



[www.synagoguehamptons.org](http://www.synagoguehamptons.org)  
[cs1800@aol.com](mailto:cs1800@aol.com)  
631-725-8188

P.O. Box 1800  
East Hampton, NY 11937

YAMIM NORA'IM \ ימים נוראים

5771

ROSH HASHANAH  
Study Texts

prepared by  
Rabbi Jan R. Uhrbach

**Abraham Joshua Heschel, Who Is Man?, pp. 107-08**

The most significant intellectual act is to decide what the most fundamental question is to live by.

**Talmud Bavli, Shabbat 31a-b**

אמר ריש לקיש: מאי דכתיב (ישעיהו לג) והיה אמונת עתיך חסן ישועות חכמת ודעת וגו' - אמונת - זה סדר זרעים, עתיך - זה סדר מועד, חסן - זה סדר נשים, ישועות - זה סדר נזיקין, חכמת - זה סדר קדשים, ודעת - זה סדר טהרות. ואפילו הכי (ישעיהו לג) יראת ה' היא אוצרו.

Resh Lakish said, What is meant by the verse, "and there shall be faith in your times, strength, salvation, wisdom and knowledge" (Isa. 33:6)? Faith refers to the Order of Seeds; your times, the Order of Festivals; strength, the Order of Women; salvation, the Order of Nezikin; wisdom, the Order of Sacrifices; and knowledge, to the Order of Purity. Yet even so *yirat Adonai* is one's treasure.

אמר רבא: בשעה שמכניסין אדם לדין אומרים לו: נשאת ונתת באמונה, קבעת עתים לתורה, עסקת בפריה ורביה, צפית לישועה, פלפלת בחכמה, הבנת דבר מתוך דבר?

Rava said, When a person is led in for Judgment they say to him or her: Did you do business with integrity, did you fix times for Torah, did you engage in procreation, did you hope for deliverance, did you sharpen your wisdom, did you understand one thing from another?

ואפילו הכי: אי יראת ה' היא אוצרו - אין, אי לא - לא. משל לאדם שאמר לשלוחו: העלה לי כור חיטין לעלייה. הלך והעלה לו. אמר לו: עירבת לי בהן קב חומטון? אמר לו: לאו. אמר לו: מוטב אם לא העליתה. תנא דבי רבי ישמעאל: מערב אדם קב חומטון בכור של תבואה, ואינו חושש.

Yet even so, if "the fear of Adonai is his treasure," it is well: if not, not. This may be compared to a man who instructed his agent, "Take me up a kor of wheat in the loft," and he went and did so. "Did you mix in a *kav* of *humton*?" he asked him, "No," replied he. "Then it were better that you had not carried it up," he retorted. The School of Rabbi Yishmael taught: A man may mix a *kav* of *humton* in a *kor* of grain, and not have to be concerned [i.e., about dishonesty.]

*Kav, kor.* Both units of measure. One *kav* = one hundred and eightieth of a *kor*.

*Humton:* a sandy soil containing salty substances and used for the preservation of wheat.

### **Talmud Bavli, Taanit 11a**

ושמא יאמר אדם: מי מעיד בי? - אבני ביתו של אדם וקורות ביתו של אדם מעידים בו, שנאמר (חבקוק ב') כי אבן מקיר תזעק וכפיס מעץ יעננה. דבי רבי שילא אמרי: שני מלאכי השרת המלוין לו לאדם הן מעידין עליו, שנאמר (תהלים צ"א) כי מלאכיו יצוה לך. רבי חידקא אומר: נשמתו של אדם היא מעידה עליו, שנאמר (מיכה ז') משכבת חיקך שמר פתחי פיד, ויש אומרים: אבריו של אדם מעידים בו, שנאמר (ישעיהו מ"ג) אתם עדי נאם ה'. (דברים ל"ב)

Perhaps a man will say, 'Who will testify against me?' The very stones of his house and its beams testify against him, as it is written, "For the stone shall cry out of the wall, and the beam out of the timber shall answer it" (Hab. 2:11). In the school of Rabbi Shila it was taught: The two ministering angels who accompany every man testify against him, as it is said, "For God will give God's angels charge over you" (Psalm 91:11). Rabbi Hīdka says: A man's own soul testifies against him, as it is said, "Guard the doors of your mouth from she who lies in your bosom (Micah 7:5). And some say: A man's own limbs testify against him, as it is said, "You are My witnesses, says Adonai" (Isa. 43:10).

