

A Midrash for Monday (#14) / Rosh HaShanah - Yom Kippur

written by Ozer Bergman

September 25, 2011

A Midrash for Monday (#14)

This one is especially appropriate for Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur and the days in between. Actually, it's good to have this one handy all the time!

The prophet Yeshayahu says, "Seek God when He is present" (Isaiah 55:6), but King David (Yeshayau's multiple-great-grandfather) says, "Seek God and His might; seek His face constantly" (1 Chronicles 16:11). Why constantly? To teach you that the Holy, Blessed God:

is sometimes visible, sometimes invisible;

sometimes hears, sometimes doesn't want to hear;

sometimes answers, sometimes doesn't answer;

is sometimes sought after, sometimes not;

*is sometimes available, sometimes unavailable;**

is sometimes close, sometimes not close.

Sometimes God as is close, as is written, "God is close to all who call Him..." (Psalms 145:18). Sometimes He is not close, as in (Proverbs 15:29), "Far from the wicked is God." One verse (Numbers 6:26) says, "God will show you favor," while another verse says, "He does not show favoritism" (Deuteronomy 10:17). If one does teshuvah (returns to God), God will show him favor. This is why Yeshayahu says (Isaiah

55:6), "Seek God when He is present, call Him when He is close."

God tells the Jewish people, "Know! I judge the world four times a year. On Pesach concerning grain, on Shavuot concerning fruit and on Sukkot concerning water. These are financial matters, whether to make someone wealthy or poor, whether to provide more or less. But on Rosh HaShanah I judge capital cases: whether to execute or to give life, and whether countries will have to go to war or enjoy peace.

"If you do wholehearted teshuvah, I will accept you and judge you favorably, because the gates of Heaven are open, and I hear your prayers. I'm watching from the windows, and peeking through the cracks, before I seal the verdict on Yom Kippur."

This is why it's a good idea to "Seek God when He is present" during the Ten Days of Teshuvah! God Himself says (Ezekiel 43:8), "There's a wall between Me and them," so "call Him when He's close!" Let go of your naughty ways, your foolish thinking, so you can return to God and He can show you compassion (cf. Isaiah 55:6–7).

May you and yours be immediately written for good life and shalom in the Book of Tzaddikim. Amen.

Based on *Midrash Tanchuma, Haazinu #4*

© Copyright 2011 O. Bergman

God willing, yours truly will be in Uman for Rosh HaShanah, so we'll see you after Yom Kippur.

**Here are some of the verses the Midrash cites:*

visible, Exodus 33:11; invisible, ibid., v. 18;

hears, Deuteronomy 4:15; sometimes doesn't want to hear, ibid., 1:45;

answers, 1 Samuel 7:9; sometimes doesn't answer, ibid., 16:1;