

ROSH HASHANAH

THE WEISS EDITION

Light points

FROM THE TEACHINGS OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE ON
THE JEWISH FESTIVALS

HOLIDAYS: TISHREI

ספר זה נדפס ביוזמת וע"י
הרה"ת ר' משה אהרן צבי בן מרים
וזוגתו מרת **העניא רבקה רות בת צפורה**
שיחיו
ווייס
שלוחי כ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
בשערמאן אוקס, קליפורניה

ימלא השי"ת כל משלותיהם לטובה ולברכה,
מתוך בריאות הנכונה והשלימה,
אריכות ימים ושנים טובות, והצלחה רבה ומופלגה
בכל אשר יפנו בגשמיות וברוחניות
ומתוך הרחבה אמיתית



ולזכות ילדיהם
שלום אליעזר, מנחם מענדל,
יונה מרדכי וזוגתו **בילא,**
חנה פערל ובעלה **שמואל יעקב** שיחיו

שיגדלו להיות חסידים יראי שמים ולמדנים
מקושרים לכ"ק אדמו"ר זי"ע
והולכים בדרכיו אשר הורגו נס"ו
מתוך בריאות הנכונה והשלימה,
ואריכות ימים ושנים טובות

אַתֶּם נֹצְרִים הַיּוֹם בְּלִפְנֵי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם רְאִשִּׁיכֶם
 שְׂבִיטֵיכֶם וְקִנְיֵיכֶם וְשִׁטְרֵיכֶם כָּל אִישׁ מִיִּשְׂרָאֵל: טַפְכֶּם
 נְשִׁיכֶם וְגֵרְךָ אֲשֶׁר בְּקֶרֶב מַחֲנֶיךָ מַחֲטֵב יַעֲצִיף עַד
 שָׁאֵב מִיָּמִיד: לְעִבְרְךָ בְּבְרִית ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ...

You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem your G-d: the leaders of your tribes, your elders and your officers, every man of Israel; your young children, your women, and your convert who is within your camp, your woodcutters and your water-drawers, so that you may enter the covenant of Hashem your G-d.

דברים כט, ט-יא | Devarim 29:9-11

The Pact

Every year we read Parshas Nitzavim on the Shabbos before Rosh Hashanah. Implied is that Parshas Nitzavim addresses the themes of Rosh Hashanah, and that reading it enables us to experience the holiday properly.

In the first verses, we read that the entire Jewish nation assembled to enter a covenant with G-d. The Torah mentions specifically that from the leaders to the water-drawers, all of Israel stood united as one—“all of you.”

What is the purpose of a covenant? If two friends are concerned that their relationship might sour at some point, they may enter into a covenant—a pact to remain loyal to each other forever, even if future events or discoveries about one another cause them to lose favor in each other’s eyes.

This, essentially, is the theme of Rosh Hashanah: a renewal of the covenant between G-d and the Jewish people. On Rosh Hashanah, when our love for G-d is strong (after our heartfelt

teshuvah during the month of Elul), we commit ourselves to G-d unconditionally. We pray that G-d will enter this covenant with us, committing Himself to us unconditionally, even if later in the year our love may not be as obvious.

The covenant of Rosh Hashanah requires, however, that all members of the Jewish nation unite as one, just as the Jewish people did—men, women and children, from the elders to the converts—in Parshas Nitzavim. For in order to evoke G-d's unconditional commitment to us, we too must behave in a manner that transcends any reason or conditions. We do this by showing our sincere love and respect for all of our fellow Jews, despite our understandable differences.

—*Likutei Sichos*, vol. 2, pp. 399-400

לִבְנֵי הַתְּקִינֹהוּ חֹזֶ"ל שֶׁיְהִי תוֹקֵעִין בִּר"ח אֱלוּל בְּכָל שָׁנָה
וְשָׁנָה וְכָל הַחֹדֶשׁ בְּדִי לְהַזְהִיר יִשְׂרָאֵל שֶׁיַּעֲשׂוּ תְּשׁוּבָה
שְׁנֵאמַר אִם יִתְקַע שׁוֹפָר בְּעִיר וְגו' וּבְדִי לְעֶרְבֵב הַשָּׁטָן.

