

Dvar Torah for Rosh HaShanah

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Based on Likutey Halakhot, Beheimah v'Chayah Tehorah 4:45–46

Why do we eat honey with the challah and with the apple the first night of Rosh HaShanah? Every Jew knows it's a siman, a sign, that we should have a sweet year. (It's a testament to our faith that we believe that our eating honey has theurgical effect.) But there's an even more powerful message in that sweet bite.

For a Jew, one of the most amazing things about honey is that it is kosher. Bees are not kosher, yet the honey they produce is. No other non-kosher animal or bird can make that claim! This is even more amazing when we consider that there's no

procedure or mitzvah that we need to do to make it kosher.

Reb Noson explains that in the on-going journey that mankind is making, there are two broad categories of tikkunim, rectifications, that are being made. There are those that we the people are responsible for, and those that God is doing. We're supposed serve Him and obey. We do what we can, imperfectly because we are only human, and God finishes the job.

But being human we don't always do what we're supposed to. Sometimes our mistakes are unintentional, but sometimes—and let's be honest here—they're quite intentional. How can our mistakes bring us, as individuals and as a species, to our desired destiny? Reb Noson quotes Rebbe Nachman who said, "God is constantly getting the job done."* What Rebbe Nachman meant, explains Reb Noson, is that no matter how badly a person or the human race botches the job, God will fix and steer things to the ending He wants**—if and when we do teshuvah (return).

That's the lesson of the honey. We haven't been so kosher for much too long a time. Yet, somehow, in some mysterious, unfathomable way, God can take all our sick and crazy ideas, our poisonous, filthy words, our laziness and greed, our cruelty to ourselves and others, and our disrespect for Him, and turn it all into the sweetest and best of all possible worlds.

May we live to see it and be part of it. Amen.

May you and yours be immediately written into the Book of the Tzaddikim.

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*Actually, what he said was, "Gott firt tamid ois."

** WARNING! This is only for past mistakes and unintentional

future mistakes. There is absolutely no license for behaving badly and relying on God's kindness to clean up your mess.