

In connection with the situation in Eretz Hakodesh, and in light of the Alter Rebbe's strong words at the end of Tanya about the imperative for Shabbos observance in the highest degree,¹ we are publishing a segment from the sefer Minchas Ani,² by Harav Yaakov Ettliger, author of Aruch Laner.

May his inspiring words encourage us to reinforce our study of the halachos of Shabbos and enhance our observance of the holy Shabbos.

This should serve as a merit for the speedy redemption of all the captives, complete recovery for all the wounded, and safety of the Jewish soldiers who risk their lives to protect the Jews in Eretz Yisrael.

With prayers for a complete victory, total destruction of our enemies, and the ultimate peace with the complete Geulah speedily in our days.

¹ Tanya, Kuntres Acharon, siman 9:

The counsel offered follows the declaration of our Sages, of blessed memory, "Whoever observes Shabbos according to its law is forgiven all his sins." The term "according to its law" is used advisedly. It is therefore incumbent upon every individual to master the "great law" of Shabbos.

Also, be most careful [on Shabbos] not to indulge in idle chatter, G-d forbid. For, as is known to the students of the Kabbalah, all the mitzvos comprise an internal and an external aspect. The externality of the [mitzvah of] Shabbos is the cessation of physical activity, just as G-d ceased making the physical heaven and earth. The internal dimension of Shabbos is one's intention in the Shabbos prayers and during one's Torah study to cleave to the One G-d, as it is written, "It is Shabbos to the L-rd your G-d."

This [internal level of the mitzvah of Shabbos] is the element of "remembering." The inner dimension of the element of "observing" is refraining from speech about material affairs, just as G-d ceased from the ten utterances through which the physical heaven and earth were created. For "one opposite the other ..."

² In parshas Haazinu.

Is Rosh Hashana coinciding with Shabbos a good omen?

The Gemara teaches that "three matters require Divine mercy: A good king, a good year, and a good dream..."³

Regarding a good year, there is room to investigate whether Rosh Hashana coinciding with Shabbos is a positive omen. We find that the Jewish nation's worst and best years had Rosh Hashana on Shabbos.

The worst years for the Jews

The destructions of the two Batei Mikdash occurred in years when Rosh Hashana fell on Shabbos. As the Talmud Yerushalmi teaches,⁴ the first Beis Hamikdash was destroyed on the first of Av, on a Sunday, and the second Beis Hamikdash was destroyed on the ninth of Av, also on a Sunday. Both were in years directly following *shemita*, as stated in the Talmud Bavli.⁵

Working backward from the first Beis Hamikdash's destruction on Rosh Chodesh Av, which fell on Sunday, Rosh Chodesh for Tammuz must have been Friday and Shabbos, for Sivan on Thursday, for Iyar on Tuesday and Wednesday, for Nisan on Monday, for Adar on Shabbos and Sunday, for Shevat on Friday, for Teves on Wednesday and Thursday, for Kislev on Tuesday, for Marcheshvan on Sunday and Monday, resulting in Rosh Hashana falling on Shabbos.

We reach a similar conclusion for the second Beis Hamikdash's destruction on Sunday, the ninth of Av.

³ Berachos 55a.

⁴ Taanis 4:5.

⁵ Taanis 29a.

This would mean Rosh Chodesh Av was on Shabbos, and calculations would result in Rosh Hashana falling on Friday. But this isn't possible, as the Gemara teaches that this would result in Yom Kippur falling on Sunday, in direct continuation to Shabbos.⁶ The *beis din* must have arranged for two consecutive months to have 29 days so that Rosh Hashana would fall one day later. Making a leap year wasn't an option that year which directly followed *shemita*.⁷

The best years for the Jews

We also find that the best years also had Rosh Hashana on Shabbos, including the year when the Jews were forgiven for the sin of the golden calf and erected the Mishkan. The Jews left Mitzrayim on a Thursday,⁸ and Tosfos details the various calendar dates of that year's events.⁹

The year the Jews entered Eretz Yisrael also had the same setup, for Moshe's passing was on Shabbos, 7 Adar, which means Rosh Chodesh Adar was on Sunday and Rosh Hashana was on Shabbos (see Tosfos on Menachos 30a, s.v. *mikan*, and the Rosh on Pesachim, *siman* 13).