The shofar is blown every year on Rosh Chodesh Elul, and throughout the month, to alert Israel to repent—as it is said: “If a shofar is blown in a city, will the people not quiver?”—and in order to confuse the Satan.

Tur, Orach Chaim 581 | טור, אורח חיים סי' תקפ"א

Weakening the Prosecution

We sound the shofar every weekday in the month of Elul, with the exception of the day before Rosh Hashanah. Why do we skip that last day? The reason given is “to confuse the Satan”—the accusing angel who attempts to prosecute us in the Heavenly Court on Rosh Hashanah—“as he will believe that the Day of Judgment has passed.”¹

But can an angel truly be fooled as to what day it is? Will the Satan really believe Rosh Hashanah has already passed? Won't he see the many Rosh Hashanah practices that we observe on this day?

Clearly, “confusing the Satan” means more than simply tricking the accusing angel about the calendar date.

During Elul, we blow the shofar “to warn the Jewish people to do *teshuvah*.”² The very sound of the shofar inspires fear of Heaven and thoughts of repentance, preparing us for the

1. *Minhagei Mahara”k*.

2. Tur, *Orach Chaim* 581.

Day of Judgment. The Tur mentions this reason and adds, “and to confuse the Satan.”³

Rather than being separate answers, these two points go hand in hand: The Satan becomes confused⁴ and disoriented *as a direct result* of the general spirit of repentance brought on by the Elul shofar. Knowing that we have heard the shofar and been stirred to repent for almost an entire month, the Satan realizes there is good reason to believe the verdict has already been sealed in our favor and becomes disoriented, unable to forcefully make his case. Ultimately, by blowing the shofar during Elul, we ensure that when the Day of Judgment comes, the Satan presents his indictments with much less conviction.

We take this a step further by *not* blowing the shofar on the day before Rosh Hashanah. This custom suggests that we are indeed confident that the shofar-blowing of Elul successfully engendered a spiritual awakening among the Jewish people, and that additional arousal by the shofar is therefore no longer necessary.

Even with the holiday of Rosh Hashanah still to come, the Heavenly prosecutor senses that the vulnerability typical of the Day of Judgment might already be behind us. His claims become weak, knowing that by then, a positive judgment for the Jewish people for the year ahead seems inevitable.

—*Likutei Sichos*, vol. 24, pp. 223-225

3. Tur, *ibid.*

4. See Rashi on Rosh Hashanah 16b, s.v. *Kdei Larveiv*.

זֶה הַיּוֹם תַּחֲלִית מַעֲשֵׂיךָ זִכְרוֹן לַיּוֹם רִאשׁוֹן

This day is the start of Your handiwork, a remembrance of the first day.

תפילת מוסף דר"ה | Musaf of Rosh Hashanah

The World's Belated Birthday

Rosh Hashanah is observed on the anniversary of the sixth day of Creation, the day that G-d created Adam, the first human.⁵ The general creation of the universe began five days earlier, on the 25th of Elul, but that day is treated as a regular weekday.

The implication is that the creation of the world—the entire universe coming into existence out of utter nothingness—is, on its own, not a cause for celebration. On the contrary, creating the world meant that G-d was forced to hide and obscure His truly Infinite Presence! Moreover, that Divine concealment allows His creations to mistakenly believe that their existence is “natural,” and not caused or controlled by G-d. An achievement such as that does not call for a yom tov, a day of rejoicing.

Rosh Hashanah, however, commemorates the creation of humans, who, by following the Torah's guidance, have the ability to dispel the world's spiritual darkness and to declare and reveal G-d's kingship over the entire universe—a milestone most definitely worth celebrating.

