

Yad Avraham Institute
Weekly Torah Commentaries Series
Days of Awe

September 24, 2009

Presented By: Rabbi Yosef Kalatsky, *Shlita*

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About the Yad Avraham Institute

The Yad Avraham is a Torah learning institute located in midtown Manhattan. Classes are offered every day during the week starting at 5:50am and throughout the day. Classes in Chumash, Halacha, Hashkofa, Gemara, and general topics are well attended by businessmen, professionals, and students. The Yad Avraham invites you to participate in our extensive offerings of classes and events.

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Yad Avraham Institute
New York
September 24, 2009

B"H

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Dean

1. Proper Perspective For Repentance

Rambam writes in the Laws of Repentance (*Hilchos Teshuvah*), "Although the obligation of blowing of the Shofar is a Divine Decree, the sound of the Shofar also contains within it an allusion (*remez*)." The subtle message that is being communicated through its sound only impacts upon the spirituality of the Jew because it is a Divine Decree. Had it not been ordained by G'd, it would be merely a sound emanating from a ram's horn, rather than the mechanism that is used to awaken the Jewish soul. The message that the sound of the Shofar conveys is, "All those who are asleep or in a deep slumber should awaken. Those of you who are dozing should awaken from your trance, search out your ways, and remember your Creator."

If one introspects and reflects on the fact that there is a Creator it would immediately establish to that individual that he is the subject of G'd. Since every aspect of one's existence is attributed to G'd's Will, one will understand that he must be subservient to G'd and be bound by His Will. The only reason a master accommodates his servant is to provide him with the means to succeed in his service. Rambam continues, "Those who forget the truth through the vanities of time and invest their efforts in emptiness and vanity will not be saved. Rather you should gaze upon your soul (be concerned about one's spiritual predicament) and improve your ways. Each one of you should abandon his evil ways and dismiss his inappropriate thoughts. Therefore one must see himself continuously as being in the balance." An individual has an equal amount of good deeds and failings. One only needs one more deed in either direction to sway the balance. Therefore, one should strive to do good deeds so as to move the balance in his favor, which will establish him as a tzaddik and give him a share in eternal goodness.

One of the Ten Commandment is, "**You shall not covet your fellow's house. You shall not covet your fellow's wife....**" The Torah forbids one to envy that which is not his own. How is one to control one's feelings such a desire? Bais HaLevy z'tl explains that the difficulty is rooted in not sensing the seriousness of one's action. If one regards the object of his envy as being on the other side of a lake that is frozen over. As one crosses the lake to fetch what he desires, he notices that the ice is thinning and beginning to break under his feet. At that moment, realizing his predicament the desire that he initially had is instantly lost. It becomes irrelevant because his only interest is returning back to safety. This is because he understands at that moment that his life has greater value than what he envies. Bais HaLevy explains that if one truly understood and appreciated the wrong and the consequence resulting from coveting his fellow's belongings, he would realize that it is no different than putting his life in jeopardy by crossing the frozen lake. If one would have this understanding, one would not have any desire for what does not belong to him. It is only because one does not appreciate the consequence of envy that one is drawn covet that which is not his.

Similarly, if one continuously perceives himself as being in the balance, regarding his spiritual record of good and evil, he will not become complacent because of his uncertain predicament. If he were to choose to do one good deed, he would be classified as righteous, and be deserving of eternity. Conversely, if he should choose to do an evil act he would be classified as evil, thus causing him to be judged negatively. If one were to address his standard of mitzvah observance in every aspect of his life, one will realize that there is much to improve. This realization will cause him to introspect and attempt to make the necessary corrections. If one assumes this perspective regarding his service of G'd, one could enter

into the day of Judgment with a sense that G'd will see him in a positive light.

2. Accept Upon Yourself My Kingship

Rosh Hashanah is the day of Judgment when G'd's exacting justice comes upon all existence. Every living being is judged for life or death for the coming year. G'd's judgment is so intense at this time that even the angels in heaven tremble from it. One would think that at such a time, when standing in judgment, one should repent and supplicate G'd for forgiveness. Nevertheless, in the prayer service of Rosh Hashanah there is no mention of confession or repentance. In fact, one does not discuss anything relating to himself, but rather, one only prays for the glory of G'd and His Kingship in existence. Why is this so?

