



Parshat Netzavim 28 Elul, 5775/September 12, 2015 Vol. 7 Num. 3

This issue of Toronto Torah is dedicated by Jeffrey and Rochel Silver in honour of their parents

Standing Before G-d Today

Rabbi Baruch Weintraub

Moshe Rabbeinu begins his final address with a ceremonial declaration: "You are all standing today before Hashem your G-d: the leaders of your tribes, your elders and your officers, every man of Israel... that you may enter the covenant... which Hashem, your G-d, is making with you today, to establish you today as His people... those standing here with us today before Hashem, our G-d, and those who are not here with us, today."

No fewer than five times does Moshe mention the word "today" in these verses, forcing us to ask what was so special about that day. This emphasis on the present is even more troubling when we take into consideration that Moshe explicitly says that the covenant also applies to those who were not present at that day. Of what use was it to emphasize that he was creating the covenant "today"?

Before attempting to answer this question, let us look at a completely different topic: the second day of Rosh Hashanah. In general, this second day does not raise any eyebrows among those living outside of Eretz Yisrael, as it follows the example of all other holidays, with their extra days added to the biblically prescribed holiday. Only for an Israeli is this day a jarring, strange phenomenon. But as a matter of fact, all should be bothered by this second day; while having another Pesach seder or eating in the succah for another night is a decision for which authority has been given to the sages, Rosh Hashanah would seem to be in a different league altogether. Apart from the mitzvah of blowing the shofar, Rosh Hashanah is a day of

Divine judgment, as our prayers underline. How can we decide for G-d that He should sit, again, on the throne of judgment?

The solution to this problem may be found in a talmudic discussion regarding when G-d judges human beings. (Rosh HaShanah 16a) The initial view, expressed by Rabbi Meir, is that human beings are judged on Rosh HaShanah, with their verdict sealed on Yom Kippur. Rabbi Yehudah took a similar position, but he noted that the judgments for certain blessings, like rain, are spread throughout the year. Rabbi Yosi, citing a verse, contended that human beings are judged daily, and Rabbi Natan quoted another verse indicating that judgment takes place at every hour. The Talmud then adds that even according to the sages who argue that judgment occurs only on Rosh Hashanah, one should pray at all times, for "calling out (to G-d) is always good.

Commenting on this passage, Rabbi Menachem Meiri wrote, "Although they said that human beings are judged and administered according to their deeds on Rosh HaShanah, a person's eyes should be raised in repentance daily, for they said that human beings are judged every day, **and all of this is true for those who understand.**"

The Meiri's assertion that all of the opinions are correct may match the view of both Rambam (*Moreh haNevuchim* 3:17) and Ramban (Commentary to Bereishit 18:19) that Divine providence for an individual (*hashgachah pratit*) depends upon that person's acts – as one clings more closely to G-d, so G-d's providence is

more personal. Thus, although all are judged on Rosh Hashanah regardless of their spiritual stance, a person who repents before G-d may be judged on any day.

Now we can understand how the sages could have added another day for G-d to sit in judgment, by adding another day in which we stand in prayer. The mere fact that we stand in front of G-d makes His providence over us stronger.

According to this, we can also suggest why Moshe repeatedly emphasized 'today', despite applying the covenant to those who were not there on that particular day. Just as G-d's judgment and providence can be accessed any day by drawing closer to Him, so is true for His covenant. The covenant was formed with those who stood "before Hashem our G-d", but the covenant can still apply "today" to all who aspire to this standing. "Today" can be any day, and it can also be every day; the intensity of our connection with G-d, as individuals and as a nation, depends upon our own acts. As Eliyahu said to Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi (Sanhedrin 98a), "Redemption can come 'today', if today will be the day on which we heed G-d's voice."

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Orot haTeshuvah

Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook
Mossad haRav Kook, Hebrew
<http://www.hebrewbooks.org/31307>

What is in this book?

Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook emphasized the importance of teshuvah (*repentance*, or *return*) throughout his writings. In the foreword to *Orot haTeshuvah*, he declared, "Teshuvah occupies the greatest portion of Torah and life, and upon it all personal and communal hopes are founded." Although Rabbi Kook penned various texts which relate to teshuvah, the central repository of his thoughts on the subject is *Orot haTeshuvah*.

Orot haTeshuvah is composed of 17 short chapters; Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook wrote the first three chapters, and his son, Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook, assembled the remaining chapters by gathering teshuvah-related passages from the corpus of the elder Rabbi Kook's writings. The work was approved by Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook, and it was published in 1925. Written in Rabbi Kook's traditional style, *Orot haTeshuvah* weaves diverse sectors of Torah into a harmonious tapestry. The book cites talmudic passages, and then explains them via philosophical, mystical, halachic and psychological ideas.

