**Brooklyn torah gazette**

**For parshas nitzavim 5779**

Volume 3, Issue 55 (Whole Number 152) 28 Elul 5779/ September 28, 2019

**Printed L’illuy nishmas Nechama bas R’ Noach, a”h**

For a free subscription, please forward your request to ***keren18@juno.com***

**A Jew Can Rise to**

**A Level Greater than**

**That of the Melachim**

**By Daniel Keren**



 The fourth and final speaker at the recent Labor Day Hakhel Flatbush Yarchei Kallah program was Rabbi Avrohom Schorr, the mora d’asra of Congregation Nezer Gedalyahu in Brooklyn. He started his remarks by recalling how once the Alter of Slabodka, Rabbi Nosson Tzvi Finkel, zt”l, came to the Chevron Yeshiva in the days of Elul and spoke to the talmidim (students) about how one should prepare for the awesome day of Rosh Hashanah.

 A few days later the Alter of Slabodka return to apologize to the students. How could he make demands on the students if the malachim (angels) can’t control themselves and how could one expect a Yid (Jew) to be able to control himself. It is recorded in the Chumash that the malachim came down to earth a few times from heaven and yet they stumbled [spiritually because of the influence in this world.] This clearly shows the superiority of a Yid who is in truth capable of a physical and hence spiritual achievement much greater than a seemingly lofty angel is capable of achieving.

 Rabbi Schorr told the audience at the Flatbush Hakhel Yarchei Kallah that instead of trying to emulate a malach, a Yid should strive to be guided by the Torah for his efforts towards spiritual perfection.

 Initially in the sibling rivalry, Eisav had control all of the summer months (Tammuz, Av and Elul.) Then his brother Yaakov Avinu took back from Eisav the essence of Chodesh Elul and the unique powers of this holy Jewish month still remains with his offspring.

**The Power of the Wicked**

**Eisav is the Ayin Rah**

 The power of [the wicked] Eisav is the ayin rah, an evil eye. And the counter-balancing quality of Yaakov is the ayin tov (a good eye.) Where do we see this in the Torah? Yaakov told his brother that he had “yeshli kol/I have everything I need!” Whereas upon hearing those words, Eisav replied that he had “yeshli rav/I have much,” but hinting that he still desired more. A Jew lives with an ayin tova, without wanting what others have.

 Rabbi Schorr pointed out that we as Jews have to take back Chodesh Elul from Eisav by replacing the prevailing ayin rah in the streets of our community with an ayin tova. What means an ayin tova? One of the greatest problems in one’s achieving teshuvah (repentance for one’s sins) is a person’s yetzer hora (evil inclination) that tries to convince the Jew that he doesn’t have any major spiritual problems to improve on.

 One of our greatest challenges today is a lack of sensitivity. For example, language that 20 or 30 years ago would have gotten someone thrown out of the classroom is today unfortunately acceptable. When a person no longer knows what is wrong, it is not possible to fix this spiritual flaw.

 All over Klal Yisroel, there is an abundance of Torah learning. Everybody wants to and everybody is learning Torah. So where is the milchama (spiritual battle?) The rasha (wicked person) on the street is trying to take away the heilikite (holiness) of the Jew.

**Kedusha Lies in the Ability of a Yid**

**To Shield His Eyes from Immorality**

 Do you want to know where kedusha (holiness) lies? It lies in the eyes of a Yid and the ability of a Jew to shield his eyes from looking at those immoral things which would strip away our spirituality.

 In the past before a Jew died, the Chevra Kadisha (burial society) would gather before and at the moment of the Yid’s petirah (death), would close his eyes. Because at the moment of a Jew’s death the forces of impurity try to immediately attack the ayin tova of the nifter (deceased.)

 There was once a time when a six or seven or eight year-old child was a taamim (spiritually pure.) Today unfortunately Jewish children at such ages know more of the impurities of the streets than we knew when we were 18 or 19.

 Nobody should blame other people for their aveiros (sins). Rather, Rabbi Schorr said, one should look to oneself and reflect on how one can elevate yourself and your household. If you focus on the spiritual blemishes of others, nobody will be elevated. Rather let us all work on ourselves and thus be worthy of having a successful Rosh Hashanah and a year of brochos (blessings).