Chazal tell us that on the day of Judgment, satan is permitted to come before G'd and prosecute the Jewish people. The only way his prosecution can be silenced is with the blowing of the shofar. The sounding of the shofar has the ability to silence satan because it reminds G'd of the Akeidah (binding of Yitzchak). Although Avraham was willing to slaughter his only beloved son, Yitzchak for G'd, at the last moment an angel called to him from heaven and told him to withdraw his hand from the lad. Soon after, Avraham saw a ram caught in the thicket near by, and he immediately understood that it there for him to actualize the service of the Akeidah. He was to slaughter the ram in the stead of Yitzchak. Because of Avraham's level of dedication and self-negation for the sake of G'd even the most intense prosecution against the Jewish people will be silenced in the merit of the Akeidah, through the blowing of the shofar. This year, however, the first day of Rosh Hashanah coincides with the Shabbos. The Rabbis legislated that the Jewish people are not permitted to blow the shofar when Rosh Hashanah falls on the Shabbos, because there may be an individual who is not proficient in its blowing and may transport the shofar four cubits in public domain in order to find someone who will instruct him how to blow it. At this particular time, how could satan be silenced if there is no shofar to counter his prosecution? In addition, why did the Rabbi's suspend the blowing of the shofar, which is the mechanism to silence the prosecution of satan against the entire Jewish people, over a concern that an insignificantly small number of people may actually transport the shofar in public domain?

Reb Meir Simcha of Dvinsk explains that what silences satan is the Jew's dedication to G'd's glory. It was Avraham's negation of himself for the sake of carrying out the Will of G'd that silences satan. Avraham did not for a moment take into consideration his personal loss or the future of the Jewish people, who were destined to be led by his son Yitzchak the future Patriarch. The blowing of the ram's horn, reminds G'd of the sacrifice that was made on His behalf. Identically, on the day of judgment, when the prosecution against the Jewish people is at an overwhelming level, it is fitting for them to negate their own needs for the sake of G'd's Honor and Glory. Our only concern on this day is the desecration of G'd's Name in the world because of the evil that exists. We supplicate Him to bring that to an end so that all humanity should recognize Him as The Master. By not addressing one's needs and focusing only on G'd, the King, this causes the Jew to be seen as a dedicated subject and servant of G'd, thus evoking the ultimate level of Mercy from Him.

Although the concern for an individual who may transport the shofar four cubits in public domain is seemingly inconsequential as compared to the whole picture; however, because the desecration of the Shabbos is a desecration of G'd we are willing to forfeit the opportunity to silence satan through the shofar and be seen in a positive light. Therefore, when satan comes before G'd on Rosh Hashanah and begins auditing the spiritual record of the Jewish people in the most incriminating manner, and there is no shofar to silence him, G'd will respond by telling him that the absence of the shofar is greater than the actual blowing because it demonstrates the ultimate sacrifice, that the Jewish people are willing to make on behalf of His Glory and Honor.

If one focuses on G'd's Glory and Kingship on Rosh Hashanah it will allow one to be the greatest beneficiary of the day. If G'd wants the Jewish people to acknowledge Him as their King and accept His Kingship, in fact He wants them to dedicate their lives to Him as His subjects. One must feel that he is no more than a chattel of G'd. This perspective and mindset is a basis for having a positive judgment on Rosh Hashanah.

3. The Jew's Personalized Relationship with G'd

The Torah states in the Portion of Haazinu, **“For Hashem's portion is His people; Yaakov is the rope (measure) of His inheritance....”** Rashi cites Chazal who explain, “Yaakov is a third of the Patriarchs. He possesses within him three generations of merit: his father

Yitzchak, his grandfather Avraham and his own. He is similar to a three-ply thread. Thus he is the measure of His inheritance.” Sforno explains **“Yaakov is the rope (measure) of His inheritance”** to mean, “He and his children are all subjects of G’d. If there is among the nations of the world one who is devoutly righteous, his righteousness is something which is isolated and limited to himself and will not be passed on to his progeny.” It is only among the Jewish people that one’s own status of purity will affect his lineage for future generations. The Jewish people possess a spiritual gene-pool which emanates from the Patriarchs which gives them greater relevance to spiritual opportunity and growth. In addition, because of this linkage we are able to draw upon their merits.

