



Yeshivat Ateret Yerushalayim

From the teachings of the Rosh Yeshiva

Ha-Rav **Shlomo Aviner** Shlit" a

Parashat Netzavim-Vayelech - #297

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On the Rosh Hashanah...

Collection of Laws of Rosh Hashanah – Part 1

[Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:235]

1. Lighting Candles

We recite the blessing of Shehechyanu on both nights of Rosh Hashanah, even if one does not have a new piece of clothing or a new fruit (which he did not yet eat this season) before him. It is preferable, however, that there be a new piece of clothing or a new fruit (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 600:2).

Question: Is it permissible to attach the candles in the candlesticks on Rosh Hashanah?

Answer: Attaching the candles to the candlesticks for the second night is forbidden on account of [the prohibition of] "leveling" (Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata p. 76 #18), and this prohibition is no less important than the actual commandment of lighting the candles. One should therefore prepare two additional candlesticks before Rosh Hashanah or stick them into the candlesticks without attaching them on the holiday.

On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, one may not prepare the candlesticks before the stars come out (definite nightfall), since we may not prepare on the first day of Rosh Hashanah for the second day. But it is permissible to light the candles before sunset, since one benefits from their light on the first day itself.

Addition to the revised edition

Question: I saw in the book "Am Ke-Lavi" (the original name of this volume of She'eilat Shlomo) that it is permissible to light on the first day of Rosh Hashanah before sunset (for the second day) because it is not considered preparation for the next day, since we benefit from the lights on the first day as well. What is the source for this law, since it does not follow the opinion of the Mateh Ephraim (599:9-11)?

Answer: The Be'er Heitev writes: "The Levush (503:4) wrote: We customarily light the candles when it gets dark even before [reciting the prayer] "Barechu." And the Or Zarua wrote that there are women who recite the blessing before they go to Shul (for Maariv of the second day). And it is also written in the Shelah that it is a greater Mitzvah to do this than to light upon returning to their house since they would return to a dark house. And in Shul it is customary to light even when it is still day time since in a Shul it is always a Mitzvah to light candles, even in the day." And this is the ruling in the Shulchan Aruch (Orach Chaim 514:5): "It is forbidden to light an idle light which one does not need, but [a light] of a Shul is not considered idle. It is permissible to light one even on the second day after Minchah and this is not considered preparing for a weekday, since in lighting it there is a Mitzvah for that time." And the Mishnah Berurah (#33) wrote: "There is a Mitzvah...that is to say, even if one does not need the light while it is still day, even so there is a Mitzvah to light it because of the honor of the Shul, and if it is already close to dark it is even permissible in one's house since he needs it at that time."

2. Annulment of Vows

It is customary to release ones vows on Erev Rosh Hashanah or Erev Yom Kippur, but it is also possible to do this during the entire Ten Days of Repentance. One who is unable to do this should be released before three individuals when the opportunity arises (Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 128:10).

3. Eating before the Shofar Blasts

Question: Is our custom of eating before the Shofar blasts in consonance with Jewish Law?

Answer:

1) In general, when it is incumbent upon a Jew to fulfill a Mitzvah he should first fulfill the Mitzvah and then eat afterwards. Nevertheless the basic law is that only an actual meal is forbidden before the fulfillment of a Mitzvah, and a small snack is permissible. But in the generations of the Achronim, they were very strict regarding eating a snack, and they only permitted it for someone who was extremely feeble (See Kitzur Shulchan Aruch 128:9. Sha'arei Teshuvah 584 #3).

2) It is now customary in all places, even amongst the pious, to permit eating a small amount. They support this on the basis of the law that a small snack is permissible. There is therefore no basis to prohibit it. See the comprehensive article of Rabbi Y. Segal in Noam vol. 14, which states that someone who has difficulty with not eating, and whose Davening continues until after midday – is permitted to eat something small.

