

הַמִּזְרָחִי HAMIZRACHI



MIZRACHI

VOLUME 2 • ISSUE 4

תשרי תש"פ
OCTOBER 2019

ISRAEL EDITION

TORAT ERETZ YISRAEL • PUBLISHED IN JERUSALEM • DISTRIBUTED AROUND THE WORLD



WITH GRATEFUL THANKS TO THE FOUNDING SPONSORS OF HAMIZRACHI – THE LAMM FAMILY OF MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

SIVAN RAHAV-MEIR
on smartphones
and real simanim



PAGE 22

RABBI HERSEL SCHACHTER
explains the power
of the shofar



PAGE 16

RABBANIT RACHELLE FRAENKEL
advocates compassion
...for ourselves



PAGE 34

RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS
encourages us to feel
G-d's closeness



PAGE 20

RABBANIT SHANI TARAGIN
explores the symbolism
of red and white



PAGE 9

RABBI YOSEF ZVI RIMON
addresses what to do
if one cannot fast



PAGE 10

ROSH HASHANAH AND YOM KIPPUR

**64
PAGES!**

The Heroes of Outpost 107

During the Yom Kippur War, 19 Israeli soldiers with minimal ammunition held back the might of the Syrian army for over four days. **PAGE 52**

INSIDE!

The remarkable story of how Israel has become a world leader in kidney transplants **PAGE 42**

Your guide to the Rosh Hashanah Simanim **PAGE 14**



If you don't want to keep Hamizrachi, you can double-wrap it before disposal, or place it directly into sheimos.

THIS EDITION IS DEDICATED IN HONOR OF
KURT & EDITH ROTHSCHILD
FOR THEIR LIFELONG UNSWERVING COMMITMENT TO
AM YISRAEL, ERETZ YISRAEL AND TORAT YISRAEL



MIZRACHI
WORLD MOVEMENT

www.mizrachi.org
office@mizrachi.org
+972 (0)2 620 9000

Chairman
Mr. Harvey Blitz

Chief Executive
Rabbi Doron Perez

Educational Directors
Rabbi Reuven Taragin
Rabbanit Shani Taragin

HAMIZRACHI

PUBLISHED BY THE MIZRACHI WORLD MOVEMENT

Editor-in-Chief
Daniel Verbov

Assistant Editor
Esther Shafier

Creative Director
Jonny Lipczer

Graphic Designer
Hadas Peretz

Production and Advertising Manager
Meyer Sterman
production@mizrachi.org

HaMizrachi seeks to spread Torat Eretz Yisrael throughout the world. HaMizrachi also contains articles, opinion pieces and advertisements that represent the diversity of views and interests in our communities. These do not necessarily reflect any official position of Mizrachi or its branches.

HAMIZRACHI DEDICATION OPPORTUNITIES

If you would like to dedicate an issue of HaMizrachi in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a simcha, please send an email to production@mizrachi.org



MIZRACHI
WORLD MOVEMENT

THE SUKKOT OF A LIFETIME

י"א-כ"ד תשרי תש"ף

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10 - WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2019

JOIN US FOR ALL OR PART OF THE PROGRAM

AT THE
JERUSALEM MOUNT ZION HOTEL
KASHRUT MEHADRIN YERUSHALAYIM

WITH **20+** WORLD CLASS EDUCATORS
INCLUDING:



Rabbi David Aaron



Rabbi Yuval Cherlow



Eve Harow



Rabbi Ari Kahn



Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon



Rabbanit Shani Taragin

Rabbi Ari Abramowitz • Rabbi Kenneth Cohen • Rabbi Jamie Cowland
Rabbi Yishai Fleisher • Rabbi Jeremy Gimpel • Josh Hasten • Gil Hoffman
Rabbi Jesse Horn • Rabbi Nasan Maimon • Rabbi Doron Perez
Rabbi Avraham Sutton • Rabbi Reuven Taragin • Rabbi Hanoch Teller

