The Light of Judgement

By Evan Goldstein, 12th Grade

Every year, on Rosh Hashana, we read from Sefer Bereishis. We discuss the story of Avraham, Hagar, Yishamel, Sarah, and Yitzchak. Avraham and Hagar had Yishmael while Sarah was still barren. Finally, towards the end of their lives, Avraham and Sarah had Yitzchak. The pasuk there tells us that after that, "Sarah saw that the son of Hagar (Yishmael), the Egyptian, that she had born to Avraham, was mocking. She said to Avraham, 'Drive out this slave-woman and her son, for the son of this slave-woman will not inherit with my son, with Yitzchak.' This thing was very wrong in the eyes of Avraham..." Sarah doesn't want Hagar and Yishamel to influence Yitzchak's upbringing so she wanted Avraham to kick them out of the household. He seems to not be so big on the idea, and refuses until Hashem tells him to follow her advice. As we know, Avraham gave them food and water and unceremoniously kicks them out. They run out of water, and Hagar leaves Yishamel. Yishmael davens for water because he is on the verge of death. Hashem knows that Yishamel's descendants will be problematic for His people, but rescues Yishamel because he cannot be judged for future events at that time.

Two problems arise from this. (1) How exactly did Yishamel mock Sarah and Avraham that he was kicked out of the house? (2) Why wasn't Yishamel judged for his past behavior?

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A Curious Haftorah

By Hudi Aronovitz, 12th Grade

The Gemorah in Berachos (29a) says that we daven a Shemonah Esrei of nine blessings on Rosh Hashanah, referring to the nine Azkaros, or names, of Hashem that are mentioned in the prayer of Chana (Shmuel 2:1-10). Chana was unable to have children with her husband, Elkanah. Her husband's second wife, Penina, was able to have children and taunted Chana for her barrenness. Chana poured her heart out in prayer at the Mishkan every year to no avail. Her prayers were finally answered on Rosh Hashanah, and she gave birth to Shmuel. We read this story as the Haftorah for the first day of Rosh Hashanah.

Granted that a major theme of Rosh Hashanah is prayer, supplication, and becoming closer to Hashem, and the story of Chana encapsulates these ideas beautifully, but why do we base the central component of Rosh Hashana, the Mussaf service, around the story of Chana?

The story of Chana has a profound deeper meaning. Sefer Shmuel Perek 2 Pasuk 5 says that "while the barren woman has born seven, She that had many children, has been bereaved." Penina buried a child each time Chana had a child. The story of Chana emphasizes that life is full of changing fortunes, as Hashem decides who lives and who dies, who is rich and who is poor, who is healthy and who is sick. The forces that affect human af-

(Continued on page 5)

Torah Teasers

By Rabbi Moshe Erlbaum, 9th Grade Rebbe

Parshas Nitzavim Questions

- Which two ancient professions appear in this parsha?
- 2. In what context is salt mentioned in this parsha? What 3 other places in the Torah is salt referred to?
- 3. Which four cities are mentioned in a single verse in this parsha, and also in a single verse in the book of Genesis?
- 4. Which three people appear together in a single verse in this parsha on two separate occasions?
- 5. In what context is a root (shoresh) mentioned in this parsha?
- 6. What item in this parsha is referred to both in the masculine form and the feminine?

Answers

- 1. The professions of a wood-chopper and a water-carrier are in Deuteronomy 29:10.
- 2. Sodom, Amora, Adma, and Tzivoyim are all mentioned in a single verse in this parsha (Deut. 29:22). They are also mentioned (twice) in single verses in parshas Lech Lecha (Genesis 14:2, 8).
- 3. Moshe states that when later generations view the destruction of the land, they will see "sulphur and salt, a conflagration of the entire Land" (Deut. 29:22). Elsewhere in the Torah: (1) Salt is mentioned in parshas Vayera when Lot's wife turns to look at the destruction of Sodom and turns into a pillar of salt (Genesis 19:26). (2) In parshas Vayikra, we are commanded to add salt to every offering (Leviticus 2:13). (3) In parshas Bamidbar, the eternal covenant with the kohanim is referred to as a "covenant of salt" (Numbers 18:19).
- 4. Avraham, Yitzhak and Yaakov are mentioned together in Deut. 29:12, and in 30:20.
- 5. Moshe compares those who have in mind to serve other gods to a "root flourishing with gall and wormwood" (Deut. 29:17).
- 6. A Torah scroll (sefer Torah) is referred to in the feminine form (Deut. 28:61), and in the masculine form (Deut. 29:20) See Rashi (Deut. 29:20) for an explanation.



