



Parashat Ha-Azinu - #298

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Q&A Regarding the War in Syria

Question #1: Should we be concerned that we will also be attacked?

Answer: We do not know the future. The situation in the Middle East is very fluid and often the unexpected happens. Nonetheless, security experts say that the chances are very low, since it is not worth it for them to open up another front and risk us crushing them.

In any event, B"H nothing will happen, but Tzahal is always ready, and now they are doubly ready. With the kindnesses of Hashem upon us, we have a strong and excellent army. There is nothing to worry about.

Question #2: Should one go and get a gas mask?

Answer: It is a personal decision. We are not obligated to do so. Tzahal will inform us if we are required. It is an extremely low risk. There is also a risk on being run over by a car while walking on the sidewalk.

Question #3: Is this the War of Gog and Magog?

Answer: No. We do not know many details about that war. Nonetheless, we do know that it is described as a war in which all the nations of the world go to war against us, and – B"H – we are victorious. It is therefore clear that this is not the War of Gog and Magog. It is also not certain that there will be a War of Gog and Magog. It might have already happened, it might not occur at all, or it may be that all of our wars for our Land since the establishment of the State are considered that war (see the book "Milchemet Gog U-Magog" of Ha-Rav Menachem Mendel Kasher).

Question #4: Is what is occurring in Syria good or bad for us?

A: It is difficult to answer this question, since we see that the situation in the Middle East is most unstable. B"H, we are stable.

Question #5: Should we be distressed that people are being killed there?

Answer: It depends. It appears that both righteous and evil people are being killed there. If they are righteous, we are distressed. Hashem is merciful to all of his creatures. And if they are evil, we rejoice. Hashem delivers them justice.

May it be Hashem's will that the following verse will be seen in the world: "And they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks, nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more" (Yeshayahu 2:4).

On the Rosh Hashanah...

Collection of Laws of Rosh Hashanah – Part 2

[Shut She'eilat Shlomo 1:235]

5. Shofar

One should not say "Baruch Hu U-Varuch Shemo" (Blessed is He and Blessed is His Name) during the blessing over the Shofar, because this blessing is also recited in order to fulfill his (the listener's) obligation, and "Baruch Hu U-Varuch Shemo" is considered an interruption (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 585). This is the general principle: any time during which it is forbidden to interrupt, one should not say "Baruch Hu U-Varuch Shemo." As, for example, during the blessing before the Shema in the morning and evening, during Baruch She-Amar and during Yishtabach. This also applies any time that a blessing is recited in order to fulfill one's obligation, as in Kiddush and Havdalah. But one may say "Baruch Hu U-Varuch Shemo" during the morning blessings, during the repetition of the prayer on Shabbat Evening in Me'ein Sheva, during Magen Avot and during the blessings for an Aliyah to the Torah.

6. Bowing in Shul

When one bows on a stone floor, he should spread out a towel, handkerchief or piece of paper (but not a Talit bag, since it is disrespectful to put it on the floor). We do this because it is written in the Torah (Vayikra 26:1): "Nor shall you place a figured stone in your Land to bow down on it." This means that it is forbidden to bow down, even to Hashem, on a stone floor (except for one in the Temple. Rama in Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 131:8). And because all of this refers to when one's face touches the ground, one should spread out the handkerchief in the place where one's face will be and not under the knees (Mishnah Berurah #40-41. Luach Heichal Shlomo).

Question: Can women fall on their knees during Musaf on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, since women were not in the Temple courtyard and therefore would not bow? [In the book "Nefesh Ha-Rav" (pp. 214-215), Rav Soloveitchik rules that women should not prostrate on account of this reason].

Answer: Yes, they may. This is a Minhag. As long as there is a modest place and she does not have a bad back, a woman may prostrate.

7. Preparing on the First Day for the Second Day

Question: Is it permissible to prepare on the first day of Rosh Hashanah for the second day?

Answer: Regarding this issue, each day is considered as a holy day on its own, and just as we do not prepare on Shabbat for a weekday, so too we do not prepare on the first day of Rosh Hashanah for the second day, since there is room to say that perhaps the holiness of the second day is in fact a weekday in relation to the holiness of the

first day (Shemirat Shabbat Ke-Hilchata p. 20 #58 and p. 59 #1). It is therefore forbidden to cook, wash dishes, prepare candles in the candlesticks, make beds, set tables, etc. (ibid. 1, 58) on the first day in preparation for the second day. One must wait until after the stars have come out.

One may, however, prepare on Rosh Hashanah for Shabbat when they are consecutive days, by making an Eruv Tavshilin (by setting aside, before the holiday begins, an eruv consisting of a cooked portion of food and a piece of bread or matzah. This is considered the start of the food for Shabbat and any further preparation of food is seen as a continuation of it, and is thus permitted).