SIMCHAT BEIT HASHOEVA • INSPIRING SHIURIM
BIRKAT KOHANIM AT THE KOTEL • CHOL HAMOED TIYULIM
MOUNT OF OLIVES • KOTEL TUNNELS • KEVER RACHEL • CAESARIA
TOWER OF DAVID • ARUGOT FARM • HEBRON • HERODION • DEAD SEA
MASADA • CITY OF DAVID • TEMPLE MOUNT • ARCHEOLOGICAL DIGS
KIDS' CLUB & BABYSITTERS • CONCERTS & ENTERTAINMENT

SUKKOT@MIZRACHI.ORG • WWW.MIZRACHI.ORG/SUKKOT



The PERSONAL and the PUBLIC

THE DUAL JUDGMENT OF ROSH HASHANAH

We are all judged not once but twice. Two days of Rosh Hashanah – two very different judgments. We are judged once as an individual and the other as part of the collective. One is a reckoning of our private mission while the other is of our public role. One is of a personal nature, the other of a communal one. One is about *תקון עצמי*, bettering ourselves, and the other is about *תקון עולם*, making the world a better place. We may fare exceptionally well in one but fail miserably in the other. These judgments together represent our dual mission and the essence of what G-d wants from every one of us.

A REMARKABLE ZOHAR

We have gotten way ahead of ourselves; skipped many stages. Let us return to the source of this

transformational idea at the heart of Jewish life in general and Rosh Hashanah in particular. The Zohar, the great book of Jewish mysticism, comments that the reason there are two days of Rosh Hashanah is indeed because there are two very different types of judgment:¹ the judgment on the first day is called *Dina Kashia* – a harsh judgment, and on the second day, *Dina Rafia* – a weaker judgment. The first has the harshness of an exact strict judgment and the second is somehow blended with that of mercy.

AN UNUSUAL FESTIVAL

It is worth pointing out that this mystical insight of the Zohar is based on a halachic anomaly – an unusual fact about Rosh Hashanah. This festival is the only one that is observed for two days both in Israel and the Diaspora. Originally it was

only a one-day festival as explicitly mentioned in the Torah. However, at some point during the Second Temple period, our Sages extended it to a two-day festival, even in Eretz Yisrael. Being the only festival celebrated on Rosh Chodesh, the beginning of a new month, many difficulties arose as to the process of sanctifying the New Moon, then fully reliant on its sighting by witnesses who testified before the *Beit Din HaGadol*, the rabbinic court in Jerusalem. It was not always clear which was the first day of the new month. In order to overcome these technical difficulties around doubtful lunar sightings at the beginning of Tishrei, Rosh Hashanah became a two-day festival throughout the Jewish world. Based on this practical halachic rationale, the Zohar offers a deeper spiritual reason for this unusual change in the calendar, which goes to the core of our mission as Jews and sets the spiritual tone for the new year.

I was first exposed to the above commentary over two decades ago while studying in yeshiva. We were joined one Elul by a Chassidic Rebbe from the Spinka court. His words that day struck a deep chord with me. He mentioned that the Zohar based its idea on the fact that there are two almost identical verses in the book of Job about a day of judgment: “And it was on that day when the sons of G-d came to present themselves before G-d and the Satan was also amongst them.”² The sons of G-d is referring to the ministering angels on high. Both the Targum Yonatan and Rashi point out that this day is referring specifically to Rosh Hashanah. After all, this is the primary day the ministering angels gather before G-d. It is the time of judgment when the

Continued on page 4



Continued from page 3

angelic forces both prosecute and defend our actions and motives in the Heavenly Court. Based on these two verses, the Zohar sees a premise for two distinct types of judgment.

A BEAUTIFUL EXPLANATION

The Rebbe went on to give a beautiful interpretation for the need for two separate days of judgment: **every Jew lives concurrently on two plains – both as an individual and as a member of the community – the Jewish people.**³ Having two roles means that a Jew has two specific missions, each one requiring a specific focus and a separate judgment. We need to give a dual reckoning of how we have lived our lives as individuals and also how we have contributed to the Jewish people and the broader community.