We say in the first blessing of the Amidah (silent prayer), “Blessed are You Hashem, our G’d and the G’d of our forefathers, G’d of Avraham, G’d of Yitzchak, and G’d of Yaakov....” The only reason the Jew can refer to G’d as “His G’d” on a personal level is because of the linkages that exists between himself and the holy Patriarchs. It was through their service that they merited to establish a personal relationship with Him. As we see, G’d identifies Himself with each of them. Therefore, we being their descendants are linked to the Holy Patriarchs are able to have that same personal relationship with G’d. Although one may be unworthy on a personal level, he still has relevance to the merits of the Patriarchs. The Mishna in Tractate Shabbos refers to the Jewish people as “princes, the children of kings.” They are seen as G’d’s children. Despite the fact that the Jew may fail, he remains the son of the King and thus can always be reinstated if he chooses to repent and return to the righteous path.

4. Establishing One’s Classification

Rambam writes in the Laws of Repentance, that in order for one to repent one must make a verbal confession in which one articulates the exact sin for which he is repenting. In addition to feeling remorse for the wrong that was done, one must make a commitment not to repeat the sin in the future.

The Gemara in Tractate Kiddushin tells us that if a man whose legal classification is “evil” marries a woman on the condition that he is righteous, it is considered a questionable marriage. Although the evil person had not made any visible changes regarding his classification as evil, the Gemara states, “The marriage is classified as questionable because he may have had stirrings of repentance in his heart.” Meaning, at the time of the marriage, it is possible that had undergone the process of

repentance in his heart and is therefore classified as an absolute tzaddik. Since, the marriage is questionable the woman would require a writ of divorce if she chooses to remarry. Minchas Chinuch asks, “According to Rambam that one must make a verbal confession in order to repent, how is it possible that the Gemara should consider the marriage of the evil person to be questionable because he may have had stirrings of repentance in his heart. However, from the Gemara it seems that even if one does not verbalize his confession he is nevertheless classified as a tzaddik.” How do we reconcile the ruling of Rambam with the Gemara?

When one sins, there is an immediate negative spiritual consequence that contaminates and diminishes one’s spirituality, which is the equivalent of damaging one’s soul. When one repents as is prescribed, the process of repentance rehabilitates and reinstates the soul to its original level and beyond. This aspect of repentance, which has the rehabilitative effect, only occurs if one had verbalized his repentance, remorse and a commitment to the future not to repeat it again. However, if one did not verbalize his repentance, although within a spiritual context he remains limited because of his previous transgressions, he nevertheless is classified as a tzaddik. He is no longer seen in the eyes of G’d as an evil person, because factually he sincerely has the remorse and commitment to live a life according to G’d’s Will. The Gemara in Tractate Zevachim tells us that the meaning of “atonement” is to be spiritually cleansed. This indicates that the consequences of the sin are removed and the person is fully restored to his original self. This aspect of teshuvah can only be brought about through the verbalization of the repentance process.

Rambam writes that the mitzvah of Yom Kippur is to repent. Therefore, one is obligated to verbalize his feelings of teshuvah. Since the service of Yom Kippur is designed to allow one to repent properly, how does one create within himself the needed sense of remorse? In order to have a proper level of regret, one must greatly reflect upon the wrong that had been done, which ultimately will cause one to feel pained and ashamed that he had sinned against G’d, as explained by Rabbeinu Yonah. Even if one had not been pained sufficiently for the wrong that he had done, if one makes a commitment on Yom Kippur to correct his ways and follow the path of Torah, then he is seen in the Eyes of G’d as righteous, because his inner commitment is to live life as a tzaddik.