"I will rejoice intensely with Hashem, my soul shall exult with my G-d." (61:10)

This year in yeshiva we are learning mesechet Brachot. On daf 54 our sages teach us the importance of blessing hashem not only in the good but in the bad. This, however is only a commandment to be besimen when something even bad happens to oneself. When a tragedy befalls our fellow Jew we must be careful to empathize with him. This is the intention of this verse: "I will rejoice intensely with Hashem...." When Hashem does things for us that we perceive as good we rejoice, thereby causing others to join in and rejoice. However, when Hashem does something we perceive to be bad, "my soul shall exult with my G-d." It is then our job to rejoice in that too. We must rejoice in all that Hashem does for us and empathize with those that are suffering. This is an important lesson in the seventh and final Haftarah in the series of seven after Tisha Bay which are meant to console and us and provide us hope. By applying these lessons to our daily lives may we be zocheh to the coming of mashiach bimheirah byameinu. Good Shabbos.

(Evan Goldstein—Continued from page 1)

When Yitzchak was born, people believed that instead of having a child, they just found an orphan in the market and claimed that he was their child. To prove them wrong, Hashem made Sarah able to nurse and made Yitzchak look like Avraham. Avraham made a huge feast to celebrate and invited a ton of people. Yishmael got up at the party and continued to perpetuate the rumor that Yitzchak wasn't in fact their child. The people believed him, and turned away from Hashem to Idols. This made Sarah believe that he wouldn't be a good influence for Yitzchak.

On Rosh Hashanah we say "Today is the birthday of the world, today the creations of the world are judged... If we is

(Continued on page 4)



The complete edition of Rabbi Moshe Atik's Torah Teasers is available on AMAZON (keyword Torah Teasers)

0-Minute Given by Rate on Salacha Shiur Given by Rabbi Aryeh Lebowitz on yutorah.org Transcribed by Zachary Goldberg

Vayechulu

Shabbos night: Is there a requirement to say Should one say vayechulu with a tzibur? "vayechulu" with two people?

lu. This Gemara is probably not talking about the pesu- have two people saying it together. kim we say after shemoneh esrei, but rather those pesukim in Shemoneh Esrei. The Gemara continues by stat- What does it mean when we refer to the pesukim of ing that anyone who says vayechulu is considered to be vayechuluas"eidus"? a partner with Hakadosh Baruch Hu in Maaseh Bereishis. This explains why we say those pesukim in does not require our eidus that He created the Shemoneh Esrei, but why do we repeat the pesukim of world. Nor did we actually witness Hashem's creation Shemoneh Esrei? vayechulu after ter Shemoneh Esrei is to ensure that we remember to it is best to recite the pesukim with at least two people say vayechulu on those nights when Yom Tov falls out since that mimics eidus which makes it a public Kidon Shabbos. On those occasions, we do not get the dush Hashem. chance to say vayechulu in Shemoneh Esrei. The Tur, however, offers a different explanation. He claims that Should an individual recite the pesukim after Shethe reason for a second recitation is so that we could be **moneh Esrei alone?** motzi the people who do not know how to say She- § The Mishnah Berurah quotes that some hold that a moneh Esrei on their own. Both of these reasons are yachid should not say vayechulu after Shemoneh Esrei quoted in Shulchan Aruch in siman 268 sif 7.

again at home during kiddush is to be motzi the women alone. and children who may have not davened Maariv.

it pertains to vayechulu. The Tur, on the other hand, Shemoneh Esrei. teaches that vayechulu is in fact eidus to Maaseh Bereishis. In addition, there is a Gemara in Shevuos that vayechulu with two people. His reasoning is that there says eidus has to be said while standing up and recited is no requirement of eidus for Maaseh Bereishis. In adout loud.