On the first day, we are judged as a פְּרָט, an individual, and on the second day as part of the כָּלל – the collective. On day one our personal life is under scrutiny. How hard have we worked to better ourselves; to improve our character traits, actions and motives. Even if we were the only person alive, we have an obligation to aspire to be the best we can be. Are we a better person and Jew this year that we were the year before? Even if we most certainly are, it is not enough. No man is an island and no-one can get away with living in splendid isolation, oblivious to those around them. For that there is a second day of reckoning. We may also be a child, a spouse, a parent, and are certainly part of a family, a community, a people and a world around us. What difference

have we made to them? Has our role over the last year in each and every one of these spheres of connection made them that much better for us having been present?

The first day is harsh judgment, דִּינָא קָשִׁיָא, since we stand completely alone as individuals. The second day is a lighter judgment – a דִּינָא רַפְּיָא – since we are never alone when we are part of the כָּלל and contributing to its success. The merit of the community comes into play when we ensure that our **individual destiny is inextricably linked with the destiny of the community – Klal Yisrael.**

To fulfill our mission and pass the dual judgment, we must succeed at both. We dare not forget either mission. We may be judged in one way as an individual, but fare very differently with regard to our judgment as part of the Jewish people. We must be careful not to lose ourselves in either role to the exclusion of the other. A person must not focus exclusively on personal spiritual growth, as important as this is, but also always see how he or she can contribute to the destiny of our people and to the greater good. Alternatively, making a difference to the lives of others at the expense of our personal growth is counter-productive. We have to have it both ways. The dual judgment of Rosh Hashanah beckons us to aspire to be a complete Jew. To aspire always to both heal ourselves and to heal the fractured world we live in. To concurrently prioritize both the course of our personal spiritual lives and also the course of the lives of all those around us.

RETURNING TO ONE DAY

Perhaps this is the reason why the two-day Rosh Hashanah observance continued during the exile of the Jewish people from our Holy City and Land. Even once the calendar was fixed and no longer dependent on the sighting of witnesses, it would be a two-day holiday, and even in Israel too. At this time, the sense of Jewish peoplehood was being eroded and we found ourselves scattered to all corners of the globe. Judaism could have very easily become individually focused, since we had been stripped of our national homeland and the collective spiritual focus of the Beit Hamikdash. Jews could have forgotten about the enormous responsibility toward one another – the power of the קהלה – the community.

If we live as complete Jews, both individually and communally, perhaps we will no longer need two separate days. We will hopefully merit to be able to return soon to the original Biblical imperative of a one-day Rosh Hashanah: one day which incorporates both individual and communal togetherness, with the One People serving the One G-d in the One Land.

¹ Zohar, Parashat Pinchas, 231.

² Job 1:6 and very similarly again in 2:1.

³ I subsequently saw a very similar idea mentioned by Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler in Michtav MiEliyahu Volume 2, in his discourse about Rosh Hashanah.

Rabbi Doron Perez is the Chief Executive of World Mizrachi

JOBS AT HAMIZRACHI!

HaMizrachi is expanding and seeking:

- a part-time sales agent
- a Spanish-speaking graphic designer
- an English to Spanish translator

For details, please email production@mizrachi.org





REUVENI PRIDAN ● JPG

Shanna Tova from UMTB

**Wishing you and your family a "CHAG SAMEACH",
and a very happy new year**

We at United Mizrahi Tefahot Bank (UMTB) offer a team of banking experts who understand your culture and language, providing personal and professional service for all your financial needs.

As Israel's premier mortgage provider, we supply you with essential information for those looking to buy homes in Israel.

Allow us to show why UMTB is Israel's fastest growing bank.