5. *Reward is Unending*

The Gemara in Tractate Sanhedrin states, “A child brings merit to his father (and forefathers).” All of the good deeds that are performed by a person accrue to the spiritual account of his parents. Because had it not been for them, he would not have come into existence to be able to perform the good deeds that he had. Although the parents may not have had any relevance to their child’s spiritual interest or development, the fact that they brought the child into existence is sufficient to allow them to be the beneficiaries, to some degree, of their child’s good deeds. If the parent is the inspiration for the child to pursue a life of service to G’d then he will be an even greater beneficiary of merit. The Gemara continues, “However, a father, regardless of his dimension of righteousness will not bring merit to his child (after the child had passed away because the righteousness of the father is unrelated to the child.” Although one has the benefit of the merit of his antecedents to assist him in his spiritual ascent in Judaism, his share in the world to come is determined only by his own accomplishments.

There is a principle that is stated by Chofetz Chaim in his writings that if one provides what is needed to give a child a proper Jewish education and subsequently that child develops to be a true Torah observant person who establishes a family in conformance with the Torah, the one who contributed initially to the child’s education will be the beneficiary of all the generations that will descend from this individual until the end of time. It is through that one act of providing for the child’s Torah education that all that follows comes about. Had it not been for the benefactor’s initiative there would not have been generations of Torah observant families.

The Midrash in the Portion of Haazinu states, “The verse in Devarim states, ‘Atone for your people Israel, that you have redeemed...’ Toras Kohanim explains that ‘That you have redeemed’ is referring to those who have passed on. From here we learn that the living could bring redemption to those who passed away.” When one performs a mitzvah, because of someone who is no longer alive, the merit generated by that mitzvah will accrue to the individual who passed away. The Midrash continues, “Therefore there is a tradition that those who are departed are remembered on Yom Kippur and one commits himself to give charity on their behalf. As the Toras Kohanim states, one may think that when one passes away charity will have no effect, the Torah teaches us that although one may have passed away, he may still receive merit from those who are alive. These acts of goodness extricate those who passed away from their predicament and elevates him

as an arrow that is shot from a bow. He immediately becomes supple and cleansed like a young kid. He will be purified as the moment that he was born...He will eat from the Tree of Life continuously that is planted in the area of the devoutly righteous and he will live eternally.”

The Mishna in Ethics of our Fathers states, “At the end of time there will be a judgment and a computation.” Seemingly, the sequence of the procedure is difficult. One may think that the computation needs to precede the judgment because the judgment is based on one’s record. Why is this not the order? Rabbi Y. I. Rudderman z’tl (Baltimore Rosh HaYeshivah) had explained that the judgment that is mentioned in the Mishna is definitely preceded by a computation to determine the individual’s fate. However, after that judgment is established there is an ongoing computation until the end of time regarding the individual who had passed away. It is the ongoing effect (positive and negative) that his actions and decisions had on other people’s lives that effects existence until the end of time. This is the computation that follows one’s death.

YAD AVRAHAM DAILY CLASS SCHEDULE

Monday Through Friday

5:50- 6:00 am	Chumash with Rashi
6:00- 6:15 am	Pirkei Avos (Maharal)
6:15- 6:30 am	Mishna Berurah
6:30 -6:45 am	Mussar – Path of the Just
6:45 -7:25 am	Talmud—Tractate Chulin –Gid Hanasheh
7:25 - 8:20 am	Davening Followed by Breakfast
8:20 - 8:45 am	Mishna - Rabbi Rovner
9:00 -10:00 am	Daf Yomi- Bava Basra
2:00pm	Mincha

Special Weekday Classes

Monday

11:30 – 12:30pm	Talmud: Megilah Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25 th FL.) Enter on 54 th Street
1:00-2:00 pm	Ramchal: Derech Hashem Location: Cedarview Capital 1Penn Plaza (45 th FL.)

Tuesday

12:10 - 1:10pm	Torah Insight Based on the Parsha Location: Yad Avraham
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Wednesday

11:30 – 12:30 pm	Talmud: Megilah Location: Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25 th FL.) Enter on 54 th Street
1:00—2:00 pm	Daas Tevunos Location: Yad Avraham

Thursday

11:00 –12:00pm	Duties of The Heart Location: Yad Avraham
12:30 – 1:30 pm	Talmud: Megilah Sunrise Capital 641 Lexington (25 th FL)