Is one allowed to lean during the recitation of with the tzibur. vavechulu?

of eidus. The Rama in Choshen Mishpat siman 17, Shemoneh Esrei? holds that one is allowed to lean when saying eidus. Accordingly, one could lean while reciting vayechulu. as well as the one after Shemoneh Esrei, the Mishnah

The Mishnah Berurah commenting on the Shul-There is a gemara in Meseches Shabbos on daf chan Aruch in siman 268 sif 7, quotes the Taz to have 119b which quotes Rav who says that even a yachid said that since there is eidus within vayechulu, it makes who davens alone must recite the pesukim of vayechu- sense to say it with a minyan, and, at the very least, to

It does not literally mean testimony, for Hashem of the world. What it truly means is that there is a great Tosfos answers our question in Pesachim on daf kiddush Hashem created by an entire tzibur declaring 106a. Tosfos states the reason we repeat vayechulu af- Hashem's creation of the world. Therefore, we conclude

- alone.
- Parenthetically, Tosfos in Meseches Pesachim § The Pri Migadim in Mishbitzos Zahav sif katan 5 on daf 106a points out that the reason we say vayechulu quotes the Gemara that a yachid should say vayechulu
- § The Biur Halacha adds that we pasken one could say It should be noted that although the Gemara re- it on alone, however, it is best to recite vayechulu with mained silent about the concept of testimony-eidus--as the tzibur, even if that requires one to hasten his pace of
 - § The Chazon Ish holds that one does not have to say dition, the Chazon Ish cautions us that undoubtedly one should not rush one's tefilah in order to say vayechulu

It would seem that we would follow the halachos What should one do if one forgot to say vayechulu in

If one missed the vayechulu in Shemoneh Esrei

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The Time of Teshuvah By: Exan Carroll, 11th Grade

Parshat Nitzavim opens with the pasuk "Atem nitzavim hayom kulchem lifnei Hashem elokeichem" (9:10). The Tzemach David brings a hint to the mitzvah of teshuva from this and the next pasuk, "Mei'chutav atzechah ad shoeiv mi'yamecha"—"You are standing here today... from your woodcutters to your water drawers" (9:11).

The Tzemach David points out the following on this pasuk: Generally, when the Torah makes a comparison in the style of "from person X to person Y", it does so in a descending order of greatness, as demonstrated by makas bechoros where the pasuk says "I will kill every firstborn, from Pharaoh's firstborn... to the firstborn of a maidservant". However, here, where it mentions the woodcutter and the water drawer, there is no significant difference that should affect the order, yet the pasuk marks a clear distinction between the two by making the comparison in the aforementioned style. So what's the reason for the distinction?

He answers this with a quote from the Zohar in parshat Pinchas on a pasuk in Iyov. The pasuk in Iyov says, "Now the day came about, and the angels of G-d came to stand beside Hashem, and the Satan, too, came among them" because that day was Rosh Hashanah. Here as well in parshat Nitzavim it was Rosh Hashanah, and Moshe was telling them to prepare for Yom Hadin (as can be seen in Rashi in 29:12). The pasuk is insinuating this time to do teshuva when it says "from your woodcutters to your water drawers", as one should begin to do teshuva at the time of woodcutting which is the 15th of Av (as is seen in Gemara Taanis 31). This is so that one will increase his learning at night until the time of water drawing, which is Hoshana Rabah.

The Arizal also gives a proof for this, as it says in Berachos 61a "after the lion and not after the woman", because the constellation for Av is a lion, and that of Elul is the besulah. This teaches us that one should start doing teshuva in Av and not once Elul has already begun. The Ateres Zekeinim gives a reason for this and says that the reason we say selichos for 4 days is because a korban needs to be checked for 4 days, and we compare ourselves to a korban because in Parshat Pinchas it says by most korbanos of holidays, "And you shall bring", but by Rosh Hashanah it says, "And you shall make", to teach that a person on Rosh Hashanah is like a korban and we therefore "check" ourselves for blemishes of sins and do teshuva for them. The Da'as Zekeinim adds on another hint when explaining the first pasuk in this week's parsha. When the pasuk says, "atem nitzavim – and when is this standing? " – hayom kulchem" when all of you are standing together as one with achdus and ahavah. These aspects are essential to doing teshuva.