—*Likutei Sichos*, vol. 29. pp. 482-483

5. See *Vayikra Rabbah* 29:1.

מְלוֹךְ עַל הָעוֹלָם כָּל בְּכֹבֹדָךְ

Reign over the entire universe in Your glory.

Rosh Hashanah Liturgy | תפילות ראש השנה

Head of the Year

The head—particularly the brain—is home to our highest faculties. In fact, our lower faculties and the life-force found in all other parts of our bodies all stem from within the brain. Moreover, not only is the brain the general source of all vitality found throughout the body, but even as the other limbs operate individually, the brain controls and directs their functionality.

All these aspects of the brain can be found in the inner theme of the holiday of Rosh Hashanah, which translates literally as “The Head of the Year.”

First and foremost, the theme of Rosh Hashanah—as expressed repeatedly in its prayers and rituals—is our declaration of our desire to be G-d’s subjects and crown Him as our King.

Our internal work to truly crown G-d as our King precedes any other act of Divine worship, because only after evoking G-d’s desire to reign over us is there significance to maintaining our relationship with Him and fulfilling His will and commands. This essential service of Rosh Hashanah, a form of Divine worship that utterly transcends our everyday worship, is comparable to the supreme faculties and functions that set the head apart from the rest of the body.

The second theme of Rosh Hashanah is its status as one of the *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, the Ten Days of Repentance

that extend from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur. Through genuine remorse and firm resolve to abandon behaviors that are not in keeping with G-d's will, we rectify the harm caused by our past transgressions and restore our attachment to Him. In a certain sense, the yearning and devotion that is expressed in *teshuvah* strikes a chord even greater than that of initially abiding by the specific commandments (and can therefore bring us atonement for transgressing them). Still, *teshuvah* is premised on our duty to observe the commandments and serves to repair the harm caused by their transgression. Relative to the specific mitzvos incumbent upon a Jew, *teshuvah* is not entirely in a league of its own; it is comparable to the vitality of the individual faculties of the body as they exist in a higher form within the brain.

Finally, it is the resolutions we make on Rosh Hashanah to act on these profound emotions and experiences that ensure our practical observance of G-d's commandments in our day-to-day lives throughout the year. These firm commitments, imbued with the unique Rosh Hashanah resolve, are like the brain and nervous system *directing* the functions of the entire body.

—*Likutei Sichos*, vol. 4, pp. 1144-1146

מִלֹּדֶךָ עַל הָעוֹלָם כָּלֹּ בְּכִבּוּדְךָ... וַיֹּאמֶר כָּל אִשָּׁר נִשְׁמָה
בְּאַפּוֹ ה' אֱלֹהֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל מֶלֶךְ וּמְלִכּוֹתָיו בְּכָל מְשָׁלָה

Reign over the entire universe in Your glory ... And let everything with a soul in its nostrils proclaim, "G-d, the L-rd of Israel, is King, and His Kingship rules over everything."

Rosh Hashanah Liturgy | תפילות ראש השנה

Rosh Hashanah: A Personal Holiday

The two days of Rosh Hashanah are “Days of Awe,” so named because of the profound awe inspired by our awareness and personal participation in the coronation of the King of Kings unfolding during these days. It is the personal petition that each and every one of us makes, asking G-d to be our king, that brings about His appointment as King of the Universe. Rosh Hashanah thus renews our union with G-d, not merely as part of the community as a whole, but as individuals.

Accordingly, contrary to the common practice of directing the inspiration of Rosh Hashanah toward global issues and problems that demand change mostly on the part of others, we must direct the inspiration evoked in these Days of Awe toward ourselves and the personal relationship we have with G-d every day in our mundane lives.

