִיחַת שֶׁמֶשׁ עַל הָאָרֶץ
מִרְאָה כִּי הָיָה	כְּשׁוֹשֻׁנֹת גֵּן בֵּין הַחֹחִים
מִרְאָה כִּי הָיָה	כְּתַבְנִית כְּסִיל וְכִימָה מִתִּימָן
כָּל אֵלֶּה בְּהִיּוֹת הַהִיכָל עַל יְסוּדוֹתָיו וּמִקְדָּשׁ הַקֹּדֶשׁ עַל מְכוּנֹתָיו וְכִי הָיָה גָדוֹל עוֹמֵד וּמְשַׁרֵּת דוֹרוֹ רְאוּ וְשִׁמְחוּ	

I, too, remember my first Yom Kippur surrounded by the joyous melody of this prayer. But where does it come from and what meaning should it have for us today?

In the Artscroll Machzor, the commentator relates, "In this alphabetical *piyut* of unknown authorship, the *Kohen Gadol*

is lauded in a series of similes, comparing him to various spiritual and material phenomena.”

But if we begin to dig a little deeper, perhaps we can find the origins – or at least an echo of the origins – of this moving poem.

As early as the ninth century in some versions of the first Siddur that we have, Rav Amram Gaon includes a brief version of this prayer at the end of the *Avodah*. Rav Sa'adia Gaon, at the turn of the tenth century, comments that this piyut is well entrenched and the universal custom.

It would seem that the basis for this joyous poem may be found in the mishna in the seventh chapter of Yoma. After offering all the sacrifices of the day, the mishna states:

<p>Mishna Yoma 7:4 They bring him [the Kohen Gadol] his personal clothes and he dresses. They accompany him home and he would make a festival for his friends when he exited, in peace, from the Kodesh.</p>	<p>משנה מסכת יומא פרק ז הביאו לו בגדי עצמו, ולבש. ומלנין אותו עד ביתו. ויום טוב הנה עושה לאוהביו בשעה שיצא בשלום מן הקדש:</p>
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Commemorating the thrill and joy of that event, we too sing about his success in coming forth whole from the Temple.

However, just as we can only imagine the event, by the time Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi compiled the Mishna, around 220CE, the Jews in Israel could only dream of what happened; The *Beit HaMikdash* was only a distant memory and hope for the future. Only through the memories of *Mesorah*, could the Mishna imagine for us the joy of that moment.

When the *Beit HaMikdash* stood, the *Kohanim* offered sacrifices, and the *Leviim* sang praises to *HaShem*, the splendor of the *Kohen HaGadol* must have been wondrous. But can we really imagine it?

Indeed, if we venture a bit further back in time, we actually have a description from the second *Beit HaMikdash* of the *kohanim* and the *Avoda*.

In the work generally known as the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*¹ (בן סירא), the author who according to most historians wrote about 20 or 30 years before the Maccabees², describes his seemingly personal experience of the *Kahon HaGadol*:

<p>Wisdom of Ben Sira Chap. 50 (New American Bible Trans.)</p>	<p>בן סירא פרק נ' מהדורת דוד כהנא</p>
<p>1. The greatest among his brethren, the glory of his people, was SIMON the priest, son of Jochanan, ...</p>	<p>(א) גְּדוֹל אֶחָיו וְתִפְאֶרֶת עָמוֹ, שִׁמְעוֹן בֶּן יוֹחָנָן הַכֹּהֵן.</p>
<p>5 How splendid he was as he appeared from the tent, as he came from within the veil!</p>	<p>(ה) מֵה נִהְדָּר בְּהִשְׁגָּיְחוֹ מֵאֵל, וּבְצֵאתוֹ מִבַּיִת הַפֶּרֶזְקֵת.</p>
<p>6 Like a star shining among the</p>	

1 The halachik status of the *Wisdom of Ben Sira*, a work frequently quoted in the Talmud and Midrash, is complicated. Rav Yosef includes the work among the "ספרים ההיצונים" -- non-canonical and apocryphal books -- which should not be learned; however, Rav Yosef later qualifies this statement by saying that "מילי מעלייתא דאית ביה דרשינן להו" that the beneficial statements of [Ben Sira] should be taught in public (Sanhedrin 100b). Surprisingly, in BK 92b, it is even quoted as part of *Ketuvim*. The author of the piyut seems to have felt that this is a virtuous section of Ben Sira worthy of emulation and hence falls under the second directive of Rav Yosef.

