

Rabbi Eliezer Hirsch "The Rosh Hashana Secret That Will Change Your Life Forever" RH 2021

1. On Rosh Hashana it is inscribed and on the fast day of Yom Kippur it is sealed...
(U'Nitaneh Tokef, High Holiday Machzor)
- 2a. *...some are careful not to eat egozim (walnuts) on Rosh Hashanah. This is because the gematria (numerical value) of the Hebrew word "egoz" is the same as the numerical value for the word chait (sin)... (Rama Orach Chaim 583:2)
2. Just as a person's merits and sins are weighed at the time of his death, so, too, the sins of every inhabitant of the world together with his merits are weighed on the festival of Rosh Hashanah. If one is found righteous, his [verdict] is sealed for life. If one is found wicked, his [verdict] is sealed for death. A Beinoni's verdict remains tentative until Yom Kippur. If he repents, his [verdict] is sealed for life. If not, his [verdict] is sealed for death. (Mishneh Torah, Teshuva 3:3)
- 2a. *This principle is a fundamental concept and a pillar [on which rests the totality] of the Torah and mitzvot as [Deuteronomy 30:15] states: "Behold, I have set before you today life [and good, death and evil]." Similarly, [Deuteronomy 11:26] states, "Behold, I have set before you today [the blessing and the curse]," implying that the choice is in your hands.
3. With regard to all the traits: a man has some from the *beginning of his creation*, in accordance with his bodily nature. Some are appropriate to a person's nature and will [therefore] be acquired more easily than other traits. Some traits he does not have from birth. He may have learned them from others, or turned to them on his own. This may have come as a result of his own thoughts, or because he heard that this was a proper trait for him, which he ought to attain. [Therefore,] he accustomed himself to it until it became a part of himself. (Mishneh Torah Deot 1:2)
4. Were God to decree that an individual would be righteous or wicked **or that there would be a quality which draws a person by his essential nature to any particular path [of behavior], way of thinking, traits, or deeds**, as imagined by many of the fools [who believe] in astrology - how could He command us through [the words of] the prophets: "Do this," "Do not do this," "Improve your behavior," or "Do not follow after your wickedness?" [According to their mistaken conception,] **from the beginning of his creation, it would be decreed upon him, or his nature would draw him, to a particular quality...** (Mishneh Torah, Teshuva 5:3)
5. The distinction between listening and sight is perhaps analogous to the difference between deeds and self. When we listen, there are no shortcuts - we can only hear one syllable at a time and must go through that step-by-step process to achieve our goals. This corresponds to the painstaking process of changing ourselves by modifying our habitual behaviors. As we discussed, that approach to change requires painstaking

effort, one action at a time, until the change becomes second nature. However, Moses introduces to us a new world with Re'eh. Sight is comprehensive; you can see many discrete things at once, an ability that is impossible with hearing. That is the meaning of the phrase, a picture is worth a thousand words. Similarly, when we view ourselves from a distance, we see a proverbial path in front of us, an overall "vision" of what we want our life to become. This characteristic of sight corresponds to doing Teshuva on your entire self, taking advantage of the awareness that "2nd level Teshuva" brings. Just like when we learn to drive, the instructor says, Make sure you look ahead, not just in front of you. That's the long view Moses teaches us with Re'eh - don't simply pay attention to the details of your personality; be sure to also look at the broader scope of your life.

(The Book of Life, Chapter 3)

6. [Rabbi Yaakov] used to say: more precious is one hour in Teshuva and good deeds in this world, than all the life of the world to come; And more precious is one hour of the tranquility of the world to come, than all the life of this world. (Avot 4:17)
7. ...Rabbi Eliezer who said the world was created in Tishrei...and Rabbi Yehoshua [who said the world was created in Nisan]. Rabbeinu Tam says they are both [correct]: You can say that in Tishrei [God] thought about creating the world, but didn't create it until Nisan... (Tosefot Rosh Hashana 27a)