



The Weekly Parsha Shiur of Maran, Rosh HaYeshiva, the righteous Kabbalist,

Our Rabbi Benayahu Yissachar Shmueli Shlit"a

An excerpt for Rosh Hashanah 5787 (2026)

This is what a person needs: Not to wait until waking up one day to go serve Hashem, but rather in these days, **right now**, to prepare oneself in every sense in advance, like the diligent maidservant who prepared everything in time, and not like the one who postponed everything to "tomorrow morning" and remained with smoke instead of a warm, good slice of bread.

THAT OUR ENEMIES SHALL TURN AGAINST EACH OTHER

And therefore, now a person needs to prepare oneself in every sense: ask forgiveness from friends, check how diligent one is in commandments, make a **soul-accounting** of every commandment and commandment, prepare in advance the prayers of the Days of Awe and their interpretation, and know how to stand and pray before the Creator of the World for the entire order of prayer, sit with the children and prepare them. Read every day Psalms to purify the soul, and be meticulous to persevere in the **Tikkunei HaZohar**. And it is good also to fast on Erev (the day before) Rosh Hashanah: a person fasts and pleads that the Holy One, Blessed be He, will forgive him.

And especially important: not to get angry, accept upon oneself with complete commitment not to get angry, because anger stems from pride and causes many sins. This is the greatest virtue (*segulah*): that a person should not get angry at all

on Rosh Hashanah, no matter how he comes home, and what his wife does or does not do.

Also, a person will prepare now all the good omens (*simanim*): the **dates**, the *Rubia* (Green beans or Black-eyed peas), the Kara (gourd), and the *Silka* (beets), and the sheep's head, that we shall be as a head and not as a tail, and so that the Holy One, Blessed be He, will remember for us the **binding of Yitzchak our father**. Every sign and sign: the couscous—that our enemies shall turn against each other, and the fava beans (*Pul*)—that our enemies shall fall. Also, we take an *etrog* (citron) and cook it, **Hakham Ovadia brings this**, for an *etrog* is (called by the Torah) Hadar, "splendor" so that "we shall be splendid in commandments."

Also, a person should endeavor to do **a Pidyon Nefesh [ransom of the soul] on Erev Rosh Hashanah**. The Maharchu (Rabbi Chaim Vital) in his book *Beit Moed* writes that he used to do a *Pidyon* every Erev Rosh Hashanah, counting 160 **Prutah coins**, keeping them until Erev Yom Kippur, performing the *Pidyon* on them, and distributing them on Sukkot Day. This is a very great thing, and it redeems a person from all trouble and distress.

FOUR "DAYS OF INSPECTION"

Forgiveness follows the preparation: as it is written: "**And Hashem said: 'I have forgiven according to your word'**" — **according to the preparation, so is the forgiveness**, and "preparation" (*hakhana*) in gematria [numerical value] is **yesod** [foundation], for the foundation of everything, is in the preparation. The moment a person makes preparations, everything falls nicely into place: how you plead to Me and arrange your words, so I forgive — "according to your word".

Among Ashkenazim, they are accustomed to say **Selichot** at least four days before Rosh Hashanah; they began on Moetzei Shabbat, and the *Mishna Berura* says that four days are like the days of inspection for a sacrifice, four days before the offering. So too, the days of *Selichot* are days of inspection.

And he adds a wondrous thing: regarding the sacrifices of the other holidays, it is written "and you shall offer (**vehikravtem**) a burnt offering," but regarding the sacrifice of Rosh Hashanah it is written "and you shall make (**va'asitem**) a burnt offering." What is "and you shall make a burnt offering"? That a person needs to make himself as if he is sacrificing himself! Therefore, they established these four days for inspection.

WHO WILL COME FIRST TO WHOM?

