

L'Shanah Tovah!

How to use your Selichot Shanah Tovah T'shuvah Worksheet

If you've been a regular at P'nai Or Selichot, you have been doing this process that we learned from Reb Zalman for many years. If you are new to this, welcome. This process is powerful as a one-time thing, but gains poignancy over years.

We use these Inventory Worksheets year after year to keep a record of how we're doing. (I have a folio of worksheet pages that I three-hole punch in a binder and save, I have done this for around 25 years! This enables me to look back each year and see my progress, and notice both new and lingering challenges.

-Rabbi Marcia

שנה Shanah

It is based on Reb Zalman's customary teaching about the meaning of Shanah.

What do you think we are saying when we sing or say *L'Shanah Tovah*?

Hebrew words mean more than their customary English translation. As a general rule, Hebrew nouns come from verbs. The word for year (Shanah) comes from a Hebrew verb.

You might answer "*L'Shanah Tovah*" means (have a) good year. But Shanah actually does not mean year! That is derivative from its actual meaning. It is a noun that comes from the verb *shin, nun, hey* which has two paradoxically opposite meanings: change and repeat!

Two examples: The Mishnah is a teaching learned by repetition; a *shunui*, is an innovation or change...

So, when we wish each other *Shanah Tovah* are we wishing each other a good change or a good repetition?

Well YES, but only you know!

We recall Reb Zalman's *haint azoy/morgen azoy* Yiddish example of a phrase that has two comparably opposite meanings based on how it is said and the hand gesture that accompanies it

Haint azoy: Today like this. *Morgen azoy*: Tomorrow like this.

With a dull voice and one hand it means "today is like this and tomorrow (sadly) will be like this too."

But with a lift of voice and using two hands, it can mean:

"Today is like this... but tomorrow, WOW! Will be like THIS!"

So Change or Repeat, which is it?

It can be both or either... and only you know what qualities of heart, mind and soul, and what behaviors you are working on to change, and what you want a pat on the back for having done well, what you've achieved... that you want to repeat and build on!

We'll use these together on the night of Selichot. AND you can start now!