

I think that script might be more useful in landing the job. Why? What's the difference? In one case the young applicant was only focused on what he wanted for himself. In the second scenario he was looking to see what he could do to add value and be helpful.

Rosh Hashanah is a giant job interview. The way to be successful is not to spend a day begging for more money. That doesn't impress the heart of "The Boss – HaMelech!" No! The best approach is to preset our minds and our hearts to desire to contribute in any way possible.

"I am looking to make the best use of my years of training in whatever my specialty is. I want to help people and encourage others to become better. I want to grow under your guidance to be the best that I can be. Lastly, but not at all less importantly I want to more than anything to help grow your 'company' to its optimal potential." Who would not gain employment in Hashem's universe with just such an attitude!?! (Rabbi Label Lam)

## Not on Shabbat

It is well known that *Rosh Hashanah* is the day on which Hashem judges us and our deeds. It is on this day that He determines, based on our merits, what kind of a year we will have. The *Satan* is busy on this day prosecuting us for our sins. Our Rabbis teach, though, that the blowing of the *shofar* helps to confuse the *Satan* so that he is no longer able to hurl accusations at us, and we then have a better chance for a favorable judgment.

There is a *halachah* that if the first day of *Rosh Hashanah* falls out on Shabbat, then we do not blow the *shofar* on that day. Rather, we blow the *shofar* only on the second day. The *Gemara* in *Masechet Rosh Hashanah* (29b) explains that the reason for this *halachah* was that there was concern that someone may mistakenly carry the *shofar* in a public domain and inadvertently violate the Shabbat. In order to avoid this possibility, the Rabbis decreed that we would not blow the *shofar* when *Rosh Hashanah* falls out on Shabbat.

Does this make sense? In order to avoid a possible unintentional error, we are putting the entire nation in great danger! Without the *shofar* to stop the *Satan*, we are defenseless against his accusations!

Rabbi Yitzhak Blazer answers that the earlier generations had a much better understanding of the severity of sins, even accidental sins. They understood that the risk of even one person committing a sin was too great a risk. In their complete comprehension of the benefits of the *shofar* blowing versus the possible violation of Shabbat, they determined that the risk was not worth the gain.

The message is clear. If this is the effect of a sin performed by mistake, how much more severe is a sin done with intention! Now, before we are judged, we must return to Hashem with humility and beg forgiveness for our past misdeeds. With this, we will merit a good year filled with blessing. (*Lekah Tob*)

תָּזְכוּ לְשָׁנִים רְבוֹת נְעִימוֹת וְטוֹבוֹת!

Have a  
& Healthy



Happy  
New Year!

בס"ד

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רוֹשׁ הַשָּׁנָה תשפ"א \* ROSH HASHANAH 2020

SEPTEMBER 18-20, 2020

1-2 TISHREI 5781

**Mabrook to Dan & Miriam Massry on the birth of a baby girl. Mabrook to the grandparents, Isaac & Elana Abadi. Mabrook to the great-grandparents, Meir & Barbara Abadi.**

**Mabrook to Yitzhak & Sara Gindi on the birth of a baby girl. Mabrook to the grandparents, A.J. & Joy Gindi. Mabrook to the great-grandmother, Mrs. Sylvia Gindi.**

**Mabrook to A.J & Joy Gindi on the engagement of their son, Jacob, to Sarah Sananes. Mabrook to the grandmother, Mrs. Sylvia Gindi.**

## A Message from our Rabbi

”יוֹם תְּרוּעָה יְהִיֶה לְכֶם”

“It shall be a day of *shofar*-sounding for you.” (*Bemidbar* 29:1)

Rosh Hashanah begins the season of *teshubah*. Can a person really change? The *Gemara* (*Menahot* 29b) tells us that Hashem created the world like the letter “*heh*,” which is bottomless, to teach us that if someone does a sin, he can fall straight down endlessly. However, on the side of the *heh* is a little opening like a door. That door represents the possibility of *teshubah*. That’s what “created like the letter *heh*” means. No matter what a person’s situation, he can always return through the little side door. There is no better theme than change at this time. We can do it!

Rabbi Paysach Krohn says he knows someone who ate whatever he wanted, whenever he wanted. For 20 years he’d been trying to lose 20 pounds, but it never happened. Then he had a heart attack. Now he’s eating low sodium, low fat, low cholesterol, and he lost 20 pounds in three months. How did he do it?