This idea is expressed in the details of Rosh Hashanah’s unique mitzvah: Sounding the shofar. We aren’t commanded to use an ensemble of instruments, just a single one. And that single instrument is not something sophisticated, capable of producing extraordinary musical compositions, but the plain

horn of an animal, from which “all sounds are acceptable.”⁶ The single, simple shofar emphasizes that the focus of Rosh Hashanah should be, first and foremost, on the individual, to the tune of introducing sanctity into our ordinary daily lives.

(For the same reason, even though Rosh Hashanah ushers in the *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, the Ten Days of Return, no confessions of sin or supplications for forgiveness are invoked throughout the holiday liturgy. Coronating G-d as our king evokes such a powerful experience of oneness with the Almighty, that no matter how great the sorrow over our past misdeeds may be, it is completely dissolved by the overwhelming awe, longing, and readiness to obey the commandments of our King.)

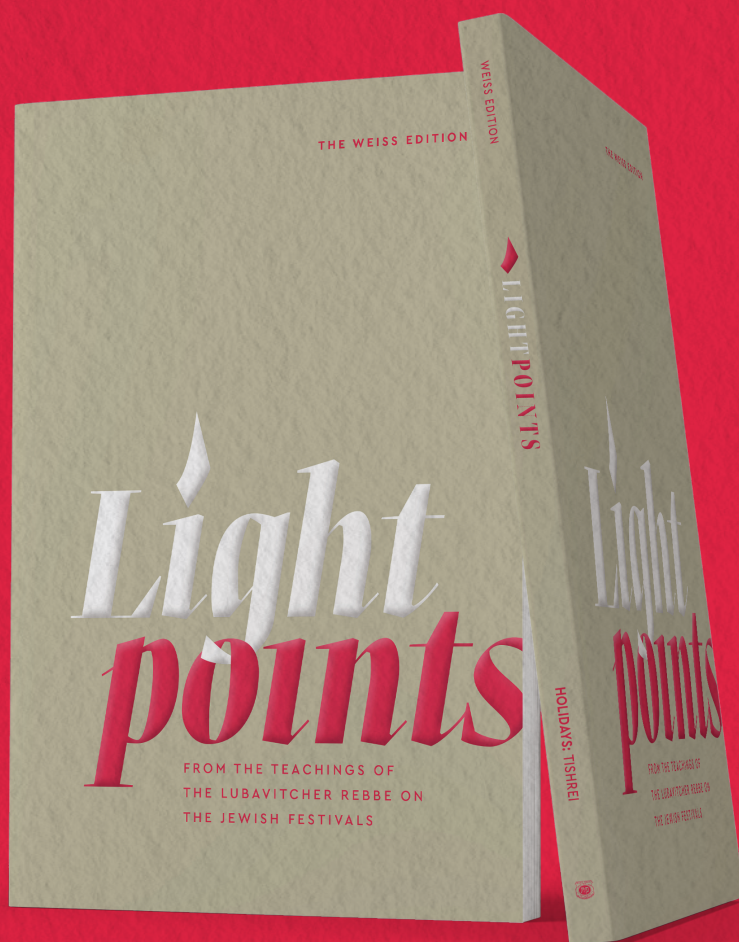
—*Likutei Sichos*, vol. 4, pp. 1354-1357

6. Rosh Hashanah 27b.

Lightpoints

לזיכרון ולעילוי נשמת
הרה"ח הרה"ת
הר"ר ישעי' זושא
ב"ר אברהם דוד ע"ה ווילהעלם
גלב"ע ביום ד' שבט ה'תשפ"ב
תנצב"ה





THE PERFECT BOOK TO
BEGIN OR
COMPLETE
YOUR DAY



KEHOT.COM
877-4-MERKOS

It's Light and to the Point.

Many profound points. One light read.

A collection of illuminated insights from the Lubavitcher Rebbe on the Jewish Festivals of Tishrei, *Lightpoints* conveys profound points in a light manner.

Originally disseminated daily to a diverse audience, *Lightpoints* contains many first-ever English adaptations of classic Chassidic sources.

This book is a must-read for anyone who enjoys concise teachings that will last a lifetime.