A parable: the beaten wife's advocacy

We can understand this [the two opposite results of Rosh Hashana coinciding with Shabbos] based on a parable:

One of the king's ministers sinned, arousing the king's strong wrath. The king instructed the judges for the upcoming court case to hand down the letter of the

law. The frightened minister appealed to various advocates to stand by his side at the trial, but one by one, they all excused themselves, with no one willing to accept this role. They all told him that there was no defense for him and he clearly deserved to be punished.

When the minister realized he had no support in his predicament, he became very distressed and related everything to his wife. She proceeded to comfort him and said, "Why are you so down, and why must you turn to these advocates? I myself am a regular in the king's inner court, and I have a close confidant there who will help me in my time of trouble. Relax and listen to me; I will speak to the king and the judges on your behalf."

It happened just as she said. At the trial, the minister's wife advocated for him, which resulted in his meritorious verdict.

Not much time passed, and another minister of the king transgressed in the same manner as the first. The king also instructed this minister to stand on trial before the judges. His friends suggested he find someone to advocate on his behalf, but remembering his colleague's recent acquittal, he laughed them off. "My wife also has many contacts in the royal court. She will speak in my merit to the king and the judges, and I will be found innocent."

However, this second minister was quick-tempered and didn't treat his wife with the proper love and respect. In his anger, he beat her cruelly, leaving marks of his beatings clear for all to see. Still, his wife accompanied him to the trial to advocate on his behalf. But as soon as she opened her mouth to speak,

⁶ Rosh Hashana 20a.

⁷ See Sanhedrin 12a.

⁸ See Shabbos 87a.

⁹ Tosfos on Bava Kamma 82a.

and the king noticed the scars on her face, he asked her what had happened.

The woman stumbled and tried to offer an excuse but was unsuccessful. One of the bystanders remarked that these were marks from the beatings of her cruel husband. The king was shocked and said to her, “For such a husband, you are acting as a defender?! All you can present is prosecution against him!” The verdict was passed to find the minister guilty and punish him.

Shabbos is our wife and advocate

Based on this parable, we can understand how Rosh Hashana’s coinciding with Shabbos could sometimes result to our benefit, while other times be a negative sign, G-d forbid.

When the Jewish people have lapsed in sin during the past year, we hope that through blowing the shofar on the Day of Judgment, the blasts should confuse the Satan, and the shofar’s merit should serve in our defense.

This applies when Rosh Hashana falls on a weekday, but when it falls on Shabbos, what merit will we find to vindicate us on the Day of Judgment?

For this purpose, Shabbos—which is considered the Jewish nation’s “wife”¹⁰—serves as our advocate before the King of kings. Shabbos frequents the royal court of Hashem’s honorable throne, as the posuk says about Shabbos, “Between Me and the Jewish people, it serves as an everlasting sign.”¹¹ In the merit of keeping Shabbos properly, Hashem forgives our wrongdoings.

¹⁰ See Bereishis Rabbah 11:8.

¹¹ Shemos 31:17.

However, this only works when the Jews keep Shabbos. But when they don’t treat their “wife” properly and even desecrate her honor publicly—how can Shabbos serve as our advocate to vindicate us in judgment? Instead, it becomes a prosecutor!

Ruining our chance of defense

When the sages forbade blowing shofar on Shabbos, it was to prevent potential Shabbos desecration. They decreed lest someone come to carry the shofar four cubits in the public domain.¹² But if someone desecrates Shabbos the entire year by carrying in the public domain—then Shabbos can’t advocate for us. And since there aren’t any shofar blasts to confuse the Satan, we must worry for the teaching of Rabbi Yitzchak, “Any year during which the shofar was not sounded at its beginning will suffer misfortune at its end.”

Therefore, especially during years in which Rosh Hashana coincides with Shabbos, we must toil in teshuvah without any break. What is beyond us we don’t know, and what is concealed from us we can’t ask. Who knows whether the year will end up being good or the opposite? And we have already been taught in the Gemara that “any year during which the shofar was not sounded at its beginning will suffer misfortune at its end.”

