



Video 6 | 15 Elul 5784
Cantor Susan Caro

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Rosh Hashanah 26b

The Gemara asks: **With regard to what** principle do these *tanna'im* (rabbis of the Mishnah) **disagree? One Sage, Rabbi Yehuda, holds that on Rosh HaShana the more a person bends his mind** and humbles himself by bending in prayer, **the better.** Therefore, a curved *shofar* is sounded as an allusion to our bent minds and bodies. **But on Yom Kippur, the more a person straightens his mind** and prays with simplicity, **the better.** Therefore, a straight *shofar* is sounded. **The other Sage, the anonymous tanna of the mishna, maintains the opposite: On Rosh HaShana, the more a person straightens his mind** and avoids any crookedness, **the better. On fasts, on the other hand, the more a person bends his mind** and humbles himself, **the better.**

Reflection Question: What order is better or more important for you: To apply straightness, directness, so that you can achieve the flexibility of *t'shuvah*? Or, to draw yourself inward, bending, humbling, taking the right amount of space, and then to straighten before humanity and God on the Day of Atonement?