Rabbi Kook's son, Rabbi Zvi Yehudah Kook, wrote that his father perpetually beseeched people to learn *Orot haTeshuvah*, and that his father would personally study it. This was particularly so in the period surrounding Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur. (Introduction to the second edition of *Orot haTeshuvah*)

Is there anything new to say about teshuvah?

Rabbi Kook describes teshuvah as more than the process of righting a wrong. In Rabbi Kook's vision, teshuvah is a process of restoration to our purest spiritual nature. This basic observation gives Rabbi Kook an idiosyncratic view of the means and goals of teshuvah.

Rabbi Kook declares that personal perfection, and the desire to regain it, is inside of each human being all along, even during the sin. Teshuvah is simply the process of making that perfection manifest. (*Orot haTeshuvah* 6:2, 7:4)

Rabbi Kook believes that a transgression can be viewed positively, as it can catalyze repentance; this is his way of explaining the talmudic observation that repentance can convert an intentional sin into a merit. (Yoma 86b) (*Orot haTeshuvah* 9)

Rabbi Kook contends that thoughts of repentance are the essence of teshuvah, and actions are simply the playing out of that which we determine in our minds; this is how he explains the successful repentance of Elazar ben Durdaya (Avodah Zarah 17a). Rabbi Kook employs the same idea to explain the talmudic statement that a man who proposes marriage "on condition that I am righteous" is making a valid proposal, even if his historic conduct has been wicked (*Kiddushin* 49b). (*Orot haTeshuvah* 8:6, 14:23)

A cautionary note

Rabbi Kook's writing can be florid, making for slow reading. Also, Rabbi Kook occasionally employs technical philosophical terminology. Therefore, study is strongly recommended; one who picks up this text for the first time on Yom Kippur will likely not find it particularly helpful.

Many English books have been written on the basis of Rabbi Kook's *Orot haTeshuvah*, both as translation and as commentary. Go to <http://amzn.to/1hQOOEB> to find some of them.

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613 Mitzvot: #453: Go to Jerusalem!

Rabbi Mordechai Torczyner

Four different biblical verses instruct Jews to bring their korbanot (ritual offerings) in the Beit haMikdash, specifically:

- An Israelite who slaughters an ox, sheep or goat in the camp, or who slaughters it outside the camp, and he does not bring it to the entrance of the Tent of Meeting, to bring a korban to G-d before the Mishkan of G-d, it will be considered [an act of spilling] blood for that person, etc. (*Vayikra* 17:3-4)
- Guard yourself, lest you bring up your offering in any site you see. (*Devarim* 12:13)
- In the place G-d will choose, among your tribes, there you shall bring up your offering, etc. (*Devarim* 12:14)
- Your sacred items and your vows, you shall bear and you shall come to the place G-d will choose. (*Devarim* 12:26)

According to Rambam and Sefer haChinuch, these verses translate into four unique commands:

- The first verse teaches a prohibition against slaughtering an offering outside of the Beit haMikdash (*Chinuch* #186);
- The second verse presents a separate prohibition against bringing an offering up on an altar outside of the Beit haMikdash (*Chinuch* #439);
- The third verse expresses a commandment to bring offerings in the Beit haMikdash (*Chinuch* #440);
- The fourth verse adds a commandment to bring offerings to the Beit haMikdash regardless of where one lives, and even should one live outside of Israel (*Chinuch* #453).

Ramban disagrees with Rambam, and contends that the third and fourth commandments listed here constitute a single mitzvah. (Ramban to Sefer haMitzvot, Aseh 85)

Sefer haChinuch identifies two distinct roots for the mitzvah of bringing offerings to the Beit haMikdash:

- We are not ordinarily permitted to kill animals; the only justification is for necessity, or to participate in one of the rituals defined by the Torah. Absent such a condition, despite the value of spontaneous worship, sacrifice would be wasteful, and is therefore prohibited by the Torah.
- On the positive side, Divine selection of a particular site elevates that location both in an objective, mystical sense, and from our subjective perspective. Therefore, we are best suited to commune with G-d at the chosen location, and we should serve G-d where our bond will be complete.

In describing the 453rd mitzvah, Sefer haChinuch emphasizes that this mitzvah adds a component that does not appear in the mitzvah (#440) of bringing offerings in the Beit haMikdash. The extra element is our strain. In this light, we can see two separate religious themes at work here: The obligation to recognize the sanctity of the site selected by G-d (#440), and the obligation to sanctify it through human effort (#453). Both themes are critical for the Jewish religious experience – recognizing the Divine Hand, and adding our own contribution.

