

Ready For Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur!

The 2-Minute Daily Journal for Today's Busy Jewish Woman

– Elul through Yom Kippur –

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INTRO

Preparing a little bit each day for the *Yomim Noraim* will ensure we're happy once they are completed. Each day from today – Rosh Chodesh Elul – until Erev Yom Kippur adds a new level in our preparation to receive the bracha for the upcoming year. The first step in getting ready for the approaching Great and Awesome Days is to contemplate the verse we read during this time that hints to Elul:

“L'ula H'emanti liros b'tuv Hashem b'erez Chai'im”
“Had I not believed in seeing the good of H' in the land of the living!”
Tehillim 27

L'ula is Elul spelled backwards. To open up the gates of Elul, King David tells we have to believe that next year we'll see the goodness of Hashem and feel alive in the land of the living. Our next step is to have the *bitachon* (trust) to act on this *emuna* (faith). This booklet is to help you take a few minutes each day to build the bitachon to receive the *tuv Hashem* for a new year of rich life.

DAY 1

A time that I can likely succeed in setting aside of few minutes daily is at

_____.

Day 2

The main gifts I am grateful for are:

In Ruchnios (a spiritual gift): _____

Relationship: _____

Mida (a character trait): _____

Koach (a natural strength): _____

E.g.

The main gifts I am grateful for are:

In Ruchnios: *a natural desire to follow rules*

Relationship: *a giving mother who is always clearly understood*

Mida: *a natural concern for others*

Koach: *an ability to think quickly*

Day 3

What was my high point last year when I used these gifts well?

In Ruchnios (a spiritual gift): _____

Relationship: _____
Mida (a character trait): _____
Koach (a natural strength): _____

Day 4:
Just like you reached a high point last year (see Day 3), what would be a big step forward for you in using these gifts in this year?

In Ruchnios (a spiritual gift): _____
Relationship: _____
Mida (a character trait): _____
Koach (a natural strength): _____

Day 5:
To be better prepared for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur this year I'd like to: *(feel free to write a number or actual titles or a name of a person to ask on each of the points below)*

Read _____ essay/ book
Learn _____ laws/ halachos
Listen to an MP3 on the topic of _____
Go to _____ shiur
Write for myself __ (#) _____ times

Day 6:
1) What must I do to:

Get the book I want to READ:
Get the halachos I want to learn:
Get the MP3 I want to listen to:
Go to a shiur:
Write in my journal:

Often we'll lose hope when confronted by a process that seems overwhelming or beyond our capacity to deal with. That voice is not our *yetzer tov* (good inclination) speaking, this feeling comes from our *yetzer hara* (negative inclination) to relinquish hope and not try at all to help ourselves. The perfectionist in us tells us "all or nothing." Even one minute a day should not be underestimated. One minute is a victory! A person can transform his prayers if he takes one minute each day to slowly learn the words. He can even learn the entire talmud.

2) Between now and Yom Kippur, when can I make a date in my calendar book to accomplish Number 1 above for myself? Feel free to mark the time next to each point above or straight into your day planner.

Day 7:

-What is a single action or behavior in your ruchnios life, that were you to act on it consistently, you would make a major difference in this area in the upcoming year?

Day 8:

-The Aleinu prayer is a major part of Rosh Hashanah davening. Take a few minutes to sit down with the siddur and read the first paragraph of Aleinu. Say over each line and then translate it into your own words and images.

For example: When you read "Sh'lo asunu k'goi arotsos"— imagine owning castles and mansions, and having every pleasure, and how giving them up happily to live as the simplest of Jews who has clarity that life is eternal, whereas the purely physical life is temporary.

Day 9:

What is a single action or behavior in your main relationship, that were you to act on it consistently would make a major difference in this area in the upcoming year?

If you pray today, try to say Aleinu with more focus.

Day 10:

In which single relationship or area of your life would working on the mida you identified yesterday would make the biggest difference?

If you pray today, try to say Aleinu with more focus.

Day 11:

What is a single action or behavior in your main mida (character trait), that were you to act on consistently would make a major difference in the upcoming year?

Day 12:

In which single relationship or area of your life would working on this character trait or mida make the biggest difference?

Day 13:

What is a single action or behavior in your main natural strength or Koach that would allow you to invest yourself in Judaism in the upcoming year?

Day 14: Is there any area of your life or avoda/relationships where you feel a little bit like you've given up?

Please list:

Day 15:

-Please review yesterday. For each area you feel you have let go or given up on, please write one phrase below as how you can ask Hashem for help in this area.

Day 16:

Please now copy these items or phrases on a little note and put them into the siddur from which you will likely pray from next.

- If you have a moment sit down and read the halachos of Shofar.

Day 17:

Hashem send us messages in life. Often Hashem's main messages to us hit us in points of pain. Very often we live with this pain on a daily basis, and may even pray for it to be resolved. However, we often forget to respond simply to the message. We forget to pray to H' to tell us what He wants us to do differently or ask Him to understand what the message is.

Please list a few areas in life where you feel pain and want to know from H' what you are supposed to do.

Day 18:

Please copy yesterday's list on a little note and put it into the siddur you will likely pray from next.

The more you pray to understand the messages Hashem is sending you the more likely you will begin to piece the message together, like a puzzle put together day by day. By Rosh Hashanah you will likely have much more clarity.

Day 19:

Part of the Elul *chesbon* is how we use the physical world. Set aside some time to think through how you use your physical gifts: your money, getting enough or too much sleep, eating to energize yourself, relaxing when necessary and not unproductively.