Summary: It is certainly preferable not to eat, in particular on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, since these Shofar blasts are a Torah Mitzvah, but for one who has difficulty waiting until the end, and whose ability to pray with proper concentration will be disturbed, it is permissible to eat something light. And one should obviously do so with awe and fear, and not for an inappropriate reason (In Shut Bnei Banim #14, Rav Yehudah Herzl Henkin disagrees with the above, but one can counter his argument).

4. Question: Is one required to recite another blessing over a Talit after the break between Shacharit and Musaf?

Answer: Yes, since this is a significant interruption and the person's mind will be distracted from the Mitzvah of Talit (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 8, Mishnah Berurah #37).

Rav Aviner on... My Friend, Temima

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Ki Tavo 5773 – translated by R. Blumberg]

My friend Temima is the person who had the greatest influence on me in my lifetime. I say this as an understatement, for the truth is that she has given me my whole life. And all of this without her knowing it. She was unaware of her influence, living her life in quiet and tranquility. Yet I made her my Rebbetzin, even though we are the same age and our friendship lasted from age fourteen until her passing away at the age of twenty-seven from an illness.

Already as a girl she was weak and sick, yet she never emitted a single complaint, sigh or expression of envy. Rather, she accepted her suffering lovingly and said, "Everyone's lot is like this. My suffering also atones, purifies and purges me." She said such things innocently. And that was her name: Temima – Innocent. Apparently, when her parents chose that name for her, it injected her with a spark of divine intuition.

At first I didn't notice her, because she was not a dazzling student. She was even less than average. She had a lot of trouble understanding, as well as remembering, and I was amongst the good students, so what did I actually have in common with her?

But one day, we happened to sit together on the bus on a class trip. We talked a bit, and that evening I returned home with a new realization: This girl was no know-it-all, but she was worth more than I. Compared to her, I was a wretched creature.

When I say that we chatted a bit, I do not mean that she was a chatterbox – she spoke simply and to the point. I was the chatterbox, whether or my words were relevant or pointless.

In any event, that day I decided that she would be my Rebbetzin, and that I would try to learn from her. Obviously, I never informed her of this, because she would have responded with her bashful smile and said, "What nonsense!"

That's how she responded when people thanked her for anything: "Why are they thanking me?" For her part, she would perform kind deeds for people day and night, boundless kindness. She did it for the poor, the wretched, the depressed, employing infinite patience, and all for the sake of heaven, with that simplicity and naturalness. She would help and help everyone until her strength ran out, despite her failing health. I began following her path, and since then, my life has been full of light, a sweet light, a soft light, a gentle light, a pure light. I took pleasure in performing kindnesses without any calculation.

What natural, simple love of her fellow man she exuded! She never complained and never criticized anyone. Yet regarding herself she fastidiously took care that she should be without sin.

I have a hard time defining her personality. She wasn't the female do-gooder type, but a simple girl who was just very careful to do no wrong. She was particularly careful about two things: 1) not to do anything to disturb others, and 2) to repent constantly regarding the slightest speck of arrogance. She made a recognizable, constant effort to remain innocent, even to the point of occasional naivety, and to remain humble.

She was always modest and unassuming. She never sought honor or position. She never sought to be "someone" or "something". Quite the contrary, she took pleasure in remaining a "nothing".

She certainly wasn't looking to make an impression with her outer appearance. She never invested in beauty care, she wore modest, simple clothing, although always clean and neat, wearing layers of clothing from head to toe, and she even looked for a head kerchief worn by girls. She never studied the laws of modesty, but modesty was something natural to her.

Even though G-d did not bless her with health or with intellectual skills, she had not a drop of envy. Quite the contrary, she was very happy. How? Through the kindness she performed, relentlessly and unceasingly for others. Her kindness was infinite. There was something else that brought her joy: prayer. When she recited her long prayers, morning, afternoon and evening, at those times when she was not busy with her kind deeds, one could see in her eyes that she was basking in supreme pleasure, indeed, that she was in heaven. At those moments, she looked like an angel. A little, human angel, but an angel all the same. She was a gentle angel. From her I learned that it is possible for a simple person to be an angel. Temima had but one longing – to serve G-d. She filled her life in every way. Thank you, my friend, for being with me.

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