(Evan Goldstein—Continued from page 2)

are like sons or if we are like slaves. If we are like sons, please have mercy on us like a father has mercy on his son. If we are like slaves, our eyes are towards You, that You will grace us with seeing the light of the judgment." What does it mean that Hashem will grace us with seeing the light of judgement?

When Yishmael was dying of thirst, he was being punished midda kanegged midda. Just as he accused Yitzchok of really being an orphan, Yishmael found HIMSELF an orphan. First he was kicked out of the house by his father, and then abandoned by his mother. Furthermore, Yishmael was the son of a slave, so therefore he himself was a slave. At that time, Yishmael realized exactly what was going on. He saw the "light of the judgment," or the reasoning behind his punishment. Hashem was treating Yishmael like the slave that he was, and at the same time allowing him to see exactly why he was being punished. After digesting everything, Yishmael understood where he went wrong, and on that spot repented, allowing Hashem to save him. On Rosh Hashanah, we ask to be treated like sons, as Hashem is our father. We hope that He will accept our Teshuva and will grant us a year without trouble. Unfortunately, we are not always worthy of that, and are looked upon as if we are slaves. Yet, even here, we ask for mercy. We ask Hashem, if we are going to be punished, at least He should give us the ability to see why we are being punished, like Yishmael. In order to properly do teshuva, we must understand what we did wrong in the first place. Unfortunately, we are sometimes unable to look at ourselves and see what that was, and we must bear the punishment for those sins. But with help from Hashem, we can at least understand why each punishment comes to us, so that starting from the time of recognition, we can do proper teshuva. May we all have a healthy new year, free of troubles for all of us as individuals and as a nation.

The Outlook of Rosh Hashanah: Shofar

By: Jacob Penstein, 9th Grade

The annual blowing of the shofar serves as the epitome of Judgment Day. In fact, one of the names of Rosh Hashanah is, "Yom Teruah," the day of blasts. Every Jewish man is obligated to hear the sounding of the ram's horn, and we have become accustomed to having everyone, including women and small children, hear the blowing of the shofar.

Rosh Hashanah day marks the creation of the world and especially the creation of the first man. These days, compared to other new years, is a very solemn time. It seems like it should be a cheerful anniversary, instead of the serious Day of Judgment that it is.

So why, rather than commemorating this event, is Rosh Hashanah the time when every person is judged before the Heavenly Court?

And furthermore, how are the quintessential aspects of this day represented by the shofar and its symbolism?

Anniversaries are moments for reflection on accomplishments and failures and planning for the future. Companies, for example, often conduct internal reviews that assess the past year and formulate changes, plans and ideas for the year to come.

This process occurs for every person on Yom HaDin. The anniversary of man's creation provides the perfect opportunity to analyze his performance.

The reason man was created and his life goals influence the essence of this day. The New Year is the annual review to judge whether or not an individual is accomplishing his purpose.

This purpose is to proclaim Hashem's sovereignty and supremacy over us and the entire Universe. And on the original Rosh Hashanah, at the beginning of man's creation, this is exactly what Adam HaRishon didn't do by eating from the Eitz HaDa'at.

The task to fix man's will so that it imitates the divine will, is ours. What better instrument is there to encourage this task than the mitzvah of shofar.

The shofar acts as a wakeup call to us all "Sleepers, arise from your sleep! Slumberers, arise from your slumber! Scrutinize your deeds and lovingly repent! Remember your Creator! Peer into your souls, improve your ways and your deeds." (Rambam, Laws of Teshuvah 3:4).