...The men must also be reprimanded, and particularly regarding carrying on Shabbos. Regarding Rabbi Yitzchak’s teaching about a year in which shofar wasn’t sounded, the commentaries explain that this doesn’t refer to a year when Rosh Hashana coincides with Shabbos, but rather when

¹² See Rosh Hashana 29b.

other circumstances prevented the sounding of the shofar (Tosfos quoting the Baal Halachos Gedolos).

Certainly, though, this exception for Shabbos only applies to those who keep Shabbos in all its details, and particularly the laws of carrying. If someone isn't careful about the prohibition of carrying on Shabbos—the entire rationale for the decree against blowing shofar on Shabbos becomes inapplicable. The lack of blowing is therefore counted against him, and he must worry for the omen of “misfortune at the end.” The posuk appropriately says, “Why should I fear in days of misfortune? [Because] the iniquity of my heels surrounds me.”¹³

The power of teshuvah

The Midrash relates:

Kayin departed [from the Heavenly court] joyfully. Adam Harishon said to him, “What became of your sentence [for killing Hevel]?” Kayin responded, “I repented and reached a compromise settlement.” Adam Harishon slapped himself on the face, saying, “Such is the power of repentance, and I did not know!” Immediately, Adam Harishon stood and said, “A psalm, a song for the Shabbos day ...”¹⁴

We can ask, what is the connection of this psalm about Shabbos to what Adam Harishon heard from Kayin? And what is the meaning of the ‘power’ of teshuva? Adam’s statement implies that he knew about the concept of teshuva and was only unaware of the extent of its power.

We are transported on Shabbos to the World to Come

¹³ Tehillim 49:6.

¹⁴ Tehillim 92:1.

We can explain this, based on the Gemara’s teaching:¹⁵

“Anyone who observes Shabbos in accordance with its *halachos*—even if he worships idolatry as the generation of Enosh, G-d forgives him, as it is stated, “Fortunate is the man [*enosh*] who does this ... [one who guards the Shabbos] from desecrating it [*meichallelo*, which can be read as *machul lo*, ‘he is forgiven’].”¹⁶

The tremendous reward for keeping Shabbos is evident from this. Now, the inner mechanics of teshuvah is that out of Hashem’s kindness, He recreates the sinner as a new person. For according to the letter of the law, a soul that sins must die.¹⁷ And therefore, teshuvah isn’t effective to be saved from an earthly *beis din*’s verdict of lashes or the death penalty.

Observing Shabbos in all aspects

But how is it possible to become a new creation?

Our sages teach us¹⁸ that Shabbos is a foretaste of the World to Come, and it corresponds to the Seventh Millennium. Therefore, one must rest on Shabbos even from thoughts concerning weekday activities, and one’s mind must be completely focused on Torah and mitzvos. Even one’s eating and drinking shouldn’t be for earthly pleasure, but rather out of pleasure in the mitzvah.

In this manner, he is living on the level of the World to Come, and it’s considered as if he was transported from this world into the spiritual world. When he

¹⁵ Shabbos 118b.

¹⁶ Yeshaya 56:2.

¹⁷ See Yalkut Shimoni on Tehillim, 702.

¹⁸ Shabbos 57b.

comes back to the weekdays, then he is truly a new person.

This is the meaning of “one who observes Shabbos **in accordance with its halachos.**” He observes Shabbos in all his matters, that it should be a foretaste of the World to Come, and this transforms him to the point that he is forgiven for all his sins.

Adam Harishon knew the concept of teshuvah, which is one of the seven things whose creation preceded the world.¹⁹ But he thought it wasn't possible to do teshuvah until the soul returns to the World to Come, when it is recreated as new and rectified. Upon hearing that Kayin's teshuvah was effective even in this world, he realized this is possible through observing Shabbos, which is considered like the World to Come. Thus, he sang the psalm about Shabbos.

For this reason, one shouldn't act leniently even with Shabbos prohibitions that appear in one's eyes to be permissible, and especially the severe prohibitions. When one observes Shabbos completely in all its aspects, as a foretaste of the World to Come, their youth renews itself like the eagle to purify them from all their wrongdoings.

¹⁹Pesachim 54a.