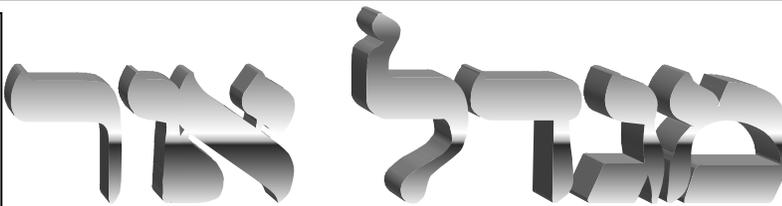


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”אתם נצבים היום כלכם לפני ה' אלהיכם... כל איש ישראל.” (דברים כט:ט)

**“You are all standing before HaShem, your G-d, today... all people of Israel.” (Deut. 29:9)**

As Moshe prepared to leave his flock, he brought them all together to bind them into a covenant with HaShem. Man, woman, and child, scholar and worker, all were included in this gathering. The purpose of it was to ensure that each person knew and appreciated that he or she had a relationship with G-d.

There is a key word in this posuk which gives us our mission statement for life. The Torah says, “You are standing before HaShem TODAY.” The word “hayom,” today, doesn't refer to a specific date, but rather has meaning only the day it is spoken. The most important day in anyone's life is not the day they were born, the day they became Bar or Bas Mitzvah, or the day they got married. The only day that matters is TODAY.

This parsha says the word “hayom” six times, representing the six days of Creation. On each day, something different was created; no two days were exactly the same. The days of our lives are also ripe for creation, no two alike, ready to be used for something that was not done before nor will it be done after. We are enjoined to make the most of our days by using them to strengthen the covenant, the relationship we have with HaShem Yisbarach.

The world was created on the 25<sup>th</sup> day of Elul, making Rosh HaShana the day when Man was created. On Rosh HaShana, when we sound the Shofar, declaring HaShem as our King, we use this very special word again.

*Hayom haras olam* – Today is the birth of the world, *Hayom yaamod ba'mishpat kol yetzurei olamim* – Today, all creatures in the cosmos shall stand to be judged.

The days leading up to Rosh HaShana are days for reflection and repentance, for introspection and change. When we get there, though, it's not time for looking back, but time to look ahead. Hayom, TODAY! We have opportunities. We can make HaShem our King and set the course of our lives by how we can make Him proud and happy with us.

It is by how we use each ‘today’ that every person will be judged individually. We have many chances in life, many opportunities, and many decisions. When HaShem looks at what we've achieved with each ‘today’ He has given us, He will decide whether we have made good use of them and deserve more, or if *chas v'shalom* we have wasted them.

If we have wasted days, what is the solution? The same as it has always been – to focus on today and make sure we make it the best it can be. Wishing everyone a kesiva v'chasima tova, a sweet new year, and a year of todays filled with goodness and success!

*After the writing of the Gemara was completed came the period of the Geonim, great men who were like kings, the epitome of righteousness, chesed, and Torah. One of the greatest was R' Saadya Gaon of Sura. He once visited a town far from his home and when he came to the inn for a room, it was late at night. Unaware of his illustrious guest's identity, the innkeeper tossed him a key and unceremoniously pointed down the hall to a door.*

*The next morning, the innkeeper heard that the famous R' Saadya Gaon was in town and realized that the guest to whom he was so rude was none other than the tzaddik himself. He ran to the Shul where R' Saadya was meeting with the leaders of the town and threw himself on the ground, begging forgiveness. “If I had known who you were,” he said, “I would have served you much differently!”*

*Years later, R' Saadya was once seen crying. “Rebbi, why are you crying?!” asked his student. He replied, “I'm doing Teshuva.” Not believing that his Rebbi, who spent his days and nights in Torah, could have done anything wrong, the talmid asked what the Teshuva was for. R' Saadya replied, “Through my learning and tefila I realize today more of HaShem's greatness than I did yesterday, and I must repent for not having served Him properly yesterday.”*

## Zmanim for שבת ויו"ט

Wesley Hills, NY

6:48 -	הדלקת נרות שבת
7:06 -	שקיעה
9:08 -	זק"ש מ"א
9:44 -	זק"ש גר"א
10:46 -	סוף זמן תפילה
7:05 -	שקיעה
7:46* -	צאת הכוכבים
8:17 -	צאת 72
6:44 -	הדלקת נרות יום א'
7:02 -	שקיעה
12:50 PM -	חצות
7:01 -	שקיעה
After 7:42 -	הדלקת נרות יום ב'
12:49 PM -	חצות
7:00 -	שקיעה
7:41* -	צאת הכוכבים
8:12 -	צאת 72

\* Based on Emergence of 3 Stars

Times courtesy of MyZmanim.com

### Did You Know?

During the Aseres Yemei Teshuva, the ten days of Repentance between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur, the Shulchan Aruch cites the practice to be more stringent than usual on things such as the bread of a non-Jew at this time. Though it may be permissible and one eats it the rest of the year, during these days one does not partake of it.

The intent of it is not to “fool” G-d, Heaven forbid, and doing so is not “bribing” Him, nor is it a falsehood to imply that one will maintain that level after Yom Kippur.

Rather, each undertaking follows its beginning and by starting the year off right, we impart a loftier spirit to it.

Additionally, though you may not have practiced these customs before, and you do not intend to practice them later, for now, today, you have acted in a superior manner. It is worthwhile for that alone, and for that you shall be rewarded.

### Thought of the week:

Yesterday is history, tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift, that's why they call it the present.