Addition to the revised edition

If Rosh Hashanah falls on a Thursday and Friday, it is forbidden to prepare on Thursday for Shabbat even with an Eruv Tavshilin. The preparation may only be performed on Friday (Shut Yehaveh Daat 6:32).

8. Repentance

Do not forget the essence of Rosh Hashanah: to perform Teshuvah, both in commandments between a person and Hashem and in commandments between a person and his fellow man

Rav Aviner on... I'm Truly Sorry, Dear

[Be-Ahavah U-Be-Emunah – Nitzavim-Vayelech 5773 – translated R. Blumberg]

Dear friend, you have three options:

1. **To get divorced.** If you do, maybe you'll build a new Jewish home and be happy, and maybe you won't remarry. And if you do remarry, maybe you won't be happy; and maybe you'll lose your connection to your children, and they'll lose theirs to you. All of these things are all possible.

2. **You can continue** living in your present state of endless mutual recriminations and arguments, which is not good for you, your wife or your children. It's unclear which is better, option 1 or 2.

3. **To try to rectify matters.** This seems feasible. Yet you cannot do it alone, because you have already tried and not succeeded over the course of many years. You should therefore go for marriage counseling. I'm happy to provide you with the name of a counselor appropriate to your circumstances who can teach you to talk to each other in a normal manner.

Yet you say that she has already despaired and pins no hopes on counseling. If so, then you must repent fully, on your own, and hope that this will influence her a bit.

She is actually only making one claim against you – that you insult her all the time, especially in front of the children, and she is no longer ready to forgive you for this. That, in fact, is a very serious charge, that can be classified as psychological violence. I suggest that you read the book, *Stalking the Soul*, by Marie-France Hirigoyen, one of France's greatest psychologists [translated into English and many other languages from the original French].

That book will help you understand what you are doing to her.

You must understand. She is full of emotional scars, and they cannot be healed, because you are constantly touching them, and even the slightest touch makes her explode with pain. So realize from the start that even if you undergo a miraculous improvement, her relationship to you, so lacking in warmth and intimacy, will not be rectified in one day. Our Sages offered a parable in Tractate Niddah: “If you remove a boiling pot from the fire, it won’t cool off immediately. It takes a lot of patience.”

True, you have claims against her as well, but there’s no benefit to investigating whether they’re true or not, and whether or not she was justified in becoming cold and remote. Rather, you must read what’s written on the back of the bus: “Don’t be right. Be smart.”

Or, as our Sages said in Baba Kama: “If they tell you you’re a jackass, take the saddle and put it on your back.”

So, dear friend, you have no recourse but to behave with immense, genuine humility, without putting on a show, and to say to her, “Dear wife, I am sorry. I am a jackass. For many years I have been a jackass. I hurt you. I tormented you. Starting now I will strive to the utmost not to be a jackass.

I demand nothing of you in return. I just demand of myself to behave properly and to rectify what I have ruined over the years, to compensate you and to make you happy.

“You can meet my overtures however you wish, and whenever you wish.

“I am sorry, dear wife. I am a jackass. ‘Jackass’ is my name and my whole being says ‘Jackass’.”

Dear friend. It is possible to make peace. If the French and the English, sworn enemies, succeeded in making peace between them, you can do it with your wife. If the European Union forced peace on France and Germany after three blood-soaked wars, certainly you can make peace with your wife.

It just requires patience. It just requires humility.

Carry out a revolution, a 180 degree turnaround, within yourself.

Be aware that your wife, as well, deep inside, longs for love and brotherhood and peace and friendship. Just as she seems to you remote and hard, so do you seem to her remote and hard.

There’s the story of the Russian nobleman who when loosened up by wine proclaimed in the tavern, “Next week there will be a bear fight with gambling, between me and the neighboring nobleman.” That nobleman, drunk as well, agreed.

When he arrived home he sobered up and realized that he had no bear in the palace, so he called the Jew who tended his estate and he said to him, “Moshka, you’re going to the marketplace and you’re to purchase a bear skin. Dress yourself in it, and you’ll be the bear. If you refuse, I shall banish you and your wife and children.”

Having no choice, but with enormous fear, the Jew agreed. A week later he found himself standing in the tavern, trembling with fear, frozen in place before a terrifying bear.

Yet the riled up crowd of gamblers pushed him forward against the bear, so he stood before it, realizing that his last moment had come, and he recited, “Hear O Israel. Hashem is G-d...”

And the bear facing him concluded, “Hashem is one.”

Then the two bears fell on each other’s necks and hugged.

Do you understand, my friend?

May G-d help you.