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Biography

Rabbi Yoshiyah Pinto

Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

Rabbi Yoshiyah ben Yosef Pinto was born in 1565 in Damascus. When he was young, he studied in the yeshiva of Rabbi Yaakov Abulafia. In 1625, he moved to Jerusalem, and soon continued on to Safed where he studied Kabbalah with Rabbi Chaim Vital, the foremost student of Rabbi Yitzchak Luria (the Arizal). Rabbi Vital's son became a student of Rabbi Pinto, and later married his daughter. Rabbi Pinto remained in Safed for a very brief period, until the death of his son, and then returned to Damascus where he was named Chief Rabbi. He remained there until his death in 1648.

Rabbi Pinto was a master preacher, and he published a few collections of sermons on the Torah, such as *Kesef Nivchar* ["choice silver"] and *Kesef Mezukak* ["refined silver"] – which, like many of his books, contain the word *kesef* ["silver"] in the title. He also authored several commentaries on *aggada* (talmudic passages that do not address legal matters), such as *Me'or Einayim* ["enlightener of eyes"]. He published a commentary on the *Ein Yaakov* collection of *aggada*; this appears under the name *Rif*, not to be confused with Rabbi Yitzchak Alfasi, the early medieval legal authority. Rabbi Pinto also wrote commentaries on parts of Tanach, including *Kesef Namess* ["molten silver"] on Eichah, and *Kesef Tzaruf* ["pure silver"] on Mishlei. He also wrote on Kabbalah.

While better known now for his homiletic works, Rabbi Pinto was also an important halachic authority. He published several legal works, such as *Kevutzat Kesef* ["gathered silver"], and a collection of responsa, *Nivchar Mikesef* ["more choice than silver"], which provides much insight into the world of Syrian Jewry.

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Torah and Translation

Man and G-d, Man and Man

Peirush Rif on Ein Yaakov to Yoma 86a

Translated by Rabbi Jonathan Ziring

[משנה יומא ח:ח - דרש רבי אלעזר בן עזריה: "מכל חטאתיכם לפני ד' תטהרו" - עבירות שבין אדם למקום יום הכפורים מכפר, עבירות שבין אדם לחברו אין יום הכפורים מכפר עד שירצה את חברו. אמר רבי עקיבא, אשריכם ישראל! לפני מי אתם מטהרין מי מטהר אתכם? אביכם שבשמים...]

וקשיא לן: מה הוסיף עוד ר"א בן עזריה לדרוש יותר מהאמור קודם?

...ונלע"ד שר"א בן עזריה דרש מהמקרא וממנו שנה לומר שהעבירות שבין אדם למקום יוה"כ מכפר, ובזמן שיש לו ג"כ עבירות שבין אדם לחברו תלויה כפרת עונותיו שבין אדם למקום עד שירצה לחברו על מה שחטא עם חברו, וכיון שהוא מרצה אותו ומפייסו אז הקב"ה מתרצה לו לכפר לו עונותיו שחטא בינו לבין המקום ב"ה. וזה הדבר דרש ר"א מדכתיב "כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאותיכם" וחזר לומר "לפני ה' תטהרו" - והרי כבר נאמר "לטהר אתכם", מה צורך לומר עוד "תטהרו"? אמנם בא לומר כי ביום הזה יכפר, יוה"כ יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאותיכם לפני ד', דהיינו עבירות שבין אדם למקום, בתנאי שתטהרו אתם בני אדם מעבירות שביניכם לביניכם, דהיינו עבירות שבין אדם לחברו. ואם לא תטהרו בעבירות שבין אדם לחברו, גם יוה"כ לא יכפר לטהר אתכם מכל חטאותיכם לפני ד', שהם בין אדם למקום.

"ל דר' עקיבא פליג אדרשא דדריש ר"א וסבר שמה שאמר הכתוב "לפני ד' תטהרו" הוא שבא הכתוב לשבח לישראל ואומר כיון שביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם מכל חטאותיכם, אשריכם ישראל כי לפני ד' תטהרו, שהוא לומר דעו מעלתכם ואושר שלכם, לפני מי אתם מטהרים? לפני אדון עולם ד' אשר בחר בכם להיות קרובים אליו. וא"כ אע"פ שלא ירצה האדם לחברו בעבירות שבינו לבין אדם אין טהרתן של ישראל תלויה בכך.

[Mishnah Yoma 8:8 - Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah expounded the text, "From all your sins, before G-d, you shall be purified": For transgressions between man and G-d, Yom Kippur atones, for transgressions between man and his peer, Yom Kippur does not atone, until he appeases his peer. R. Akiva says, Fortunate are you, Israel! Before whom are you purified, and who purifies you? Your Father in heaven...]

What did Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah add beyond what had been said previously [that one is not forgiven for interpersonal sins without appeasing his peer]? ...

