

RABBI TZVI FISHMAN



I Am My Beloved's

It was taught: Rabbi Shimon ben Elazar said: Ezra [the prophet] ordained that Israel should [publicly] read the curses... in [Parashas Ki Savo] before Rosh Hashanah.

Why? Abaye, or perhaps Reish Lakish, said [it's] so that the [outgoing] year and its curses may end. (Talmud, Megilla 31b)

According to this explanation, why do we interrupt with this week's Torah reading, Nitzavim and Vayeilech? Why not read Ki Savo immediately before Rosh Hashanah?

As we enter the last few days of the month of Ellul, it's worthwhile to reflect on one of Ellul's lessons.

The *Mishna B'rura* writes that there's a hint to the nature of Ellul in Shir haShirim, the Song of Songs:

I am my beloved's [alone], and my beloved is mine. (6:3)

This seems counterintuitive. When a person thinks about Ellul and *t'shuva* (repentance), shouldn't his first thought be of Hashem? Why associate Ellul with a verse in which the speaker talks about herself?

This week's Torah portion begins:

You are standing today, all of you, before Hashem... *kol ish Yisrael*—every man in Israel. (29:9)

Chasam Sofer explains "*kol ish Yisrael*" a different way: "Every man [among you] is 'Yisrael.'" "Yisrael" is a title of dignity. (See B'reishis 32:29.) Moshe was telling his people, "Not a single one of you isn't valuable."

Rabbeinu Yonah takes this further. Right at the start of *Sha'arei Avodah*, he writes that the initial entryway into serving Hashem is recognizing one's self-worth—his own

virtues and the distinction of his ancestors.


When Ellul and Rosh Hashanah come, a person's *yetzer hara* (evil inclination) may perk up and say, "How can you ask Hashem for anything? Look at your past year!"

The response is, "I am my Beloved's!" I have great worth!" *Kol ish Yisrael*—every Jew is special in Hashem's eyes, to the extent that Hashem desires our prayers, and He grants our prayers the power even to change nature.

I once heard a *schmuess* (an inspiring talk) before Rosh Hashanah from a great man in Jerusalem, Rabbi Tzvi Meyer Silverberg, *shlit"a*. I remember him saying, "If we would have had just a little more focus during the prayers of [last year's] *Yamim Nora'im* (High Holidays), how many tragedies, G-d forbid, could have been avoided? How much richer would our year have been?"

Chessed Avraham explains that, throughout the year, when a person prays, his prayers don't always go directly to Hashem. Sometimes they are conveyed by Hashem's agents, angels that send up prayers. But on Rosh Hashanah, all of us "are standing before Hashem," and our prayers do go directly from our mouths to Hashem.

Perhaps that is why we read Nitzavim before Rosh Hashanah—to remind us who we really are and what we can accomplish.

The power is in our hands. Let's utilize the prayers of the *Yamim Nora'im* to their fullest extent. May all of the Jewish People merit to have a *k'siva v'chassima tova*, to be inscribed and sealed in the Book of Life, and have a year of redemption and salvation. 

A TIMELY HALACHA

RABBI CHAIM HEINEMANN

We begin reciting *S'lichos*, prayers for forgiveness and mercy, after this Shabbos. Here are some related, interesting laws.

It is customary to get up earlier than usual to say *S'lichos*, starting the Sunday before Rosh Hashanah. If Rosh Hashanah begins on Monday or Tuesday, we begin *S'lichos* the Sunday of the week before. (Sehardim recite *S'lichos* the entire month of Ellul.) (O.C. 581:1)

S'lichos shouldn't be said before midnight (*Magen Avraham* 565:5). If the only congregational service will be before midnight, it's better to join them than to say *S'lichos* alone later. (Rabbi Shmuel Kamenetsky, *Kovetz Halachos*, p. 17)


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A RIDDLE FOR YOU

Who was a king over a gentile nation, before becoming a king of the Jews?

The answer will appear next week.

LAST WEEK'S RIDDLE:

- Q** What mitzvah—not one of the four traditional cups of wine drunk at the Seder—can a person fulfill by drinking a cup of wine *after* eating the Afikoman?
- A** If the Seder night falls on Motzo'ei Shabbos, and a person forgets to say Havdalah until after he's eaten the Afikoman, he should make Havdalah on another cup of wine. 

THIS SHABBOS

Kollel Women's Learning Shabbos Afternoon Series—Dr. Chana Crystal presents "Rosh Hashanah: A Beginning or an End?" 5pm, at the Weinrib residence.