He wanted life, so he changed. If you believe that your life is on the line, you’ll change. The Torah tells us: “I have placed life and death before you, the blessing and the curse – choose life” (*Debarim* 30:19). Our problem is not that we can’t change, but that we don’t believe we can change. If you believe it you will change.

*Tizku leshanim rabot!*

Rabbi Reuven Semah

## Some Reminders for Rosh Hashanah

**Special Fruits and Vegetables for Rosh Hashanah Night** - After *Kidush* and making the *berachah* on the bread, we eat special delicacies which, because of their names, are symbolic for a good year. A prayer, which can be found on the following pages, is said on every food. The foods are: dates, black-eyed peas, leeks, Swiss chard, gourd, pomegranates, apples, and head of lamb. These fruits can be purchased at any fruit specialty store.

**Candlelighting** - Candles are lit both nights of the holiday. On the second night, the candles must be lit from a pre-existing flame. See the prayer schedule for the proper times.

**Ten Days of Teshubah** - The ten days from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur are to be used to reflect on our ways and make *teshubah* (repentance). There are certain additions and changes in the *Amidah*, so be sure to pray with the *siddur*. The most important change is *Hamelech Hakadosh* instead of *Ha-kel Hakadosh*. If one forgets this, he must repeat the *Amidah*. We should all try to attend the weekday *minyan* in our synagogue for *selihot* and *shaharit*. See prayer schedule.

**Shofar** - The *misvah* of blowing the *shofar* is the only distinction the Torah gives to Rosh Hashanah. Although we do not ask for forgiveness in our prayers on Rosh Hashanah, the sound of the *shofar* should bring us to thoughts of repentance, thereby confusing the *Satan* and assuring us of a good year. Our custom is to blow 101 sounds and, from the time of the *Berachah* until the last sound, we are forbidden to talk about anything not related to the prayers. This year, there will be no *shofar* blowing on the first day as it is Shabbat.

**Tashlich** - On the 2<sup>nd</sup> day of Rosh Hashanah (since the first day is Shabbat), we gather near a body of water and say certain prayers, including the verse that says our sins will be cast into the water. However, it takes more than emptying our pockets over the water to get rid of our sins, and we should use this opportunity as a time for self-reflection.

**Som Gedaliah** - The day following Rosh Hashanah is a fast day which commemorates the assassination of Gedaliah ben Ahikam. This year, the fast is on Monday, September 21. All adults are obligated to fast from **a.m.** until **p.m.**

**Succah** - A Succah may be purchased through Rabbi Joseph Cohen at 732-222-0045.

## Rosh Hashanah Night

**After kidush & making hamosee on the bread, recite the following:**

- 1) יהי רצון מלפניך ה' א-לקנו וא-לקי אבותינו שתתחדש עלינו שנה טובה ומתוקה מראשית השנה ועד אחרית השנה: ברוך אתה ה' א-לקנו מלך העולם בורא פרי העץ: Apple dipped in sugar: תפוח
- 2) יהי רצון מלפניך ה' א-לקנו וא-לקי אבותינו שיקרתו אויבינו ויחננו ויבטלנו ויבטלנו ויבטלנו ויבטלנו: Leek: כרתי
- 3) יהי רצון מלפניך ה' א-לקנו וא-לקי אבותינו שישתלקו אויבינו ויחננו ויבטלנו ויבטלנו ויבטלנו ויבטלנו: Swiss chard: סלקא

- 4) יהי רצון מלפניך ה' א-לקנו וא-לקי אבותינו שיתמו אויבינו ויחננו ויבטלנו ויבטלנו ויבטלנו ויבטלנו: Dates: תמרים
- 5) יהי רצון מלפניך ה' א-לקנו וא-לקי אבותינו שתקרא רוע גזר דיננו ויקרא לפניך זכיותינו: Gourd: קרא
- 6) יהי רצון מלפניך ה' א-לקנו וא-לקי אבותינו שירבו זכיותינו פרוגיא ותלבגנו: Black-eyed peas: רוביא
- 7) יהי רצון מלפניך ה' א-לקנו וא-לקי אבותינו שנהיה מלאים מצות כרמון: Pomegranate: רמון
- 8) יהי רצון מלפניך ה' א-לקנו וא-לקי אבותינו שנהיה לראש ולא לזנב. ותזכר לנו (עקדתו) אילו של יצחק אבינו עליו השלום בן אברהם אבינו עליו השלום: Head of sheep: ראש כבש

## Such an Attitude

“The livelihood of a person is decided from Rosh Hashanah to Rosh Hashanah” (*Masechet Rosh Hashanah*)

Many great determinations are made on Rosh Hashanah. It is truly an awesome day where many important factors that impact all of our lives are scripted. It's no wonder that these days are called “Days of Awe”. How are we to position ourselves for the best possible outcome? What should our posture be? What is our strategy of this “Day of Judgment”?