It is brought in the Midrash: **Knesset Yisrael** [the Congregation of Israel] said before the Holy One, Blessed be He: "**Master of the World, yours it is! The**

repentance is in Your hand: 'Turn us back, Hashem, to You and we shall return'." He said to them: "No, yours it is. You need to return first: **'Return to Me, and I will return to you'.**"

And it is necessary to understand what the argument is? Rather, the nation of Israel, they come before the Holy One, Blessed be He, and say to Him: There is a law that one who sent an agent, and the agent died, the sender is responsible for him and needs to repent. My dear one, you sent a human being to perform an action, and the person passed away. **You** need to repent. Therefore, the nation of Israel says to the Holy One, Blessed be He: **You sent us** to this world, we erred along the way, what shall we do? The soul, Heaven forbid is like dead. You need to return us; it is not upon us. **You are the sender.**

The Holy One, Blessed be He, says to them: No, you need to repent. Why? Because if the sender warned the agent and said to him "do not go on this path, it is dangerous, go on this path, choose life, I instructed you," and that agent changed and did not listen, in such a case the sender is not liable, because he warned the agent. So says the Holy One, Blessed be He: I warned you and rebuked you, I told you to walk in the good path. Therefore, **"Return to Me and I will return to you."** But what? Open for Me an opening **like the point of a needle — a small opening** — and I will open for you an opening like the opening of a hall, that wagons and carriages enter through it. Slightly we open, and see what happens!

DO NOT RELY ON THE CANTOR

On the Day of Judgement, a person needs to **rely only on himself**, there is a person who says: "I am going to a place where there is a cantor with a good voice and a good shofar blower" he relies on the cantor and the shofar blower... No! A person needs to rely **only on himself**, to think about himself how they look at him in Heaven, what is happening with him, what his actions are, where he stands, whether he walks in **the ways of Hashem.**

They brought a parable about this: One day **the fox saw** the animals in great distress, crying and wailing. He came to them and asked: What happened? They said to him: We angered the king, **the lion**, and we do not know what to do. He is calling us to judgement, and we want to appease him. The fox said to them: No problem, come with me, and I will appease him! **I have three hundred parables**, I will gladden the king with them, I will amuse him, and he will forgive you. They said: This is good advice, let us go.

The fox stopped in the middle of the way. They said to him: Well, let us continue! He said: I want to tell you the truth, I forgot a hundred, I only have two hundred. They said: Even two hundred is good, let us continue. They walked a bit more, and again he stopped. What happened? I forgot another hundred, out of fear. They said: Good, even a hundred is good, let us continue. They reached the entrance of the king. **The lion sees them**, and the fox flees! He said to them: **I forgot everything...**

Thus say our rabbis: Do not rely on anyone, you need to prepare yourself by yourself, and not rely that someone else will do this in your place. To pay good attention to ourselves, how we wake up every day, how we pray to the Holy One, Blessed be He, how we do deeds and change ourselves for the better, this is **the main principle**.

EVERYTHING IS BECAUSE OF THE BREAD

And one needs to know a very important thing: Many times, a person prays to the Holy One, Blessed be He, that he will have such and such, wants this, wants that. But the main essential thing is to pray to Hashem, May He Be Blessed, for **the distress of the Divine Presence** (Shechinah): the Shechinah is as if in prison, our sins caused it, she moves and wanders from her place, she is not in the Holy Temple, which was destroyed because of our sins.

The Rashash in his ethic-lessons (Mussar) for Rosh Hashanah brings from **Tikkunei HaZohar** that human beings on Rosh Hashanah are "**like dogs barking hav**" [giving us / barking]: "Give us sustenance, give us life [give us livelihood, give us children, give us life]," and the Shechinah cries out, for there is no one who pays attention and seeks for her. And therefore, the main thing is to cry out for the distress of the exile of the Shechinah.

And the truth is, that if we worry about the Shechinah, everything will work out. For if the Shechinah is with us, a person will lack nothing in the world: he will have children, he will have sustenance, he will have livelihood, he will have Torah, he will have holiness, everything will be. For when the Shechinah is at ease, all abundance descends through her to the nation of Israel: abundance of holiness, abundance of life, abundance of Torah, abundance of livelihood, everything descends through her, she is the mother through whose hand everything is. Why go roundabout?

How is it written in Shmuel (Samuel)? "**Why has the son of Yishai not come today as well as yesterday to the bread?**" Our rabbis explain: "the son of Yishai" — this is Messiah, and why has he not come? Because "today as well as yesterday to the bread": a person worries about the bread, stands on Rosh Hashanah and on Yom Kippur and cries out "bring me children, bring me sustenance, bring me livelihood, it is hard for me." Sir, this is not the goal! The goal is that we worry about the Shechinah.

HOW DID YOUR COMMANDER TOLERATE YOU?