### **Sifre, Devarim, Piska 307**

... כשאדם נפטר מן העולם באים כל מעשיו ונפרטים לפניו ואומרים לו כך וכך עשית ביום פלוני וכך וכך עשית ביום פלוני. אתה מאמין בדברים הללו? והוא אומר הן. אומרים לו חתום... והוא מצדיק את הדין ואומר יפה נידנתי....

When a person is removed from this world, all his deeds come and detail themselves before him, saying, "Thus and such did you do on this date, and thus and such did you do on that date. Do you affirm these things?" And the person says, "Yes." They say to him, "Sign." . . . And he affirms the justice of the judgment, saying, "I have been judged well." . .

### **Zohar III, 121b**

When people are asleep and experience the taste of death, and the soul ascends to the higher regions, it stands in the place that it occupies and the deeds that it performed during the day are examined, and they are written on a tablet. Why is this? Because the soul ascends and gives an account of the person's deeds and of every word that passes his lips.

It is the distinction of man to be concerned with ends, not only with needs. . . .

A free man does not look upon himself as if he were a repository of fixed needs, but regards his life as an orientation toward ends. To have a goal before one's eyes, to pursue and to keep on extending it, seems to be the way of civilized living. It is typical of the debauchee to adjust his ends to his selfish needs. He is always ready to conform to his needs . . . [F]ree men are not blind in obeying needs, but, weighing and comparing their relative merits, they will seek to satisfy those which contribute to the enhancement and enrichment of higher values. . . . They do not say: "Needs justify the ends," but on the contrary: "Ends justify the needs."

**Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Man Is Not Alone*, pp. 219-20, 182**

### **Talmud Bavli, Kiddushin 40b**

וכשם שהלימוד קודם למעשה, כך דינו קודם למעשה, כדבר המנוגא, דאמר רב המנוגא: אין תחילת דינו של אדם אלא על דברי תורה, שנאמר: (משלי יז) פוטר מים ראשית מדון

[J]ust as learning preceded practice, so does the judgment thereof [in the next world] take precedence over that of practice, in accordance with Rav Hamnuna. For Rav Hamnuna said: The beginning of a person's judgment is in respect of words of the Torah alone, for it is said: The rejection [lit. one who frees himself] of water is the beginning of harsh judgment (see Prov. 17:14).

### **Bereshit Rabbah 26:1**

שהגה דבר מתוך דבר אמר מה טעם ריבה הקב"ה בטהורים יותר מטמאים לא שהוא רוצה להקריב מהן קרבן מיד ויקח מכל הבהמה הטהורה וגו' (שם)

[Noah] inferred one thing from another, saying to himself, "Why did the Holy Blessed One order more clean animals [to be saved] than unclean ones? Surely because God desires that offerings should be made to God of the former. Immediately, "He took of every clean beast." (Gen. 8:20).

### **Rashi on Deut. 1:13**

ונבונים - מבינים דבר מתוך דבר זהו ששאל אריוס את ר' יוסי מה בין חכמים לנבונים חכם דומה לשולחני עשיר כשמביאין לו דינרין לראות רואה וכשאין מביאין לו יושב ותוהה נבון

### **Talmud Bavli, Bava Metzia 84a**

One day Rabbi Yohanan was bathing in the Jordan, when Resh Lakish [a robber] saw him and leapt into the Jordan after him. Said he [Rabbi Yohanan] to him, "May your strength be for the Torah." He replied, "May your beauty be for women."

He said, "If you will repent I will give you my sister [in marriage], who is more beautiful than I." He undertook [to repent]; then he wished to return and collect his weapons, but could not. Subsequently, [Rabbi Yohanan] taught him Bible and Mishnah, and made him into a great man.