*Reprinted from the September 12, 2019 edition of the Flatbush Jewish News.*

**For the Jew the Torah is “Our**

**Life and the Length of Our Days"**

**From the Talks of the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

**Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, Zt”l**

 This week's Torah portion, Nitzavim, definitively describes the Jew's relationship with G-d and His Torah. "And you shall obey His voice...for He is your life, and the length of your days."

 The Torah not only enables a Jew to imbue his life with holiness and promises sublime reward in the World to Come -- it is his very life.

 In order to understand this concept, let us use the human body as an analogy.

 The life-force of a human being -- that which animates the physical matter of which man is composed -- is found to the same degree throughout the body, equally present in the heel as in the head.

 Although the head is the center of the soul's higher faculties -- intellectual understanding, the senses of sight and hearing -- no one limb is more animated by this force than another. Every part of the physical body is equally alive.

 The same principle is also true of the Torah and its far-reaching influence.

 Every detail of a Jew's existence -- from the most exalted to the most mundane -- derives its life-force from the Torah, inasmuch as the Torah addresses all the minutiae of daily life and imbues them with G-dliness.

 This is clearly demonstrated by the type of reward G-d promises for observing the Torah: "If you will walk in My statutes...I will give you rain in due season...and the earth shall produce its yield."



**The Lubavitcher Rebbe, zt”l**

 The reward for learning Torah is not only spiritual benefit, but tangible, material reward as well, expressing the fact that the Torah addresses both the spiritual and physical nature of the Jew, covering the full spectrum of his existence.

 The Torah's description of the Messianic Era, with its wondrous manifestations of G-dliness and extraordinary phenomena, is therefore more clearly understood in this light.

 "[In the Messianic Era] the land of Israel will produce [fully baked] loaves of bread and [ready-made] articles of silk," we are promised.

 But why will such remarkable material developments be necessary, if, as we are taught, when Moshiach comes the entire world will recognize the G-dliness within creation, and the sole pursuit of the Jewish people will be the study of G-d's Torah?

 Simply put, it is through these miracles involving physical phenomena that the underlying unity of G-d's creation with His Torah will be most openly revealed.

When these miracles will be actualized in our everyday, physical lives, the truth that the Torah is "our life and the length of our days" will be obvious to all.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Nitzavim 5754/1994 edition of L’Chaim Weekly (Issue #331), a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn, NY.*

**Rav Avigdor Miller**

**On Watching Sports**



 **QUESTION:** What is wrong with someone who follows sports and what limits are required for someone who does?

 **ANSWER:** We must understand that the ideal of following sports has been imported from the gentile world. Jews have no interest in sports. Jews have interest in maintaining their health, they have interests in maintaining their livelihood, and they have interest also in maintaining their happiness.

 Now, I added the last one because it could be that in order to make yourself more happy you might play ball - you might engage in some sport. But to be a *follower* of sports means that you are a follower of the gentile nations. There is no such ideal as sports among Jews. And there never was.

 Even the common people in the days of Rashi didn’t know of sports. Yes, children played. And I’m sure there were adults who wasted some time too, but the idea of sports as it was practiced among the gentiles was entirely alien to Jews. Whether the sport consists of watching two people punch each other in a ring, or seeing horses in a race, or people trying to hit a little ball with a club, whatever it is, all these ideals are imported from the gentile world.

 Football and basketball; if you play it yourself it’s good exercise. But if you go someplace and you pay admission - or even if you go in for free - to watch these things, then it’s a sign that you identify with the outside world.

 Which world? The world that used to have gladiators and arenas, where men fought each other to the death. The world that used to watch men being cast to the lions in the Roman arenas. Chariot races, hippodromes, theatres, military contests -all these are the inheritance of the nations of the world.

 Now, the Jews have plenty of good times - there’s a lot of fun you can have. And children can play, and adults if they wish can also play; but not as an ideal. אל תשמח ישראל אל גיל כעמים - Yisroel, do not rejoice in the fun of the nations (Hoshea 9:1).