Mizrahi Tefahot – Your Banking Home in Israel

For further information contact:

Jay Jacobs

Tel: +972-52-5690685

E-mail: jacobsj@umtb.co.il

UMTB Israel's No.1 bank for home loans and personal banking





The CENTRALITY of HISTORY

If you were to stand at the base of a mighty mountain, at the front door of an extravagant palace, or an inch away from a sweeping tapestry, you might know that you were standing in the presence of something special, but you would fail to grasp its greatness.

A single stone of the Kotel or a solitary chunk of rock at the base of Mount Everest can fail to impress. Retreat to a point at which you can take in the magnificence of its entirety and only then will you be able to truly appreciate what your eyes behold.

On Rosh Hashanah, we spend a great deal of time mentioning remembrance.

Indeed, a centerpiece of the main prayer service is called *Zichronot*, remembrances, during which we invoke many heroic deeds of our ancestors in the Bible (such as the righteousness of Noach, the self-sacrifice of Yitzchak and the ironclad faith of the Jews in the desert). We beseech G-d to remember these great individuals, and in their merit, to remember us too.

Like all compositions of prayer, these paragraphs are not addressed solely to G-d. They are equally written with the intention of impacting each of us.

While we will never be able to fully comprehend the notion of G-d 'remembering,' this focus on memory and on memories teaches us a crucial lesson about the underlying meaning of Jewish living.

To be a Jew is to remember. To actively remember. *Zachor*.

This principle constitutes the essence of our existence and permeates throughout the contours of our calendar.

Every Friday night we lift a glass of wine to remember that there is a Creator behind Creation; every Seder Night we engage our senses to relive and remember the salvation from Egyptian oppression; every Tisha B'Av we remember and commemorate the tragedies of a long, painful history, and every Yom HaAtzmaut we remember and celebrate our miraculous national resurrection.

To be a Jew is to set aside time for intense and active remembrance, affording us an opportunity to reflect upon our history, our mission, and our lofty purpose in this world.

As Jews, we must learn the art of contextualization – to orient our internal paradigms until we perceive ourselves not only as individuals (which is important in and of itself), but as an essential element of an enormous tapestry of breathtaking beauty and irreducible meaning.

Rosh Hashanah, as the first moment of the Jewish year, represents the opportunity to put this into action.

This is the time to step back and contextualize.

The memories we invoke in our prayers compel us to recalibrate, to take the time to remind ourselves to see beyond our own interests and

understand our larger contexts as we create new memories.

This process reminds us that we do not stand alone before G-d. Rather, we are linked to vast networks that imbue our lives with purpose, significance and commitment.

We remind ourselves that we are part of a global Jewish community that lives in a time of both obstacles and opportunity, and therefore we pray for the strength to overcome the challenges.

We remind ourselves that we are part of the magnificent Jewish story, a narrative replete with heroines and heroes, whose faith and righteousness serve to guide our own decisions in the service of G-d and our people.

And we remind ourselves that we are part of humankind as a whole, whose peace and prosperity we yearn and pray for every day.

Through remembering the greater context in which we live our lives, we give meaning to our existence over and above the fleeting pursuit of our own individual ends.

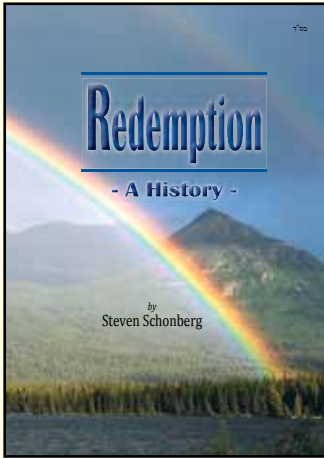
This expanded consciousness and broadened perspective enables us to connect to something infinitely greater than ourselves.

So this Rosh Hashanah, may we merit to truly grasp the greatness of our existence, to experience this deeper level of meaning throughout the upcoming year, and to spread our light throughout the entire world.