2 *Hellenistic Civilization and the Jews*, Tcherikover, Victor (Jerusalem, 1959. Magnes) pp. 142-151. See also The Jewish Encyclopedia: *Sirach, The Wisdom of Jesus the Son of*. Some Rishonim, based on a medieval work *The Alpha-Beta of Ben Sira*, claim that Ben Sira was the son of Yermiyahu and therefore lived around the time of Alexander the Great. If so, then the upcoming reference would be to Shimon HaTzadik I around 330 BCE.

<p>clouds, like the full moon at the holyday season;</p> <p>7 Like the sun shining upon the temple, like the rainbow appearing in the cloudy sky;</p> <p>8 Like the blossoms on the branches in springtime, like a lily on the banks of a stream; Like the trees of Lebanon in summer,</p> <p>9 Like the fire of incense at the sacrifice; Like a vessel of beaten gold, studded with precious stones;</p> <p>10 Like a luxuriant olive tree thick with fruit, like a cypress standing against the clouds;</p> <p>11 Vested in his magnificent robes, and wearing his garments of splendor, As he ascended the glorious altar and lent majesty to the court of the sanctuary....</p> <p>17 Then all the people with one accord would quickly fall prostrate to the ground In adoration before</p>	<p>(ו) כְּכֹכֵב אֹר מִבֵּין עָבִים, וְכִנְרַח מְלֵא בִימֵי מוֹעֵד.</p> <p>(ז) קְשֵׁמֶשׁ מִשְׁקֵרֶת אֶל הַיְכָל הַמֶּלֶךְ, וְקִשְׁת נִרְאָתָה בְּעָנָן.</p> <p>(ח) פִּנֵּץ בְּעֵנָפוֹ בִּימֵי מוֹעֵד, וְכִשׁוּשָׁן עַל יְבֵלֵי מַיִם.</p> <p>(ח*) כְּפָרַח לְבָנוֹן בִּימֵי קִיץ, וְכֹאֵשׁ לְבוֹנָה עַל הַמִּנְחָה.</p> <p>(ט) כְּכֵלֵי זָהָב מִפְתָּח וְאֲנָטִיל, הַנֶּאֱחָזוּ עַל אֲבָנֵי חֹפֶץ.</p> <p>(י) כְּזֵית רֵעָנָן מְלֵא גִרְגָר, וְכַעֲז שְׁמֹן מְרוּהָ עֵנָף.</p> <p>(יא) בְּעִטּוֹתוֹ בְּגָדֵי כְבוֹד, וְהִתְלַבְּשׁוּ בְּגָדֵי תִפְאָרֶת.</p> <p>(יא*) בְּעִלּוֹתוֹ עַל מִזְבַּח הוֹד, וַיִּהְדָּר עֲזָרַת מִקְדָּשׁ....</p> <p>(יז) כָּל בָּשָׂר יִחַדּוּ נִמְהָרוּ, וַיִּפְלוּ עַל פְּנֵיהֶם אֲרָצָה.</p>
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<p>the Most High, before the Holy One of Israel.</p>	<p>(יז*) להשתחוות לפני עֲלִיוֹן, לפני קדוש ישראל.</p>
<p>18 Then hymns would re-echo, and over the throng sweet strains of praise resound.</p>	<p>(יח) ויתן השיר קולו, ועל המון העריכו גרו.</p>
<p>19 All the people of the land would shout for joy, praying to the Merciful One, As the high priest completed the services at the altar by presenting to God the sacrifice due;</p>	<p>(יט) ויר'נו כל עם הארץ, בתפלה לפני רחום. (יט*) עד פלותו לשרת מזבח, ומשפטיו הגיע אליו.</p>
<p>20 Then coming down he would raise his hands over all the congregation of Israel. The blessing of the LORD would be upon his lips, the name of the LORD would be his glory.</p>	<p>(כ) אז ירד ונשא ידיו, על כל קהל ישראל.</p>
<p>21 Then again the people would lie prostrate to receive from him the blessing of the Most High.</p>	<p>(כא) וישנו לנפול שנית, ברכות לקחת מפניו.</p>

Here Ben Sira details for us his eyewitness account of the actions of the Kohen HaGadol Shimon HaTzadik II³. His