 Rejoice, yes! But not the way the nations rejoice. We are a separate nation and we shouldn’t emulate them. And therefore, when Jews identify with gentiles in anything, they have cut off their identity withthe Holy Nation, the *Am Yisroel.*

*Reprinted from the July 28, 2019 email of Toras Avigdor, based on Tape #701.*

**Rabbi Berel Wein on**

**Parashat Nitzavim**

 This week's reading in the Torah describes the eternal binding covenant between G-d and the Jewish people. This covenant has played itself out over thousands of years of world history and remains valid and operative today as it did on the day that Moshe presented it to the Jewish people at the end of his life.

 The covenant is all-encompassing and applies to all who were members of the Jewish people. It states specifically that even the lowest and least educated classes of the Jewish people – those who chop the word and draw the water – are as important and included in the terms of the covenant as are the wisest and most intellectually gifted of the Jewish people.

 This is a remarkable statement for human society, which, since its inception has always divided itself into classes according to talents, education, and financial status. These differences also existed within Jewish society, but the covenant is not affected by these societal norms and differences that every generation of Jewish people exhibited.

 The Torah does not present for us a utopian vision of a classless society, where equality exists amongst all members of a certain nation or group. Such an idea flies in the face of human nature and behavior. The Torah does inform us though, that there is an over-arching covenant that binds all Jews, no matter their station in life and their experiences, and it is this covenant that is the basis of the relationship between the G-d of Israel and the people of Israel.

****

**Rabbi Berel Wein**

 The Torah recognizes that life is not always fair to everyone. The distribution of talent, opportunities and wealth has always been unequal, and no economic theory or legislative program will ever change that reality. The Torah does not countenance playing the victim card as an excuse for one's failures and shortcomings. The prophet Jeremiah stated this succinctly when he said, “Why should a human being complain, is it not sufficient that it is yet alive?”.

 Judaism measures people by their capacity to realize their potential. That is why the rabbis taught us that the righteous people are judged as finely as the breadth of a hair. The more righteous one is, the greater is the potential for performing acts of goodness.

 In effect, the Torah is teaching us that we are our own judges, each according to his/her abilities and opportunities. The question that will be asked of us is why we were not what we could have been, irrespective of the achievements and greatness we have achieved or compared to that of other human beings.

 It is ironic that in world history the Jewish people could certainly be characterized as the victim and would be justified for not being a contributory force in the advancement of world civilization.

 But, even the most cursory view of world history shows that it was the Jewish people, more than anyone else, who drove forward the forces of civilization for the betterment of the human condition, physically and certainly spiritually.

*Reprinted from this week’s website of Rabbiwein.com*

**Where Hashem is**

**Found in Our Marriage**

**By Rabbi Moshe Meir Weiss**



 We postpone once again our crash course on tefilah for another Elul discussion.

 The Torah teaches us the importance of the shanah rishonah, the first year of marriage. It recommends, “Noki yihiyeh l’veiso shanah echas v’simach es ishto asher lakach – The husband should be free for his home for a year and gladden his wife who he took.”

 Both Rabbeinu Efraim and the Bal HaTurim point out that the last letters of the words noki yihiyeh l’veiso shanah, spells the ineffable Name of Hashem yud, kei (hei), vav, kei (hei).

 Rabbeinu Efraim explains that since this is in juxtaposition to the word v’simach, to enjoy, it teaches us, “Ein haShechina shora ela mitoch simcha – The Divine Presence only rests upon one who is happy.”

 In my recent Q&A for Irgun Shiurei Torah, I was asked, “If the Divine Presence only devolves upon a person when he is in a state of joy, how did Yermiyah the prophet prophesize Eichah, Lamentations, when he was in a state of deep mourning.

 I answered that the default position of a Jew is one of joy, as it says, “Ivdu es Hashem b’simcha – Serve Hashem with joy,” and therefore that is normally when the Divine Presence will be found. But, at the time of the destruction of the Temple, the proper mood was one of mourning and therefore it was suitable for prophecy.

 The Bal HaTurim explains the proximity of Hashem’s Ineffable Name to v’simach es ishto, rejoicing in one’s wife, is to convey the important lesson that even behind closed doors, Hashem’s Eyes are upon the couple watching how they behave with one another.