Day 20:

For parents – take out a photo album and find pictures of each child that makes you feel lots of love. Identify what each child needs from you specifically, and write it down. For those who are not yet parents, do the same with other loved ones.

Day 21:

Look over yesterday's list, and write down what is the main impediment keeping you from being able to give to each child/ loved one consistently.

Day 22:

Spend some time reading a halacha sefer.

Please list any areas you feel lacking to make your Rosh Hashanah preparations complete. (e.g., No time to either pray or go to a shiur.)

Write it down and go share it with your friend, loved one or soul mate.

Day 23:

What is one way you can help accomplish the preparations you identified yesterday?

Day 24:

Grab a siddur with explanations such as the ArtScroll *Machzor* and take a few minutes to read about the 13 Middos of Rachamim.

Day 25:

What is the biggest lesson H' has taught you this year?

After dinner, take a few minutes and review the words of prayer in the Rosh Hashanah *Machzor*.

Day 26:

What do you think you can take out of yesterday's lesson?

-List 5 ways you may be able to approach a tikun (correction) from your side.

Day 27:

-Take 5 to 10 minutes to go away from everyone and be in a bubble with Hashem and speak about whatever you need.

Day 28:

Like a kallah (bride) before her wedding day, take a pad and write down all that you wish to prayer for – for yourself and others. Include a section to thank Hashem for gifts and challenges He has given you. Also include any areas you need help with to be able to do your job according to Hashem's will as you understand it.

Erev Rosh Hashanah:

If you haven't yet done it, make time to write or download a shiur. If it is not working out then ask your *besheret* or friend for help to take this time.

We say *Ani L'Dodi*; that means I take steps to come close to H'. This should produce a parallel response of *V'Dodi Li*. If you feel that Hashem is indeed helping or coming closer to you, then thank Him and redouble your requests for His help. We see that all the Tzadikim asked for big gifts when they felt H' was close. However if you feel He is still not coming close, share with Him your pain of feeling distant and ask him to reveal to your eyes the truth of *V'Dodi Li*.

First Day of Your New Year:

Remember that no matter what is going on, you'll always win by using your natural strengths and middos to rise above any annoyances.

When you daven, take your list and know that even if you have no kavana, the *emet* is that Hashem hears you. Knowing this with clarity — that it does not depend on you but only on Him — will allow your prayers to be accepted. So afterwards be happy and assume your prayers have been answered.

Second Day Rosh Hashanah 2:

- Take a 10 minute walk by yourself, and collect your thoughts. If you have children, ask your husband / friend, etc. to watch the kids so you can take a 10-minute walk by yourself, and collect your thoughts.

-Remember that no matter what is going on, you'll always win by using your natural strengths to rise above any annoyances. Also remember that Hashem wants you to succeed, no matter what you are being tested with.

-When you daven, take your list from Day 28 and know that even if you have no *kavana*, the *emet* is that H' hears you. Knowing this with clarity—that it does not depend on you but only on Him—will allow your prayers to be accepted. So afterwards, be happy and assume they have.

The Day After Rosh Hashanah - The Fast of Gedalia

Today is about making Rosh Hashanah real.

-Review your journal and list three insights that you sense you need to act upon for the year to be one of bracha for you and your family.

Is there a single action or behavior in the four areas (below), which you would like to practice during the 10 days of Teshuvah? By doing them (without making any commitments, i.e. say *bli neder*) you will see whether these are good actions you want to take upon yourself from Yom Kippur onwards.

The main gifts I am grateful for are:

In Ruchnios (a spiritual gift): _____

Relationship: _____

Mida (a character trait): _____

Koach (a natural strength): _____

4th day of 10 days of Teshuvah

-Is there a book, MP3 or essay you want to read? If so, arrange to have it ready and set a time to do it in your planner.

5th day of 10 days of Teshuvah

Please list anyone you may want to make amends with. Please list any individuals you may owe money to.

-Please open your Yom Kippur Machzor, and spend 10 minutes reviewing the prayers, and reading any commentaries that speak to you.

6th day of 10 days of Teshuvah

Try to be in touch with anyone with whom you want to make amends. If you owe someone something, try to return it or at least inform them of your plan to return it.

7th day of 10 days of Teshuvah

- Is there any one in your heart whom you need to forgive?
- Is there anyone in your heart against whom you are holding *hakpadas* (harsh feelings)? If so, try to imagine them as a little baby when they were totally innocent and forgive them, or have mercy and goodwill towards them in your heart.
- Now you may imagine yourself as an innocent baby and try to have mercy and let go of any harsh feelings and judgments you may hold against yourself.

8th day of 10 days of Teshuvah

Take a paper and pencil and spend a few moments to look through the *Al Chets* and *Vidui (confession)*. See if anything comes to mind that you want to ask forgiveness for and write it down.

-- As you read and look at what you wrote — try to decipher if there is one main *mida* or action underlying the other actions (e.g. anger, lust, weak *emuna*, impatience, etc). If so, make that one *mida* the focus of your Teshuvah on Yom Kippur.

Erev Yom Kippur

If there is anything you are considering taking on, try to figure out a way to do it so you won't fail. For example: This year I will set an alarm to go off daily reminding me to check mark if I smiled at my son when he came home. I will check my list four times a week until Chanukah.

Yom Kippur

Trust that if do the slightest Teshuvah, H' will wash away the past. To really secure a new path forward take on the tiniest change H' will open the gates for you. Make sure to make your deal by Neilah, and trust you'll have a great year!