The shofar acts as a commemoration to the Avot's self-sacrifice to fulfill G-d's will, best exemplified in the episode of the akeidah, whose portion is read on Rosh Hashanah. Avraham binds his son Yitzchak as a korban to Hashem. The ram brought instead of Yitzchak is immortalized in the shofar, generally a ram's horn. The shofar also celebrates the horn sounded at Har Sinai when Israel established their covenant with Hashem whilst declaring the permanence of creation with their acceptance of Torah. The shofar also spurs us toward the final redemption and the rebuilding of the Beit HaMikdash, accompanied by the blowing go the shofar.

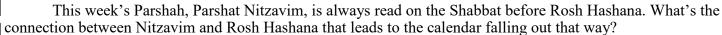
(Hudi Aronovitz—Continued from page 1)

fairs are not arbitrary, but quite the opposite - Hashem dictates our lives and things can change in a second. Chana's resolute nature resulted in the eventual birth of Shmuel, but for years she suffered from her barrenness and withstood her sister's provocation.

Emotionally, Rosh Hashanah is one of the most difficult days of the year. Hashem decides how our lives will play out in the coming year, if we will have life, prosperity and health, or lo aleinu, the opposite. It is the Day of Judgement. The story of Chana mitigates this idea that Rosh Hashanah is such a consequential day in regards to our fates, as she is telling us that Hashem runs the world and even the most difficult of grievances and challenges can change instantly into blessings.

Nitzavim and Rosh Hashana

By: Yosef Axelrod, 9th Grade



In the fourth aliyah of Parshat Nitzavim, Moshe gathers Bnei Yisrael one last time to tell them about the exile in Israel that will occur if they don't follow the Torah. Moshe then tells them that they will do teshuvah and return to Eretz Yisrael. It is because of these lessons of Nitzavim that it is always immediately before Rosh Hashana. Two of the critical messages of the Parsha are the importance of commitment to Hashem as well as the concept of teshuva, both of which are important themes of Rosh Hashanah.

Let this be a reminder for us as we enter the Yomim Noraim to strengthen our Tefilla and Lilmud HaTorah in order to build a stronger connection with Hashem so that He will answer our refilled and bring Moshiach bim'heira v'yameinu.

(Stories of Greatness-Continued from page 8)

money she found in his wallet. "Looks like we caught a big fish this time." One of the sons examined the money, went to the cupboard, took out a large bottle of vodka and put it on the table with a bang. "Brothers, let's celebrate! G-d has been good to us! We have enough money here to be happy for a long, long time! But first, let's take care of our guest." He pulled a large knife from somewhere under his coat while one of his brothers was pouring him a drink. He took a cup of vodka in his free hand, raised it high and said, "To long life, except for you!" as he looked at the bound chassid.

One of the brothers, surprised by the joke, laughed so hard that the vodka came spraying out of his mouth on the others, and they all began to laugh, and then someone began a song and another toast, then another. Then the door opened again, and it was their father. "Aha!" he shouted as he looked at the money on the table and the bound victim on the floor. "Good work, boys! Excellent! We'll have to kill him though . . . I'm glad you left him for me. You know what? In the morning I'll take care of him. Now, let's drink to our good fortune!" And before long they were all drunk as Lot, and forgot completely about our unfortunate hero.

Late that night, when they were all sleeping soundly, the father woke, looked around to make sure that no one else was awake, tiptoed over to our chassid, motioned him to be silent, cut his ropes and silently ordered him to follow. He tiptoed to the door, opened it and gave the chassid his coat. "Here is your money back," he whispered in the chassid's ear as he pushed the wallet into his coat pocket. Then he pressed a gold coin into the chassid's hand. "This is for charity from an old sinner. Tell your rebbe to please pray for me. Now go! Get out of here as fast as you can . . . run for your life." Dawn was beginning to light the horizon, the storm had stopped, and our grateful hero was on the road back home.

When he entered the rebbe's room, the rebbe looked up at him and said: "I know what happened; you don't have to tell me. I was up all night interceding on your behalf." The chassid produced the golden coin and told of the old thief's request. The rebbe took the coin and wedged it in a crack in the wall next to his desk, and said no more.