 By a chuppah, at the end of the marriage ceremony, the chossan, the groom, breaks a glass. The well-known reason is to remember the destruction of the Temple and to recall that even at the height of our joy we are thinking about our missing Temple.

 But, the Rabbeinu Bachya gives another reason. He says that it is to recall the breaking of the luchos, the first tablets. Why do we remember this at a marriage ceremony?

 Our Rabbis explain that it is to convey the important message that the first tablets that were given in front of millions of people ended up in smithereens. But, the second tablets that were given very privately to Moshe Rabbeinu endure forever. So too, we are teaching our new chossan and kallah that it is what they do behind closed doors, in the privacy of their chambers, is what makes the marriage strong and enduring.

 I would like to add that the Ineffable Name is next to the v’simach es ishto because when a man gladdens his wife in the way that only a husband can, that is what brings the Shechina down to the couple.

 When it says, “Ish v’isha shalom beineihem, Shechina shruyah beineihem – Husband and wife, when there is peace between them, the Divine Presence devolves upon them,” this manifests itself especially during marital intimacy. It is then that the letter yud in ish (the husband) merges with the letter hei in isha (the wife) and synthesizes to become Yud-Hei, Kah (the Name of Hashem).

 In the merit of our always bettering this vital area, may Hashem bless us with long life, good health, and everything wonderful.

*Reprinted from the Parshas Ki Savo 5779 email of the Jewish VUES.*

**Examining the Social Vision Of the Lubavitcher Rebbe**

**By Daniel Keren**

(“Social Vision: The Lubavitcher Rebbe’s Transformative Paradigm for the World” by Philip Wexler with Eli Rubin and Michael Wexler, 265 pages, 2019, a Herder & Herder Book, The Crossroad Publishing Company)



 When offered the chance to review Philip Wexler’s new book on the social vision of the late Torah scholar and Chassidic leader – Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, zt”l, I didn’t realize just how much of an am ha’aretz (ignoramus) I am with regards to sociology. I never took a sociology course at the University of Missouri where I majored in journalism with a minor in history.

 Had I considered the subtitle of Wexler’s book (“The Lubavitcher Rebbe’s Transformative Paradigm for the World,”) I might have had second thoughts about trying to review the book. I confess I had to google the definition of the word “paradigm.”

 Other terms such as socio mystical, inner worldly asceticism and avatar for starters made me grateful that I never seriously considered sociology as even as a minor to pursue in university.

**** 

**Philip Wexler Max Weber**

 So if you are a sociologist or even enjoy reading books on sociology, you probably might want to read Wexler’s understanding of the social vision of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

**A Mission to Understand the Unique Social**

**Vision of a Dominant Jewish Leader**

 In this mission to understand and communicate the unique social vision of one of the dominant Jewish and general personalities of the 20th Century (whose influence was not limited to Klal Yisroel (the Jewish nation), Wexler was assisted by Rabbi Eli Rubin, an editor and research writer at Chabad.org and a graduate research student in the Department of Hebrew and Jewish Studies at the University College London.

 Rabbi Rubin guided Wexler towards a better grasp of some of the social vision concepts of the Lubavitcher Rebbe such as the Rebbe’s great interest in promoting a moment of silence in the public schools and developing solar energy as a method for the country to avoid dependence on oil producers in the Middle East who were using OPEC strategies to punish the United States and the rest of the Industrial World for being supportive of Israel.

**The Major Influence of Max Weber**

 A major influence on Wexler’s attempt to understand the social vision of the Lubavitcher Rebbe was late 19th and early 20th century German sociologist, philosopher and political economist – Max Weber (1864-1920) who died at an early age as a result of having been infected by the Spanish influenza that killed tens of millions of people around the world at that time.

 Wexler points out that Weber focused on the transforming of an ascetic Protestant society in Northern Europe into a more secularized vocationalism (i.e. the spirit of capitalism). Apparently Wexler finds many similarities in the social vision of the Lubavitcher Rebbe who was born in Tzarist Russia and who later studied at the University of Berlin and at the Sorbonne in Paris.