No one should go into a court without a counsel. Maybe it was Abraham Lincoln who said, “Someone who represents himself has a fool for a client.” We don't want to be that reckless and foolish when so much lies in the balance. *Baruch Hashem* we have a *Machzor* much of which was organized by the Men of the Great Assembly, amongst whom there was prophets and great Sages.

But let us take a closer look at this lawyer's brief. If a person's livelihood is determined on Rosh Hashanah then why is there no explicit mention of or petition for money or salary? It's conspicuously absent from the liturgy of the day. How then is our livelihood reckoned? The final results are based on what?! Here is a very straightforward and practical approach to Rosh Hashanah!

A doctor friend of mine told me that he had interviewed a young graduate from medical school to join his practice. He started the interview with an open question, “What are you looking for?” The young doctor answered immediately and with confidence, “I am looking to make six figures, have at least two days off each week to play golf leisurely, and I would need my own parking place so I don't have to waste time circulating in search of a parking spot.

“I have more on my list too...” My doctor friend told him that would be enough and the interview ended there. Obviously, he did not get the job. What had he done so terribly wrong?

What would have been a better answer to that question, “What are you looking for?” Try this! “I am looking to make the best use of my years of training in medicine. I want to be able to help and heal people. I hear that you are experts in this field and I would be excited to learn from the best and grow under guidance from your years of experience. Lastly but not at all less importantly, I want to be able help you grow your practice to meet its optimum potential.”

good. The pruning may take the form of suffering in this world -- in the next world, the dimension of truth, the person will be revealed as wholly positive.

A negative individual is described as a tree planted in bad soil where branches overhang good ground. The root and essence are bad, but even the worst individual has positive actions and qualities. However, some pruning will reveal the essence as bad. The pruning may take the form of great happiness and reward in this world, leaving a clarified existence of negativity in the next.

This idea helps one to understand a difficult section in the *Rambam*. The *Rambam* states that on Rosh Hashanah the righteous are sealed for life immediately, the evil are sealed for the opposite immediately, and those who are intermediate, neither righteous nor evil, hang in the balance until Yom Kippur. The *Rambam* says that these are people whose *misvot* exactly equal their *averot*. (Not necessarily in number, quality counts.)

The strange part of this discussion is that the *Rambam* goes on to say that most people are in this third category, exactly balanced between good and bad. Is it really possible that most people are exactly balanced in terms of their positive and negative actions?

The explanation, however, is that what is meant here is not an exact technical balancing of actions, what is meant is that most people are trees planted midway between good and bad soil -- available for good and positive actions when the opportunity arises, when inspiration occurs, but unfortunately, available for selfishness and negativity when tempted. Most people have never made a conscious policy decision about what they are here for. Where is your tree planted? Its default position straddles the line. What is required at the moment of conception of time is a decision about who I am in essence, not about which technical actions need work -- that will come later.

Rosh Hashanah is a time for moving the core, making sure the tree is moved entirely into positive territory, the pruning is the second stage. Consciously choosing a positive direction, setting a spiritual goal and beginning movement in its direction is what Rosh Hashanah must teach. (Rabbi Akiva Tatz)

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## *Why Did You Wait Until Now?*

Rav Aharon of Karlin was the *hazan* for *Shaharit* on Rosh Hashanah. However, as soon as he recited the very first word, *Hamelech* (the King), he burst into tears and was unable to continue. Later, his *Hasidim* asked him, "Rebbe, what caused you to break down crying the way you did?"

He explained, "No sooner did I say the word *Hamelech* than I was reminded of a story in the *Gemara*. When Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai came to Vespasian, he greeted Vespasian with the words, 'Peace be unto you, O king, peace be unto you, O king.' When Vespasian, who had not yet received news of his appointment by the Roman Senate, heard this, he replied, 'You deserve death for one of two reasons: If I am not the king, how dare you refer to me that way? And if I am the king, why did you not come to me until now?'"