Now, one day there was a dispute in the schoolhouse [with respect to the following:] a sword, knife, dagger, spear, hand-saw and a scythe — at what stage [of their manufacture] can they become unclean? When their manufacture is finished. And when is their manufacture finished? Rabbi Yoḥanan ruled: When they are tempered in a furnace. Resh Lakish maintained: When they have been furbished in water. Said he to him: "A robber understands his trade." Said he to him, 'And wherewith have you benefitted me: there [as a robber] I was called Master, and here I am called Master.'" "By bringing you under the wings of the Shekhinah," he retorted.

Rabbi Yoḥanan therefore felt himself deeply hurt, and Resh Lakish fell ill. His sister [i.e., Rabbi Yohanan's, the wife of Resh Lakish] came and wept before him: "Forgive him for the sake of my son," she pleaded. He replied: "Leave your fatherless children. I will preserve them alive." "For the sake of my widowhood then!" "And let your widows trust in me," he assured her.

Resh Lakish died, and Rabbi Yoḥanan was plunged into deep grief. Said the Rabbis, "Who shall go to ease his mind? Let Rabbi Eleazar ben Pedat go, whose teachings are very subtle." So he went and sat before him; and on every teaching uttered by Rabbi Yoḥanan, he responded: "There is a text (a baraita) which supports you." "Are you like the son of Lakisha [Resh Lakish]?" [Rabbi Yoḥanan] complained. "Whenever I would posit something, the son of Lakisha would challenge me with twenty-four objections, to which I gave twenty-four answers, and through that the teaching was expanded and more fully comprehended. But you say, 'there's a teaching which supports you.' Don't I myself know myself that my opinions are right?" Thus he went on rending his garments and weeping, saying, "Where are you, O son of Lakisha, where are you, O son of Lakisha." He cried thus until his mind was turned. The Rabbis sought compassion for him [they prayed], and he died.

דומה לשולחני תגר כשמביאין לו מעות לראות רואה וכשאין מביאין לו הוא מחזר ומביא משלו:

"Wise and understanding." They can logically derive one thing from another. This is what Arios asked Rabbi Yose, "What is the difference between "those who are wise" and "those who are understanding"? [He answered:] "One who is wise is like a rich moneychanger. When they bring him dinars to examine, he examines. And when they do not bring him, he sits and wonders. One who is understanding is like an enterprising moneychanger. When they bring him money to examine, he examines. And when they do not bring him, he goes about and brings on his own."

### **Sfat Emet on Deut. 28:1 (tr. by Arthur Green)**

“If you listen, listen to the voice of Adonai your God” (Deut. 28:1). The Midrash comments: “Happy is the one whose listenings are to me, hovering always at My doorways, door within door . . .”

“Listenings” means that one should always be prepared to receive and listen closely to the words of God. The voice of that word is in every thing, since each was created by God’s utterance and has the power of divine speech hidden within it. This is the hidden light that we are told to find.

Inwardness goes on, deeper and deeper, truly beyond measure. This is the meaning of “My doorways.” Never think that you have come to the truth; understand that you are always standing at the entrance. The word “doorway” (*delet*) is related to “poverty” [or “humility”] (*dalut*). This is the way you find door after door opening for you, [by always knowing how little you have achieved thus far].

This is especially true of the Jew, whose living soul constantly hears the voice of Torah. But this too is hidden from us. This is why the verse says “listen, listen” -- listen to that which you already are hearing.

The Midrash goes on to say: “to guard the doorpost of My entrance.” Just as the *mezuzah* is fixed, so you too should not depart from synagogues or houses of study. This means that a person has to be ready always only to hear the word of God. Then, when a moment of grace occurs, something opens for him. But he has to be standing always at the doorway. That is “whose listenings are to Me.” All the senses have to be prepared to receive and listen closely to the word of God and nothing else.