 Interestingly, the Lubavitcher Rebbe was strongly opposed to his own Chassidim learning in secular universities as he believed the overwhelming environment on campus against traditional faith would severely harm the spiritual neshama of the Jewish student.

**A Desire to Reject the Dominance of**

**Capitalism Over Religious Values**

 Wexler explains in his prologue that it was his desire to escape Weber’s conclusion that the new spirit of capitalism had completely displaced an earlier world of direct personal relations (perhaps symbolizing the religious values of an earlier age) that led him to abandon his traditional career as a sociologist back in 2000 when he resigned his position as dean of the Warner School of Education at the University of Rochester to accept a fellowship at the Shalom Hartman Institute in Jerusalem.

 What followed was a period of confusion for the author as he writes: “This was a turn to religion, and to Jewish studies, but as I will soon explain, it was also a return to the roots of the very tradition from whose bounds I sought to release myself. I subsequently took up a post at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, keeping one foot in the world of religious studies and Jewish mysticism while continuing my work in sociology as chair of the School of Education.”

**Hasidism as an Antidote to Alienation**

 Wexler’s study of the social vision of the Lubavitcher Rebbe is divided into seven chapters that touch such topics as the possibility of prophecy in society and in sociology, a countercultural strategy for Jewish Renaissance, women as agents of change in America and beyond, the Tsadik, the Community and Hasidism as an antidote to alienation, the Rebbe’s mission statement, an examination of the Rebbe’s public farbrengens, undoing the dialectic between self and community, expanding the scope of education, non-denomination prayer and the civic utility of religion and the Rebbe’s view of criminal justice reform and the rehabilitation of humanity.

 In the epilogue to his book on the social vision of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Wexler concludes with the intriguing thought: “His [the Lubavitcher Rebbe’s] Hasidic vision has the capacity to replace the empty ritualism’s of contemporary life, instead infusing all interactions with divinity, wisdom, and empathy. Extending from micro activity to macro culture, this would constitute a transformative recalibration of the most elemental paradigms that govern life in this world, thereby bringing about the full realization and eternal renewal of social being and of human being.”

*Reprinted from the September 19, 2019 edition of the Jewish Connection.*

**Thoughts that Count**

*And also with him that is not here with us this day*. (Deut. 29:14)

 When a Jew enters into a covenant with G-d by keeping His Torah and mitzvot, every Jew, of every generation past and present, is present at his side.

 One need not therefore be concerned that the Jews are "the least of the nations," for our eternal bond with G-d, in the cumulative sense, is truly monumental and awesome. *(Likutei Sichot)*

*Gather the people together, men, women and children* (Deut. 31:12)

 Rashi asks: Why were the children included? To bring reward to the parents who brought them.

 G-d helps parents raise their children to be G-d-fearing and upright to the same degree that they put their efforts into the task. *(Sefat Emet)*

*And call heaven and earth to witness against them* (Deut. 31:28)

 They, the Jewish people, will be My witnesses, testifying that I created heaven and earth. For it is through the Jews that the world comes to know that G-d is the Creator and that He constantly oversees His handiwork. *(Chidushei Harim)*

*Reprinted from the Parashat Nitzavim 5754/1994 of L’Chaim Weekly, a publication of the Lubavitch Youth Organization in Brooklyn.*

**The Ghosts of Rosh Hashana’s Past**

**By Devora Jaye**



 When I was growing up, Rosh Hashanah was my favorite holiday. Everything was majestic and exciting and I always got a new dress. I always felt that Rosh Hashanah was a do-over, like the first day of school. The previous year didn’t matter.

 I was less interested in the spiritual aspect of the holiday and more excited about the possibilities. A Brand New Year. If I yelled at my sister, got bad grades or spoke*lashon hara,* it was ok; I was starting over. For twenty years of my life I held on to that feeling, that glittery, shiny excitement of the Brand New. And then something happened.

 When the Twin Towers fell just before Rosh Hashanah, it changed my life forever. I will never forget those weeks and days leading up to what had been my favorite *yom tov*. I remember every excruciating second: waiting for news of my brother-in-law who worked at the World Trade Center; not getting good news, like every one of my friends who knew people who were there; deciding to head home to Maryland to wait it out; the car ride to my sister’s apartment to pack up her things; the long drive to my parents’ house; leaving a smoldering city skyline behind in the rearview mirror.