3 In Antiquities XII:4 Josephus informs us of the lineage of Shimon: "At this time Seleucus, who was called Soter, reigned over Asia, being the son of Antiochus the Great. And [now] Hyrcanus's father, Joseph, died. He was a good man, and of great magnanimity; and brought the Jews out of a state of poverty and meanness, to one that was more splendid... His uncle also, Onias, died [about this time], and left the high priesthood to his son Simeon." But see the previous note.

poetic description is not limited to Yom Kippur; however, the similarities to our piyut are both obvious and striking. The opening stanza and the use of words in the similes such as flowers, sun, stars, shining, etc. all describing the exit of the *Kohen Gadol* clearly served as the basis for the piyut which became almost universal custom by the time of the *Gaonim*. Here we no longer have a picture drawn from distant memories, but rather a personal account. We can envision the *Kohen* coming forth from his *Avoda* in his beautiful attire and the anticipation of the onlookers watching the whole affair. Our piyut, therefore, designed from this intimate experience, conveys to us the reality of the day.

Rabbi Soloveitchik famously stated that when one learns the *Avodah* of the *Kohen Gadol* on *Yom Kippur*, it is as if the *Kohen* again performs the *mitzvot* of the day. For the joyous congregation singing about the *Kohen Gadol* based on the words of a pious second century BCE Jew who actually witnessed the *Avodah*, this is not an imagined echo, but rather an actualization of the real event.

Traversing the history of this piyut from the modern *Machzor* to the *Gaonim*, through the medieval *Paytan* and *Chazal* all the way back to the time of the actual *Avodah* connects us to the true event described in our *Tefillah*. When we raise our voices crying out in joy and song, we too have a chance to relive this momentous occasion.

May we all merit the opportunity to witness the rebuilding of the *Beit HaMikdash* and create prayers and songs to pass to our children recounting our personal experiences of the *Avodah* of the *Kohen Gadol*.

Rabbi Yehuda Susman
Rosh HaYeshiva

Yom Kippur SheHal B'Shabbat - the Essence of Two Days

Which has more *kedusha* - Shabbat or Yom Kippur? Commonly, Yom Kippur is thought of as the holiest day of the year and the fact that we fast as always even when Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat (as it does this year) would bear this conclusion out. The *innui* (deprivation) of Yom Kippur takes precedence over the mitzvah of *oneg Shabbat* and the fast is not set aside. Yet a look at the liturgy¹ would seem to yield a contradictory conclusion. The *mishna* (Megila 4:2) rules that six people are called to the Torah on Yom Kippur and seven on Shabbat. The *gemara* (Megila 22) explains:

נקוט האי כללא בידך כל דטפי ליה מילתא מחבריה טפי ליה גברא
יתירא הלכך בראש חודש ומועד דאיכא קרבן מוסף קורין ארבעה ביום
טוב דאסור בעשיית מלאכה חמשה ביום הכפורים דענוש כרת ששה
שבת דאיכא איסור סקילה שבעה

Accept the following principle: Any day which is greater (ie: has a higher level of sanctity) than its fellow will correspondingly have a greater number of people called to read from the Torah. Accordingly, on *Rosh Hodesh* and (*Hol Ha*)*Moed*, when a *korban musaf* was brought, we call four to the Torah (i.e. - one more than the normal three). On *Yom Tov*, when in addition to the *musaf*, there is a prohibition of *melacha*, we call five. On Yom Kippur, which carries the penalty of *karet*

¹ Another seeming liturgical example of the primacy of Shabbat over Yom Kipur can be found in the accepted Ashkenazi custom to skip the *avinu malkenu* prayer on Yom Kipur that falls on Shabbat. The accepted rationale for the *minhag* is the aversion of including *bakasha* in our tefilot; *avinu malkenu* is a string of supplications partly modeled on the *shemone esrei*. It should be noted, however, that the practice itself was disputed by the *rishonim*, and in many communities, *avinu malkenu* was recited even on Shabbat (For a summary of the pertinent opinions, see Y. Yaakovson, *Netiv Bina*, vol. 5 pp. 80-81)

for its violation, we call six. On Shabbat, where the penalty is (the more severe) *skila*, we call seven.

The discrepancy needs to be explained. It would seem that a distinction needs to be drawn between two different aspects of Yom Kippur – the prohibition of *melacha* and the mitzva of *innui*. When it comes to the basic sanctity of the day, Shabbat is indeed predominant. However, eating on Shabbat stems from the *mitzvah* of *oneg Shabbat* (the direct source of which is found in *Yeshiyahu 58*) and is trumped by the Torah directive of “*V’Initem et Nafshotehem*” (*VaYikra 23*) on Yom Kippur. The Torah obligation of *kiddush* on Shabbat, derived from the *pasuk* of “*Zachor et Yom HaShabbat L’Kadsho*” - is fulfilled by the verbal mention (remembrance) of Shabbat in the *shemone esrei* of *arvit*. Saying *Kiddush* with a cup of wine, a rabbinic requirement², is waived in the face of the requirement to fast on Yom Kippur.