Fifteen years passed, and this same chassid, who was now married with a family, became one of the rebbe's gabbaim (secretaries). One day he answered the door to an old beggar, and told him to wait. When he entered the rebbe's room and informed him that there was a beggar at the door, the rebbe pulled the gold coin from



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(Ten Minute Hakacha—Continued from page 3)

Berurah says that one should stand for vayechulu during kiddush even if one usually sits.

The Tzitz Eliezer brings up a situation where one is up to vayechulu in Shemoneh Esrei when the tzibur is up to the one after Shemoneh Esrei. He recommends that one should say the pesukim with the tzibur, even out loud. The Tzitz Eliezer adds that one should also repeat the pesukim later, since there is an Arizal which teaches that there is a mailah to say vayechulu three times.

Conclusion:

If one follows the Chazon Ish, then one is not required to recite vayechulu with two people. If one paskens like the Mishnah Berurah then one should make sure to say vayechulu with two people. The svara of the Mishnah Berurah is that there is a concept of eidus when saying vayechulu. However, this does not follow all the halachos of kabalas eidus since it is not an actual kabalas eidus. Lastly, the Shulchan Aruch does mention to stand and say vayechulu out loud.

(Stories of Greatness—Continued from page 6)

the crack where it had been for the past fifteen years, and told the chassid that this was the old man who had released him years ago.

It seems that when his wife and sons awoke and realized what he had done, they beat him and drove him from the house just some hours before the police made a surprise raid and took the mother and sons off to prison. The old man began a life of wandering and atonement, waiting for a sign that his repentance had been accepted in heaven.



STORIES OF GREATNESS **TOLD OVER BY: NETANEL YOMTOV**

-depth involvement Hashem has in our daily the front porch and knocked on the door. our faith and always keep in mind that Ha- your horse in the barn. Please sit down." shem is looking after us. Adapted from chabad.org. Have a great Shabbos!!

house that had its door on the east side.

the money had been collected. But one day main entrance of the house in it! the chassid found himself caught in a snowprayed to G-d for some sort of miracle.

last ounce of strength he forced the horse in while their mother examined the booty. its direction, and sure enough, it was a house! It even had a mezuzah on the door. A Jewish we have here!" as she held up the pack of house, no less! He thanked G-d for his good

This week's story shows us the real in fortune as he jumped from his wagon onto

lives. While sometimes we realize and other An elderly woman opened the door and let times we don't, we have to always believe him in to the warm house. "Come in, you that Hashem has our best interests in mind must be freezing," she said. "Come have a and that everything will work out in the end. cup of tea; sit here by the stove. In just a mi-Hopefully, from this story, we can strengthen nute my sons will return, and they will put

Just as he sat down and began thawing out, he remembered that it was almost Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi once night and he hadn't yet prayed minchah (the sent one of his chassidim on a mission to afternoon prayer). So he asked the woman raise a large sum of money for an important which direction was east (to face Jerusalem, cause. The rebbe blessed him with a safe trip, as is customary during prayer) and prayed, but mysteriously warned him not to enter any thanking G-d for his good fortune. As he finished praying, he noticed that something was The trip went well, and soon most of wrong: the eastern wall was the one with the

Without hesitation he put on his coat storm on a lonely road winding through the and walked to the door, saying apologeticalforest. The wind grew steadily stronger and ly, "I'll be right back"—but the door was colder. He urged his horse on, hoping to locked. He went to a window, but it too was reach some sort of an inn before he lost his locked. "I forgot something in the wagon," he way entirely in the snow; but hours passed called to the old woman, who had slipped out and still nothing. He was numb and freezing, of the room. "Could you please open the and the snow was falling so densely that he door?" Suddenly a key turned in the door couldn't really see where he was going. He from the outside, and four brawny young men entered from the storm. As soon as they saw Suddenly, through the white sea of their visitor they immediately grabbed him, swirling snow, he saw what looked like the emptied his pockets, tied him up, laid him on outline of a house just off the road. With his the ground in a corner, and sat down to eat

"Ho ho!" she exclaimed. "Look what

(Continued on page 6)

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