 No one spoke. We all moved as if we were underwater. And somehow, then we had to make Rosh Hashanah.

 I walked with my father to shul on the first night of the*yom tov,* so he would not have to go by himself—my brother-in-law was his only son. Everyone was silent. I watched from the women’s section as every man in the shul walked up to my father and hugged him.

 *Davening*that Rosh Hashanah was painful. For the first time, I felt connected to the prayers, the judgment, the true meaning of Rosh Hashanah. I could not see the possibilities of the year ahead. There was only one possibility I was interested in: I wanted my brother-in-law to be alive.

 I prayed like I had never prayed before. My other sister and I were huddled together in shul, as if somehow by combining forces, Hashem would grant our request. But Rosh Hashanah was ruined for me. It would never again have the same luster, the same tingly excitement it had always had.

 A year later, as Rosh Hashanah approached, I was filled with dread. Not the good kind of spiritual “about-to-be-judged” dread. Just dread. How could I do this again? I didn’t want Rosh Hashanah to come. I couldn’t bear the disappointment. Why bother praying if I was going to be ignored anyway?

 How could I have my Brand New Rosh Hashanah when I was filled with anger and sadness, when I could not believe Hashem had ignored my heartfelt pleas the year before? I was bereft of the joy that I had always associated with this holiday. Rosh Hashanah would never be the same again.

 But things change. My family has changed. I’ve changed. I have seen that there is comfort in friends and family. I have learned that every moment we have in this world is beautiful. I have seen how people can become stronger, how families and communities can unite in times of pain. I have learned that we can heal. There might not be a happily ever after, but there is “happy” and there is “after.”

 My view of Rosh Hashanah has changed, too. I have learned that it’s not about the shiny Brand New, starting over. It’s about starting over with all the lessons that you learned since the last Rosh Hashanah.  It’s about layering every Rosh Hashanah of your life into that Brand New, and applying your own glitter to it.

Reprinted from the Fall 2016 issue of Jewish Action.

**The Problem with Feeding Fish at Tashlich**

**By Yehuda Shurpin**

**On the “custom” of throwing bread into the water on Rosh Hashanah**



 It is customary on Rosh Hashanah to go to a river or other body of water with live fish and recite the [Tashlich prayers](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/427289/), followed by the symbolic shaking of the corners of our garments. Contrary to what some believe, feeding the fish is not part of the Tashlich ritual. In fact, it is problematic to do so on Rosh Hashanah.

 Where did this misconception stem from?

 During Tashlich, we recite the closing verses of the book of Michah: “Who is a G‑d like You, pardoning iniquity and forgiving transgression to the residue of his heritage. He retains not His anger forever, because He delights in kindness. He will again have mercy on us. He will suppress our iniquities; and You will cast *(tashlich)* our sins into the depths of the sea.”

 This is where the ritual got the name Tashlich, which literally means “cast.”

 The custom of shaking the corners of one’s garments (or *tallit katan*) at the conclusion of Tashlich comes from this verse as well. By shaking the garment, we symbolically show that we are casting off our sins into the river and are ready to start the new year with a clean slate.

 It is possible that due to the reference of “casting into the depths of the sea,” some individuals erroneously started casting food into the water, as if it symbolizes throwing away our sins to the fish. However, there is no actual source for throwing food to the fish,1 and in some of the earliest sources for the custom of Tashlich, as far back as the 14th century, the rabbis already decried this practice.2

 Rabbi Yaakov Moelin, known as the Maharil (1365–1427), gives two reasons for why it is problematic to feed the fish at Tashlich. Interestingly, both of these reasons are related to two common misconceptions about the laws of Yom Tov in general, namely, feeding animals and carrying.