"Therefore," said Rav Aharon, "when I referred to Hashem as *Hamelech*, I was filled with remorse. As Hashem is the King, why have I not come to Him in repentance until now?" (A Word of Wisdom, a Word of Wit)

## *The Bodyguard at My Door*

When I was a sophomore in high school, my mom received a death threat from someone who was angry about one of her decisions as a NY State Supreme Court Judge. The police decided to station a personal security guard at our house until the threat passed.

The guard would stand by our front door, waiting to escort my mother to her car. But first he would watch me get onto the bus each morning, scanning the surroundings for any danger. He would walk down the driveway in full uniform with two guns in his holster, and nod to me that the coast was clear.

I was completely mortified. Was this guy joking? Couldn't he make himself a little less obvious in front of all of my friends? Was any of this really necessary? I would run onto the bus and slump down as far as I could into my seat.

"That's so cool! What is that guard doing at your house?" my friend asked me on the first morning.

"What guy?" I cringed and glanced sideways towards my house, hoping that the paranoid bodyguard had faded back behind the trees. But no, he was still standing there, looking up and down the street as if he expected some psycho to come barreling down towards the school bus.

"Um, the guy with the gun there who's talking into his walkie-talkie right now in your driveway..."

"Oh, that guy. I don't know what he's doing, something to do with my mom's job," I mumbled. I changed the conversation so quickly that no one brought it up again for the next few weeks as I endured the endless trek from my front door to the bus under the paranoid gaze of Mr. Crazy Bodyguard. Did he have to follow me all the way to the bus every morning?

Looking back at it now, I'm embarrassed by how rude I was to this officer who was risking his life to do his job, who was getting up before dawn to watch some stranger's disgruntled teenager get on her school bus safely. I don't even remember ever saying good morning to him. All I wanted him to do was disappear.

What I should have said was thank you.

What I didn't realize then was that there is always Someone watching me, standing guard by the door, scanning my life for dangers. And this Guardian never sleeps and never leaves. And if we stop and listen, we can hear Him whispering to us, "I'm trying to help you, to reach you. Can you hear me now?"

As Rosh Hashanah approaches, I look back at the past year and wonder how many days I lived in the same careless, ungrateful way that I did as a teenager trying to run onto the bus without saying thank you. How many times I forgot to turn around at the end of the day and say thank You for protecting my family. How often I was too distracted to even say good morning. Instead of appreciating the blessings in my life, I just expected my good health, my job, and my home to be there and wondered why the One who gives it all to me couldn't just get off the driveway, away from the front door, so I could pretend that I was in charge. So that I could feel like I created and sustained my own life without any help.

But when I stopped and listened very closely to the murmurings of my soul, I knew that I didn't want to live that way.

What I really want is to be aware that there is a Guardian, a loving Father, a King at my front door. And I want to be able to hear the *shofar's* call. To silence the static of the walkie talkies in my life and hear the whispers of Someone who loves me so much

that He scans the streets of my life even when I don't know where I'm going. He clears paths. He redirects. He creates while we sleep.

On Rosh Hashanah, He gives us a chance to wake up. He sounds an alarm for all of us. It starts off so softly, almost like it's a part of our dreams. But then it gets louder and louder like a crying child, like a life awakening, like a world trembling before the King. We can hit snooze or lower the volume. Or we can hear the Guardian of Israel who never sleeps whispering to us, "Can you hear me now? I'm right here by your side, as I've been every day."

We can hear the cry of the *shofar*, wake up and say thank You. Thank You for creating us, for sustaining us and for bringing us to this moment in time. (Aish.com)

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## *A Father's Love*

I have something to admit. I don't like newborn babies. Don't get me wrong – I love each of my kids a lot. I just didn't really connect to them when they were newborns. All babies do is eat, excrete, sleep, and cry whenever they need to do any of the above. For years I felt guilty about feeling this way but I recently broached the subject with a few fellow fathers and discovered I wasn't alone. Everyone I spoke to agreed that they didn't really feel much connection to their babies for the first few months of their life. Most fathers take time to develop a bond with their little ones.

Women are the opposite. From the moment my wife finds out she's pregnant she's already in love with the baby. And after birth – she's head over heels.

When our first son was born my wife squealed, "I love him!" as she laid eyes on the tiny infant for the first time. I anxiously awaited my turn to get to hold him. They finally finished cleaning him and placed the bundle in my arms. His cone-shaped head and wrinkled face was a pale shade of pink with grey and blue hues. It was a face only a mother could love.