Nevertheless, there are instances where the lines of the conflict between Shabbat and Yom Kippur are blurred. Is a person, who for medical reasons is not allowed to fast on Yom Kippur (*Holeh sheyesh bo Sakana*) required to make the *kiddush* over wine? The *Magen Avraham* 618:10 rules that he is not: “(*kiddush*) was never legislated for Yom Kippur and certainly not for a critically ill patient whose mindset is not necessarily settled (enough for the task at hand)”. Rabbi Akiva Eiger, in his gloss, agrees with the *Magen Avraham’s* conclusion regarding a Yom Kippur that falls during the week, but takes issue when the *kedusha* of Shabbat needs to be taken in account.

... אבל ביום הכיפורים שחל בשבת דחייב עליו מדאורייתא לקדש.
ולהסוברים דאין קידוש אלא במקום סעודה הוא דרבנן. יש לומר דיצא
ידי חייב דאורייתא בהזכרת שבת בתפילה אם מכוון לצאת ולגבי דרבנן

² This is the understanding of the Rambam (*Hilchot Shabbat 29:1*) and the *Shulchan Arukh* (*Orach Haim 271*). See, however, *Tosefot* and *Ran* (*Pesachim 106a*) who raise the possibility that *kiddush* with wine is actually a *d’oraita*.

הוי כמו יום הכיפורים דעלמא. וגם בזה יש לחלק דדווקא מצד יום הכפורים לא תקנו קידוש כלל כיון דעל פי הרוב אינו יכול לאכול לא תקנו משום חולה לחוד... מה שאין כן בחל בשבת דתקנת חז"ל היה בכל שבת דיהיה קידוש במקום סעודה. ממילא גם שבת זו בכלל. וזה החולה חל עליו החיוב דשבת....

...however, on Yom Kippur that falls on Shabbat, where there is a Torah obligation to make *kiddush* (he should fulfill that obligation and make *kiddush*). However, according to those who hold that the concept of making *kiddush* with the meal is only Rabbinic in nature, therefore the Torah obligation is fulfilled when Shabbat is mentioned in the *tefila*. As for the Rabbinic obligation (of wine), it should be treated like all other Yom Kippurs. Nevertheless, this argument would hold true only for Yom Kippur (during the rest of the week) when no obligation (for *Kiddush*) was legislated, and the exception necessary for an ill person is not significant. But when it (Yom Kippur) falls on Shabbat, the Rabbinic statute of *Kiddush* with the meal was made for all Shabbatot. Including (whenever relevant), the Shabbat of Yom Kippur....

In short, his rationale is a simple one - The *issur* of *innui* has been set aside - why should the *mitzvot* of Shabbat not resume to their initial strength?

R. Eiger's argument seems to be a potent one. Yet subsequent *posekim* (Including *Mishneh Brura* and *Arukh Hashulchan*) reject his position without explanation as to why.³ One could argue, however, that the assumed perspective of the foundation of the argument can be questioned. R. Eiger is working with the assumption that the aspect of Yom Kippur which prevented the fulfillment of the *mitzvah* of *kiddush* -

³ See however, *Mikraei Kodesh* no. 54 who presents a technical challenge to R. Eiger's position focusing on fashioning a suitable text for the *Kiddush* of Shabbat Yom Kipur.

namely *innui* - is the responsibility of the individual – *hovat hayachid*. It follows that when a specific individual finds himself exempted from *innui*, he will be automatically obligated in all that the *innui* had blocked.

However, that perspective is by no means a given. In a lengthy *tshuva*, the *Tzemah Tzedek* (*Orach Haim* 36) dealing with a related issue⁴ comes to the following conclusion:

אמרה תורה תענו את נפשותיכם אף כשחל בשבת א"כ ביטלה תורה מצות אכילת שבת ועונג שבת כשחל בו יוהכ"פ, א"כ אין שום מצוה... דהמצוה הוא להיפך לענות נפש.

