

Breslov Repair Kit—Rosh Hashana & Self-Awareness

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Rosh Hashana is the day of judgment for all humankind.

It is the anniversary of the creation of Adam and Eve. In other words, it's the birthday of everyone's great, great, great (and so on), grandparents!

It is a day of awe and fear and also a day of celebration.

Rosh Hashana is a day of great self-awareness and relationships, too. It is a time to recognize who we are as individuals, as members of family and community, the Jewish people, and humanity.

It is a day to invest fully in becoming more aware of our relationship with Hashem, God.

Pretty heady stuff for us mere mortals. But we know that Hashem doesn't give us anything impossible to do.

So, how do we get there?

Ideally, we've been preparing for Rosh Hashana during the ~~month of Elul~~ entire year.

By talking with Hashem in *hisbodedus*, prayerful meditation

each and every day. By spending at least a few minutes speaking our thoughts aloud and going over our past and present thoughts and actions. By reviewing our relationships with Hashem and the people in our lives.

By taking the time to take care of our spiritual selves, even for a few minutes a day, self-awareness becomes a good friend and a good habit.

Judgment

One of the key components of self-awareness is judgment. To be self-aware, we must judge ourselves. We're not "judgmental" in the negative sense of beating ourselves up (most of us already do enough of that!) We just try our best to be honest about our good points and honest about our shortcomings, even our failures. All year long, in *hisbodedus*, we resolve to strengthen our good points and let go of our not-so-good points.

But what if we're new to this, and haven't paid attention to where we've been, who we are, and where we're headed? And now, suddenly, we realize it's nearly Rosh Hashana, and the King of Kings will be sitting in judgment over us?

One of Rebbe Nachman's most famous sayings is: *If you believe you can damage, believe you can repair.*

It is never too late to take stock and make efforts to come closer to realizing your true spiritual potential. In other words, yes, you can "cram" if you need to!

Participate in [Selichos](#) services and the power of the words are guaranteed to turn your heart and mind towards the spiritual work you need to do.

Say [Tehillim \(Psalms\)](#). If you already say Psalms each day, say an extra one, one that speaks to your heart. From the beginning of Elul, many say Psalm 27 twice each day. Many also

say the whole book of Tehillim in small increments, from the start of Elul through Yom Kippur. There are other customs, too—you have a lot of choice.

From now until Rosh Hashana (the Yom Tov starts Wednesday evening, September 4th, at sundown), you can also take some time each day to reflect on one or more of the following:

Do I judge others extra-fairly, even leniently?

Do I always try to find the good points in others and giving them the benefit of the doubt? Remember, “judgment belongs to God.”* We have to remind ourselves: We don’t want to be judged for one mistake or even willful negative deeds, we want to be judged for the totality of our being. We don’t want to be judged for the fact that we gossip occasionally, we want to be judged for all the times we visited sick people in the hospital and helped out our neighbors and friends. *Do I focus on the good points in others? Do I forgive?*

Am I honest in all my dealings with others?

Do I err on the side of honesty, even if it appears to “hurt” my own interests? Do I avoid hurting others, because causing others pain by saying harsh words is also type of dishonesty? Do I avoid telling lies or making false excuses? Am I honest with financial dealings? *Do I never take what isn’t mine?*

Do I trust in God?

Do I believe that He is always acting in my best interests, even when things appear to be difficult? Do I make an effort to have a relationship with Hashem? The Torah (including all the holy books of the Talmud, the Zohar, and the teachings of the sages) is a gift from Hashem to us. Remember, this gift instructs us how to not only achieve our true potential but is designed by Hashem to show the way in which we can come closer to Him. *Do I trust that God has given me the tools I need to live a meaningful, fulfilling life and do I choose to use*

these tools?

Will this coming year be different?

What can I do to make this year a year of spiritual growth for me personally, in my relationships with others, and in my relationship with Hashem?

Of course, there are many more areas we can focus on, but any of these is a good place to start.

Kesiva V'Chasima Tova. May you be written and sealed for the good.

Recommended Resource: [Where Earth and Heaven Kiss](#) is a book designed to inspire your fledgling practice of *hisbodedus*, or strengthen your existing practice.

*Devarim (Deuteronomy) 1:17.