The Ba'al Shem Tov used to tell: The Russian Czar, on the day they crowned him as king, all the armies of Russia went out, all the forces: land, sea, and air, cannons and soldiers—all stood before him. He passed from place to place to a high location to view his army, wave to everyone, and encourage them all.

And lo, as he passed near one of the soldiers, suddenly one of the soldiers drew his sword in order to stab the king and kill him. A junior soldier who stood there drew his sword and struck the attacker. The king heard the drawing of the swords, but continued walking as if he saw nothing. The soldiers were alarmed, but the king signaled to them not to make a commotion, and everything was fine.

Afterward, in the palace, they told him that that junior soldier saved him. He said: Call him to me. The soldier came before the king. The king said to him: You saved me, thank you very much, what would you like me to give you as a gift? The soldier said: What, suddenly, what gift? It is an honor for me to save the king, we do not want anything, we owe you everything. The king said to him: Nevertheless, tell me what you want me to give you. The soldier said: I have been thirty years in the army, working outside in extreme cold, sometimes fifty degrees below zero, I am freezing. **I want to work inside**. The king said to him: Fine, you got it. But your commander I am elevating in rank, for how did he tolerate you, **that you are such a fool...** Instead of asking to be the chief commander of the army, and thus you would become! You ask for trivial things...

So too we, instead of asking for great things on Rosh Hashanah, the pinnacle of the headline—matters regarding the Divine Presence (*Shechinah*), request trivial things: give me a home, give me a livelihood, this is the small mind. Instead of asking for **the building of our Temple, redemption, the Shechinah**, which if that exists, everything works out, this is what one needs to ask for, not nonsense and futilities. Everything depends on where a person's head is located.

WHY DID HE NOT SEE THE FLASHLIGHT?

There was **a family** that returned from a trip years ago, they would go to refresh abroad to breathe **a little air**, and afterwards they would return. That family, **G-d-fearing and righteous**, a father and three children and a wife, when they returned, it was late night, and there **was an accident with the train**, on the spot the wife and the children were killed, and he was severely injured. They took him to the hospital, for several months **he could not speak**, could not understand what was happening with him, until after half a year – seven months, he began to slowly recover, and then they came and told him what happened, that his wife and children **all passed away in the accident**. He did not believe. He said: How can this be. I thought that they were also sick. But to such an extent?! He pulled himself together, *sued the train people*, the manager, they sent a big lawyer, they also sent the one who was there, that same one **who shines with his flashlight** and warns the passengers in vehicles that a train is passing.

The judge asks him: **Did you warn him?** He says: Yes. I signaled to him with the flashlight. The father says: **No, I did not see this**. Said the judge: He says that he signaled to you, **I accept** what he says. In short, the judge says to him: **You received the punishment**, Hashem save us, your children and wife died, now you will pay court fees, and go to good life and peace, and Hashem will help you. He came after everything, said to the train man: Look, **I am a very careful person**,

praying every day to the Holy One, Blessed be He. I will not do anything to you, I really want to know, did you signal to me with the flashlight? He says: Yes. He asked him: What is yes? **I did not see anything**, I am not stupid, I do not do such things, I total want to know if I caused **the death of my children** by not taking care, if I am to blame for something, this I want to know, tell me, **where am I standing**. I won't do anything to you, not speaking with anyone. I will give you whatever you want, just tell me the truth. He said to him: To tell the truth, I signaled with the flashlight, but **it did not have a battery**, there was no light that would shine, do you understand? **There was no light**. The battery did not work.

THAT YOUR LIGHT WILL REACH ABOVE

What does this tell us? We need to pray strongly from all the heart, and to focus well in prayer, to illuminate above in the upper worlds. A person cannot say: "I prayed." What prayed? You prayed for yourself, not to the Creator of the world. The Creator of the world needs fire, to know that today determines everything. Did you illuminate in the upper worlds? Did you light the flashlight, or was the flashlight turned off? How do you want good decrees decreed upon you? What about your prayer? Does it have a flame, a blaze?! Therefore, now is the time to ask from the Holy One, Blessed be He, that we may merit for a year that is the best, that we shall be as a head and not as a tail. What is this "as a head and not as a tail" – meaning, that the main thing is spirituality, the head is spirituality, the tail is physical/material matters, everything follows after the brain.