**Feeding Animals**

 On the one hand, Jewish law stresses the importance of feeding one's animals in a timely manner. In fact, according to Jewish law, if one has animals that are dependent upon him, he is not allowed to sit down to eat before first feeding them.3

 On the other hand, on Shabbat and holidays one is not allowed to feed any animals that aren’t one’s responsibility and are not dependent upon him for their sustenance. Among other reasons, it is assumed that they will be able to get their sustenance elsewhere, and feeding them would involve unnecessary effort, which is prohibited. Therefore, on Shabbat and holidays it is even forbidden to feed one’s own bees or doves that nest in a dovecote, since they go out and feed themselves.4

 Additionally, on Yom Tov, there is an added restriction that one cannot place food directly before any kosher animal that is considered *mukztah**5—*even if it is dependent upon you for its sustenance—lest you come to move or capture it (*muktzah* in this context refers to any animal wasn’t designated for use on Yom Tov).6

 And while some authorities7 are of the opinion that this restriction doesn’t apply to any animal that is already considered “captured” (regardless of whether it is considered *mukztah*), all would agree that fish in a pond are both *muktzah* and not halachically considered “captured.”

 Based on this, it would be problematic to feed the fish at Tashlich, since they aren’t dependent upon you for their sustenance.

 However, this alone wouldn’t necessarily preclude all fish feeding at Tashlich. For example, if you have a private fish pond where the fish are dependent on you for their sustenance, then you are permitted on Yom Tov to place the food at a distance from them, since this unusual method will remind you that you aren’t permitted to catch the fish.8

 But there is another issue with feeding the fish at Tashlich.

**Carrying**

 Although, unlike Shabbat, one is generally permitted to carry in a public domain on Yom Tov, one may only carry items for which there is some sort of need. Since live fish are considered *muktzah* on Yom Tov, one has no need to feed them, and therefore carrying any food for them would not be permitted (unless there is an eruv9).10

 Based on the above, although there may be some specific scenarios in which it would be permitted to feed the fish at Tashlich on Rosh Hashanah, in general one is not permitted to do so.

**FOOTNOTES**

[1.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4498624/jewish/The-Problem-With-Feeding-Fish-at-Tashlich.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnoteRef1a4498624) See, however, Yad Yosef, Orach Chaim 324:12, quoted in Ketzeh Hamateh 598:11, that it is similar to feeding the birds on Shabbat Shirah, which some permit. However, there is no clear source that actually advocates feeding the fish, only possible reasons why it may not be problematic.

[2.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4498624/jewish/The-Problem-With-Feeding-Fish-at-Tashlich.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnoteRef2a4498624) See, for example, Minhagei Maharil, Rosh Hashanah.

[3.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4498624/jewish/The-Problem-With-Feeding-Fish-at-Tashlich.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnoteRef3a4498624) Talmud Berachot 40a.

[4.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4498624/jewish/The-Problem-With-Feeding-Fish-at-Tashlich.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnoteRef4a4498624) See Shulchan Aruch Harav, Orach Chaim 324:7.

[5.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4498624/jewish/The-Problem-With-Feeding-Fish-at-Tashlich.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnoteRef5a4498624) For more on *mukztah* as it pertains to live animals, see[How does Shabbat observance affect pet owners?](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/522415)

[6.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4498624/jewish/The-Problem-With-Feeding-Fish-at-Tashlich.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnoteRef6a4498624) See Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chaim 497:2; Shulchan Aruch Harav, Orach Chaim 497:5.

[7.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4498624/jewish/The-Problem-With-Feeding-Fish-at-Tashlich.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnoteRef7a4498624) See Mishnah Berurah 497:4 and Biur Halacha *ad loc.*

[8.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4498624/jewish/The-Problem-With-Feeding-Fish-at-Tashlich.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnoteRef8a4498624) See Shulchan Aruch Harav, Orach Chaim 497:5; Mishnah Berurah 497:5.

[9.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4498624/jewish/The-Problem-With-Feeding-Fish-at-Tashlich.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnoteRef9a4498624) See Shulchan Aruch Harav, Orach Chaim 518:2.

[10.](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4498624/jewish/The-Problem-With-Feeding-Fish-at-Tashlich.htm%22%20%5Cl%20%22footnoteRef10a4498624) See Shulchan Aruch Harav, Orach Chaim 518:1.

*Reprinted from the Parashat Nitzavim 5779 email of Chabad.Org Magazine.*