"Isn't he beautiful?" my wife cooed from the hospital bed.

"Um. Yeah. He sure is something else," I said through my teeth. *So I guess this is what it's like being a father*, I thought. *Just nod and smile and pretend you know what she's talking about.*

Why the different reactions? Of course hormones play a role. But there's more to it. My wife spent the past nine months developing an inextricable bond with the baby – a bond more intimate and intense than a man could ever know.

I felt kind of left out of the whole baby thing. She carried him, she gave birth to him, and she did the feeding. My job was secondary.

Then one night, everything changed. I was sitting on the couch holding my first born son when he suddenly looked me in the eyes and smiled. For the very first time I felt like my part in the relationship mattered. He acknowledged me. Now we had a relationship. He giggled when I tickled his stomach, squealed when I threw him into the air, and stared into my eyes with affection as he stroked my beard with his little hands. Someday I would read to him, tell him stories, take him hiking and teach him to ride a bike. I was suddenly more than just a diaper changer and stroller pusher. I was a father.

Perhaps this is the reason that Judaism often refers to G-d as our Father – *Abinu*. I mean, isn't mother a more accurate description of the Creator who gives life to the universe? According to Jewish philosophy G-d created the world for one reason: to give us the greatest gift possible – a relationship with Him, the Infinite source of creation.

As our Creator He loves us unconditionally simply because we exist – just like a mother. But as our Father, He is longing for us to do something in return, to acknowledge Him and to seek a relationship with Him. G-d is anxiously waiting for us to smile at Him, ask for His help, thank Him, and actively make Him a part of our lives.

Many people approach the High Holidays as a time to ask G-d for everything we need in the new year. We come to Him with a long shopping list of requests: health, happiness, financial success, and love. As we approach the New Year, instead of thinking about what G-d can do for us, let's think about what we can do for Him. How can we make Him an active part of our lives this year?

This Rosh Hashanah, let's start by thanking G-d for all the amazing blessings we had during this past year. Many of us paid our bills, enjoyed overall good health, and experienced meaningful moments with our families. None of that was possible without Him! Letting Him know we appreciate the life He's given us is the ultimate gift we can give our Father. And in response He will surely shower us with all the blessings that we need for the next year.

So as I spend another late night rocking my latest newborn son, I look forward to the day when he looks back at me and says, "Thanks Dad." (Rabbi Gavriel Horan)

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## *Beginnings*

*"Everything goes after the beginning."*

This statement of *Hazal* contains hidden depth. The moment of conception of anything which comes into existence must contain all the elements of the future of that thing. Just as all the genes of a human being are laid down at conception and thereafter all the physical features which manifest in the child as it develops are results of those genes, so too all phenomena in the world are a reflection of the elements contained, infinitely compressed, in their beginnings.

The moment of transition from non-existence to existence is the most potent, containing all. Thereafter, as the child develops, a critical phase follows, but not as critical as the first instant, and so on, each phase a revelation of the coding of the previous. The closer to the beginning, the more critical. Small effects at the genetic level will be much more far-reaching than larger effects during embryonic development, and effects at embryonic level more far-reaching than effects at the adult level. Therefore, the moment which demands greatest care, greatest intensity, greatest purity, is the very first.

Time is also a creation. The Jewish year is an organic entity. Its conception takes place on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. For this reason we are so extremely careful about trying to live correctly on Rosh Hashanah and the subsequent days. The way one begins the year will determine how the rest of the year reveals itself. If one can form the genes of the year correctly, the fetus will develop correctly and the child and adult will be wholesome.

Mistakes in this phase will be very hard to correct later. Efforts made in the first ten days may prevent major "surgery" being necessary later. Each moment of Rosh Hashanah should be utilized with exquisite care, only positive personality traits should be manifest, great control over anger and other negative traits should be exercised. Many have the custom not to sleep during the day of Rosh Hashanah, at least not until midday -- they want to lay down the genes of the year in consciousness and spiritual effort, not oblivion.

What should be the major focus of the day? Can one really correct all ones' personality faults in one day, or even ten? The answer lies in a description taught by *Hazal* of the human being. A righteous person is like a tree planted in good soil whose branches overhang bad soil. The meaning is that the root is good, the person is essentially good, but no one is perfect and the branches overhanging bad ground represent the person's shortcomings. However, some pruning will reveal roots entirely