When the Torah stated “Deprive yourselves” even when Yom Kippur falls on Shabbat, it in effect nullified the *mitzvah* of eating on Shabbat and of *oneg Shabbat* when Shabbat and Yom Kippur coincide. Consequentially, there is no *mitzvah*...for the *mitzvah* has become *le’anot nefesh* (to deprive oneself).

In other words, the *mitzvah* of *innui* is not merely the obligation of the individual, but a categorization of the nature of the day itself. Exemptions can be granted and the individual may find himself fasting or not. Regardless - the day is defined as one of categorical *innui* and no *halachik* significance – no *mitzvah* – can be ascribed to the act of consumption. Applying this to the question of *kiddush*, one would come to the conclusion that even on Shabbat, there can be no sanctification of an act which stands in opposition to

⁴ The question raised runs as follows: 1) there is a position amongst the *rishonim* that according to the Torah, a person needs to eat a minimum of a *Kazayit* (olive) every Shabbat. 2) The proscribed *shiur* of consumption on Yom Kipur is a *KaKotevet* (large date), approximately 50% more than a *kazayit*. 3) Eating less than the proscribed *shiur* is not necessarily prohibited from the Torah (*Hatzi shiur mutar min haTorah*). 4) It follows that we should require a person to eat a *kazayit*, so that he fulfills his Torah requirement of *oneg Shabbat*, without risking violation of the prohibition of *innui*.

the very nature of Yom Kippur and accept the ruling of the *Magen Avraham* and reject the position of R. Eiger.⁵

If we return to our opening question: “Which has more *kedusha* - Shabbat or Yom Kippur?” our response will now be more nuanced. The focus of *Kedushat Shabbat* is the prohibition of *melacha*. Indeed - even the *mitzvah* of *zachor/Kiddush* is appended to that motif :

שמות פרק כ

(ז) זָכוֹר אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ:

(ח) שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים תַּעֲבֹד וְעָשִׂיתָ כָּל מְלֶאכֶתְךָ:

(ט) וַיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי שַׁבַּת לַיהוָה וְקָדְשׁ הָיָה לְךָ לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה כָּל מְלֶאכֶה אֹתָהּ וּבְיוֹם

וַיִּבְתְּךָ עֲבָדְךָ וְאִמְתְּךָ וַיְהִימְתְּךָ וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּשַׁעְרֶיךָ:

(י) כִּי שֵׁשֶׁת יָמִים עָשָׂה יְהוָה אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ אֶת הַיָּם וְאֶת כָּל אֲשֶׁר בָּם

וַיִּנַּח בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי עַל כֵּן בֵּרַךְ יְהוָה אֶת יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת וַיְקַדְּשֶׁהוּ:

The primary motif of Yom Kippur, on the other hand, is that of *innui*. The prohibition from work is of secondary importance.⁶ Hence, when the Torah describes the nature of Yom Kippur, it makes no mention of the *issur melacha* and focuses solely on the *innui*.

ויקרא פרק כג

(לב) שַׁבַּת שַׁבְּתוֹן הוּא לָכֶם וְעֲנִיתֶם אֶת נַפְשׁוֹ תִּכְבֹּם בְּתַשְׁעָה לַח דָּשׁ בְּעָרֶב מְעָרֵב עַד עָרֵב תִּשְׁבְּתוּ וְשַׁבְּתֶם:⁸

When Shabbat and Yom Kippur coincide, neither *kedusha* overwhelms the other. Rather we give primacy to each in its own sphere.

⁵ See the position R. Moshe Feinstein (*Igrot Moshe, Chosen Mishpat 1:39*), who also categorically rejects the opinion of R. Eiger, possibly based on the rationale stated here. Similarly, compare the position of R. Shlomo Zalman Auerbach brought in *Shemirat Shabbat K'hilchata (chapter 39 note 105)* regarding the impossibility of creating a *zimun* on Yom Kippur of people with *heterim* to eat.

⁶ See in this regard the illuminating comment of R. N.Z.Y. Berlin in *Haemek Davar VaYikra 23:29*, that were eating to be allowed on Yom Kipur, the stringency of the *melacha* prohibited would be that of *Yom Tov* and *melechet ochel nefesh* would be permitted. *Melacha* being secondary, is determined by *innui*.

⁷ See Rambam (*Hilchot Shevitat Asor 1:6*) with regard to *tosefet yom kipur*. Our discussion here can serve as a framework for understanding his position.

⁸ A full analysis of the entire *parsha*, including the several references to *melacha* found therein, is beyond the scope of this article.