### **Vayikra Rabbah 34:8**

אמר ר' יצחק למדתך תורה דרך ארץ שכשיהא אדם עושה מצוה  
יהא עושה אותה בלב שמח שאלו היה ראובן יודע שהקב"ה מכתוב  
עליו (בראשית לו) וישמע ראובן ויצילהו מידם היה טוענו ומוליכו  
אצל אביו ואלו היה יודע בועז שהקב"ה מכתוב עליו ויצבט לה קלי  
עגלים פטומים היה מאכילה ר' כהן ורבי יהושע ברבי סימון בשם  
ר' לוי אמרו לשעבר היה אדם עושה מצוה והנביא כותבה ועכשיו  
אדם עושה מצוה מי כותבה אליהו ומלך המשיח והקב"ה חותם על  
ידיהם כההוא דכתיב (מלאכי ג) אז נדברו יראי ה' איש אל רעהו  
ויקשב ה' וישמע ויכתב וגו' תני

Rabbi Yitzhak commented: The Torah teaches you a good rule of conduct, to wit, that when a person performs a mitzvah, one should do so with a joyful heart. For example, if Reuben had known that the Holy Blessed One would have it written of him, “*And Reuben heard it, and delivered him out of their hand*” (Gen. 37:21), he would have carried Joseph and brought him to his father. And if Boaz had known that the Holy Blessed One would have it written of him that he “*Reached her parched corn,*” he would have given her to eat fatted calves!

Rabbi Kohen and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Rabbi Simon in the name of Rabbi Levi said: In times past when a person did a mitzvah the prophet would record it, but now if a person does a mitzvah who records it? Elijah and the Messiah, the Holy Blessed One signing beside them, in accordance with that which is written, “*Then those who feared Adonai spoke one with another; and Adonai paid attention, and heard, and a book of remembrance was written before God . . .*” (Mal. 3:16).

#### **Midrash Tanhuma, Ki Tavo, Perek 4**

והיה אם שמוע תשמע אם שמעת קמעא סופך לשמוע הרבה . . .

“It shall be that if hearing you hear” -- if you listen a little, in the end you will hear much. . . .

ד”א אם שמוע תשמע תשמיע תלמודך לפני הקב”ה אימתי הוא משמיע תלמודו רבי יהודה אומר בשעה שהוא בא ליפטר מן העולם שנאמר (קהלת יב) סוף דבר הכל נשמע ורבי מאיר אומר עד שהוא משלים נשמתו שנאמר (איוב ג) צלמות ולא סדרים שהוא סודר תלמודו . . .

Alternatively, “if hearing you hear”: You will cause your learning to be heard before the Holy Blessed One. When will one cause one’s learning to be heard? Rabbi Yehudah says, In the moment when he comes to depart from this world, as it says, “The end of the matter (davar) all will be heard” (Kohelet 12:13). Rabbi Meir says, “Not until his soul is reconciled, made to be at peace,” as it says “the shadow of death, where there is no order” (Job 10:22), that he is ordering his studies. . . .

ד”א אם שמעת בעולם הזה תשמע לעוה”ב מפי הקב”ה אמר רבי יונה אביו של רבי מנא בשם רבי לוי שאמר בשם רבי אבא לא היתה התורה צריכה לינתן לישראל בעולם הזה למה שהכל עתידין להיות למדין תורה מפי הקב”ה לעוה”ב למה נתנה להם בעוה”ז שכשיבא הקב”ה ללמדם בעוה”ב יהיו הכל יודעין באיזה פרשה הוא עסוק לפיכך אם שמוע בעוה”ז תשמע לעוה”ב מפי הקב”ה. . .

Alternatively, “if hearing you hear”: If you hear in this world, you will in the world to come from the mouth of the Holy Blessed One. Rabbi Yona the father of Rabbi Mana in the name of Rabbi Levi in the name of Rabbi Abba said: It was not necessary that the Torah be given to Israel in this world. Why? Because in the future, everyone will learn Torah directly from the mouth of the Holy Blessed One in the world to come. So why was it given to them in this world? So that when the Holy Blessed One comes to teach them in the world to come, everyone will know about which section of the Torah God is dealing with. Therefore, “if you hear in this world, you will hear in the world to come from the mouth of the Holy Blessed One.”