



SIX PERSPECTIVES ON THE YAMIM NORAIM

Carving Out our Teshuva Journey

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Following the sin of the Egel HaZahav and the destruction of the first set of the luchos, Hashem commands Moshe Rabbeinu to carve for himself a new set of luchos and then ascend up Har Sinai for Hashem to inscribe them.

And upon the Lord said to me, "Carve for yourself two tables of stone like unto the first, and come up unto Me into the mount and make an ark of wood." Devarim 10:1

This command was an essential

component of the process to rectify personal teshuva processes during this time. The Rambam explains in Hilchos Teshuva 5:1, "reshus l'chol adam l'cholos, which Hashem carved and inscribed for Bnei Yisrael, the second set of luchos was to be carved by Moshe Rabbeinu himself on the first day of Elul. The process of rectifying the relationship between Bnei Yisrael and Hashem required Moshe's effort on behalf of the nation. In the process of communal teshuva toward Hashem, human effort was necessary. Indeed, it was only after Moshe carved this new set of luchos that Moshe was permitted to approach Hakadosh Baruch Hu, and to ascend up the mountain to continue the teshuva process.

The necessity of human effort as part of the process to ascend back up the mountain is a message that was not only relevant to Moshe Rabbeinu, but is critical to understanding our

relationship with Hashem. Hashem gave each of us this capacity, and the teshuva process gives each of us the chance to utilize this capacity to improve ourselves and our relationship with Hashem.

In other words, the opportunity to ascend up the mountain is there for each person, but we have to choose it. The message of "pesal lecha" teaches us that during this time period, we need to first invest our own effort to improve and to make the choices that raise us up, so we can ascend the mountain, coming closer to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

Rosh Hashana is the day where we crown Hashem as king. It is the day

we recommit ourselves to embracing the struggle with infertility and of her the relationship of “anu amecha, tearful prayers at the Mishkan which v'ata malkeihu that we are Your are ultimately answered with the nation, and You are our King. During birth of her son Shmuel. e ha ara the month of Elul, a month in which concludes with shiras Chana “HaMelech basadeh,” the King is in poetic response of joy and gratitude eld, we know that Hashem is extra for this Divine gi .

close, waiting for us. And yet, each person's relationship with the King is dependent on his or her own choices. Why does the Gemara prescribe this ha ara for Rosh Hashana? e classic explanation relates to the narrative e King is there, the King is waiting and we have the amazing potential portion of the ha ara: Rosh Hashana during this time to choose to ascend is the day that Chana's prayers for a child were answered, as was the case up the mountain by carving our own for Sara as well (whose childbirth is tablets through the choices that we the topic of the day's kerias ha-Torah). make.

Perhaps there are timely connections It is always possible to get on board and improve, even now. It is never too late. at's exactly the message for this unique moment that occurs just once a year. You can always improve, no ma er where you've been all of last year. It does not ma er what your Elul looked like. In just another moment we will hear the shofar, and together we will coronate G-d.

Sculpture and Sculptor: Rosh Hashana Musings on our Inner Landscaping

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We will preface our te llas musaf on the rst day of Rosh Hashana with a ha ara drawn from the opening chapters of sefer Shmuel. is ha ara tells the story of Chana's painful

4. Shmuel I 2:2.
5. Berachos 10a. See also Maharsha, Chidushei Agados.v. ve-Ain Tzayar.
6. See Mechilta of Beshalah (Shirano. 8); Midrash Tanchuma beginning of Tazria and Derashos Ibn Shuib there.
7. Perhaps based on the idea in the Mechilta
8. Berachos 58a. See also Maharsha s.v. ve-Ain
9. Rosh Hashana 16a. See also, the Gemara further end of 18a.
10. For more on the centrality of our "inner landscape", the chovos ha-levavos, please check "What I Do vs. Why I Do: A Surprising Insight about Intentions and Penimiyus" (<https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/963084/>) and "Inner Work: The Power of Penimiyus and Heart" (<https://www.yutorah.org/lectures/lecture.cfm/965233/>).

B'Onnes UV'Ratzon: What is True Duress?

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The special vidui that we recite on Yom Kippur begins with the following confession:

אני חוטא לפניך יהוה אלהיך יהוה אחד (I am a sinner before you, God, the Lord our God, the Lord is one.)

perceptions; what we viewed as pure⁵ the expression of mutual love
 din, can now, following Tisha B'av, between Hashem and Klal Yisrael.
 be understood through the prism Indeed, the essence of this theme
 of rachamim. In retrospect, we can empowers us to discern the midah
 consider even the tragedies in our tovah merubah and the love of Hashem
 history in a new light. For example, inherent in how He guides our lives
 Chazal emphasize that the destruction even when, at the moment, their
 of the Beit HaMikdash was in essence events seem bleak. When we gain this
 a kindness for the Jews, for the perspective, we set the stage for the
 alternative would have been their highest level of repentance, teshuva
 destruction. me'ahava- teshuva that emerges
 from love for Hashem.

In this light, perhaps four ha orot
 would not suffice. True, four might
 indicate Hashem's midah tova
 merubah. But the additional three
 ha orot d'nechemta demonstrate that
 we can even look back at the original
 shalosh d'puranah and adjust our
 lens to perceive their prophecies
 more favorably. In hindsight, our
 personal and communal travails are
 also orchestrated through the loving
 providence of Hakadosh Baruch Hu.
 Halacha considers it a definitional
 insight adds new meaning to
 our minhag of reciting Shir hama'alot
 mima'amakim k'raticha Hashem
 (Tehillim 130) between Rosh
 Hashana and Yom Kippur. This psalm
 of repentance beseeches God "from
 the depths" — generally understood
 as a call to Hashem from the depths
 of suffering and humility. So pervasive
 and compelling is this human state,
 Halacha considers it a definitional

If so, it is most appropriate for the
 final four of these ha orot to serve
 as ha orot of the month of Elul. The
 name Elul hints to "Ani l'dodi v'dodi