It seems to me that Rabbi Elazar ben Azariah expounded the verse, and from it he learned, that sins that are between man and G-d, Yom Kippur atones for. [However,] when one also has sins between man and his peer, the atonement for his sins between man and G-d is suspended until he appeases his peer for his sin against him. Once he appeases and satisfies him, the Holy One Blessed be He is appeased towards him to atone for the sins he has committed between man and G-d. And this Rabbi Elazar expounded from [the verse], "From all your sins, before G-d" and "you shall be purified." After all, it had already said "to purify you," so what need was there to add "you shall be purified"? Rather, it means that "on this day, it shall atone," meaning Yom Kippur will atone to purify you for all your sins before G-d, i.e. the sins between man and G-d, on condition that you purify yourselves from sin between yourselves, for sins between man and his peer. And if you don't purify yourself from sins between man and his peer, Yom Kippur will not even atone to purify you from your sins "before G-d", meaning between man and G-d.

It seems to me that Rabbi Akiva disagrees with what Rabbi Elazar expounded and thinks that when the verse says "before, G-d you will be purified," the verse is praising Israel and saying that since "on this day he atones for you, to purify you from all your sins," [it means] "How fortunate are you, for you are purified before G-d" – know your exalted state and your fortune!

Before Whom are you purified? Before G-d, the Master of the world, who chose you to be close to him! If so, even if a person does not appease his peer for sins between man and his peer, the purity of Israel does not depend on this.

This Week in Israeli History: 3 Tishrei 1955 The Establishment of Dimona

Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig

3 Tishrei is Wednesday

Currently home to over 33,000 residents, the city of Dimona had far humbler beginnings. In September of 1955, thirty-six families emigrating from Morocco founded Dimona in the Negev. Life in the newly-founded settlement was by no means easy. Resources had to be brought into Dimona from nearby cities, such as Beersheva. Additionally, as the city was in its early stages of growth, many of the early residents of Dimona had to travel to other areas for employment. Many mined potash (a potassium rich salt) for the Dead Sea Works. Today, Dimona's population has grown to include a sizeable Russian community as well as a large portion of the 80,000 strong Indian Jewish community found in the Negev region.

For much of the city's history, the Dead Sea Works and related companies have been some of the most common places of employment of Dimona residents. In past decades,

many residents worked in textiles, but outsourcing of jobs to countries in the Far East has severely hurt this industry. Dimona is also home to Luz II, Ltd, a company that has been refining solar panel technologies with the goal of increasing performance, while lowering implementation costs. In spite of these significant industries, the past several years have seen a rising unemployment rate in Dimona as well as surrounding areas in the Negev. Recent months have seen a series of strikes protesting the unemployment situation in Dimona.

Modern Dimona is perhaps best known for the Negev Nuclear Research Center based just outside of the city. While not officially acknowledged, it is widely believed to be production home of Israel's nuclear arsenal. In 1986, the Center was the subject of an intelligence leak by Mordechai Vanunu. Upon being captured by the Mossad, Vanunu was sentenced to prison, serving 18 years.

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Weekly Highlights: Sept. 12 – Sept. 18 / 28 Elul – 5 Tishrei

Time	Speaker	Topic	Location	Special Notes
שבת Sept. 12				
After hashkamah	Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig	Meshech Chochmah	Clanton Park	
Before Pirkei Avot	R' Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	
After minchah	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Gemara Avodah Zarah: Idolatrous Techelet?	BAYT	
Sun. Sept. 13				
8:45 AM	R' Jonathan Ziring	The Fundamentals of Faith of Rabbi Chasdai Crescas	BAYT Boardroom	Hebrew
8:45 AM	R' Josh Gutenberg	Contemporary Halachah: Showering on Yom Tov	BAYT	Third floor
9:15 AM	R' Shalom Krell	Kuzari	Zichron Yisroel	Hebrew
לשנה טובה נכתב ונחתם לאלתר לחיים טובים ולשלום				
MAY WE BE INSCRIBED AND SEALED FOR A YEAR OF HEALTH AND HAPPINESS AND TORAH AND SHALOM AND BLESSING!				
Mon. Sept. 14				
Before minchah	R' Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	
Tue. Sept. 15				
Before minchah	R' Jonathan Ziring	Daf Yomi	BAYT	
Wed. Sept. 16 Fast of Gedaliah				
After minchah with JLIC	Yisroel Meir Rosenzweig	Teshuvah and Kapparah The Haftorah of Yom Kippur	BAYT	Gruda Beit Midrash University Students
Thu. Sept. 17				
1:30 PM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Yehoshua: The Land of Yosef	49 Michael Ct. Thornhill	Women
Fri. Sept. 18				
10:30 AM	R' Mordechai Torczyner	Eruvin: Defining a Reshut haYachid	Yeshivat Or Chaim	Advanced

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