Sponsorship & feedback:

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A TIMELY HALACHA

CONTINUED

It is proper to train boys under bar mitzvah to say *S'lichos* in the morning. However, one need not wake them up extra early. The custom is that women do not recite *S'lichos*. (*Kovetz*, p. 28, note 27)

Since *S'lichos* contain a number of verses, one must recite *Birchos haTorah*, the blessings recited before learning Torah, before beginning (O.C. 46:9)—even if, by doing so, one will fall behind and miss some of the *S'lichos*. (*Kovetz*, p. 19)

It is best not to start reciting “*Ashrei*,” which prefaces the *S'lichos*, until a *minyan* has gathered. (*Matteh Efrayim*, O.C. 581:17). If it is getting late, the congregation can start “*Ashrei*” and wait to say its final verses after ten men are present. When faced with no other choice, they can begin the *S'lichos* without a *minyan*, and pause to recite *Kaddish* (ordinarily recited near the beginning) when the tenth man arrives. (*Eliyahu Rabbah* 13).

If the congregation is moving too rapidly for a person to keep up, he should go slowly, at his own pace, and focus on what he is saying—“a little, with concentration, is preferred over a lot without concentration.” However, he should join the congregation when they recite the Thirteen Attributes of Divine Mercy.

S'lichos end with the recital of *Tachanun*, prayers of confession and repentance. If a newlywed groom is present, *Tachanun* is not said. The same applies if one of the principals of a circumcision is present, providing that the *S'lichos* finish after daybreak. (Rabbi Tzvi Pesach Frank, *Mikro'ei Kodosh* 2) 🕍

At the Kollel

EVERY DAY

EVERY WEEK

🕍🕍 “Dirshu” Gemara Shiur (Maseches Chulin)

Rabbi Yitzchok Preis.....
Sunday 7:15–8:15 AM
Monday–Friday 5:50–6:45 AM

🕍🕍 Kollel Yisgaber K'ari (amud-a-day of Mishnah B'rurah)

Rabbi Chaim Heinemann.....
Monday–Friday 6:55–7:20 AM

🕍🕍 Mishnah Kavuah online

two mishnayos and some mussar
Rabbi Ezra Stettin.....any time you like

🕍 Daf Yomi

Rabbi Meir Minster.....
Sunday–Thursday 8–8:45 PM
Shabbos (at CZE) 1:00 pre-mincha

🕍🕍 Night Seder Chabura

in the Annex Library
(Maseches Avodah Zara)
led by Rabbi Tzvi Fishman
Sunday–Thursday 9–9:55 PM
followed by Ma'ariv at 9:55

KEY: 🕍 Beginners 🕍 Intermediate 🕍 Advanced 🕍 for men and women

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Rabbi Landis
speaking at our
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GREAT ACTS OF ORDINARY PEOPLE

DOV WAITED ANXIOUSLY, WHILE HIS REBBE handed the class's tests back. Dov had a feeling he hadn't done very well.

When he finally saw his test, it was worse than he'd imagined—a 65. Ashamed of his grade, he ran to his backpack and stuffed the paper inside.

Then he heard his teacher's voice, di-

rected to him. “I want that test signed by a parent, please, Dov.”

Now Dov felt even worse.

On his way home, Dov strategized how to get the test signed without too much of ruckus about it. He decided he needed to catch his father, at a busy moment—there was a chance he might not look too closely; with his mother, that would never work.

The chance finally came while Dov was davening Shacharis next to his father, the next morning. As his father bent over to say *Tachanun*, Dov placed his test next to his father's tallis bag and whispered, “I need you to sign this.”

What his father did next surprised him. He took a piece of paper out of his pocket and wrote, “Dov is an excellent boy, who just happened to get a 65 on his test. It won't happen again. Thank you. Isaac Bernfeld.”

Dov felt so special when he saw his father's loving words, especially after expecting one punishment or another. After showing the note to his Rebbe, he would hold on to it for years to come. 🕍

THIS WEEK IN JEWISH HISTORY

RABBI MOSHE TZVI CRYSTAL

On 19 Elul, 5596 (1836), the Ashkenazic community of Jerusalem, known as the *Perushim*, began clearing away the rubble from the site known as the shul of Rabbi Yehudah HaChasid, popularly referred to as the Churva (the “Ruins”). It had actually been the site of a shul for many years when the rabbi and his followers reached Jerusalem in 1700. The clearing of the site came after the community received a permit to rebuild the mostly destroyed Ashkenazic section of Jerusalem. The permit was ambiguous regarding permission to rebuild the Churva itself, which had lain in ruins since its destruction over 100 years earlier, in 1720. A permit was necessary because erecting or even repairing a synagogue had been forbidden since the Turks had conquered Israel in 1517. After clearing away the rubble, the community decided not to pursue the rebuilding at that time. They waited until the summer of 1855, when they obtained express permission to build a synagogue, with the help of Sir Moses Montefiore. 🕍