Rabbi Benji Levy is CEO of Mosaic United

FOR THE THIRD TEMPLE

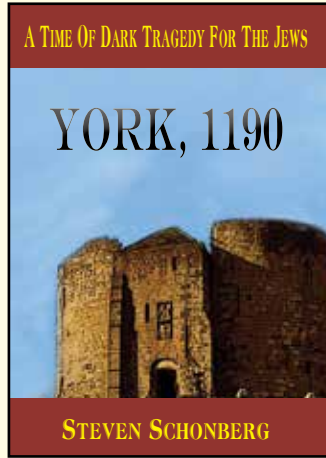
Books By Steven Schonberg



'Redemption – A History' provides the reader with knowledge about Redemption, and communicates G-d's relationship to His Chosen People.

The author believes that his life story, as expressed in poetic form in this book, is also a symbol of G-d's bond with Israel.

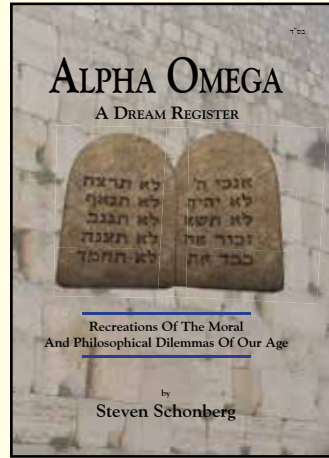
ISBN: 978-1946124029
Soft cover; 264 pages
USD \$19.95; NIS 89



In 1190, York became the location of one of the worst pogroms for Jews in England during the medieval period.

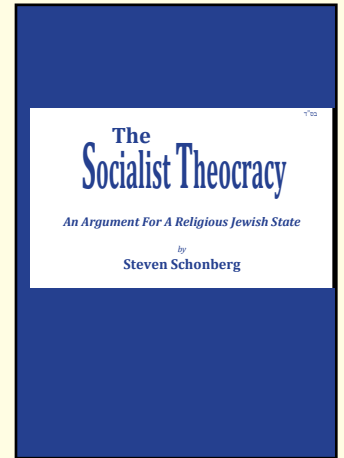
The author documents in this historical novel, 'York, 1190', the circumstances that led up to this tragedy for the Jews, in the light of redeeming these dark events.

ISBN: 978-1936778447
Soft cover, 146 pages
USD \$15.95; NIS 59



Sharp moral stories in 'Alpha Omega: A Dream Register' reflect an impassioned search for a future based on faith, amid the conflicting ideologies, and human frailties, of the present – with the realization – of an ultimate victory of truth.

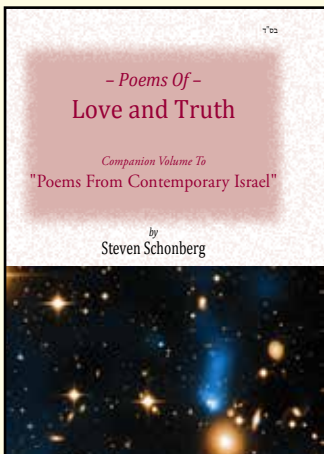
ISBN: 978-1946124142
Soft cover, 142 pages
USD \$15.95; NIS 59



'The Socialist Theocracy' presents the argument for a religious Jewish state, with a Messianic vision of the immediate future, embracing modern technology.

ISBN: 978-1-946124227
Soft cover, 32 pages
USD \$9.95; NIS 39

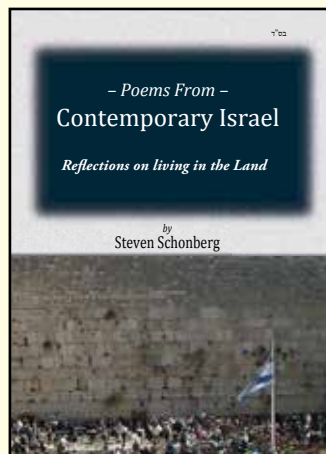
REDEPTIVE THEMES



'To bring down, from Heaven, the Ideal' - (And the Author's Dream)

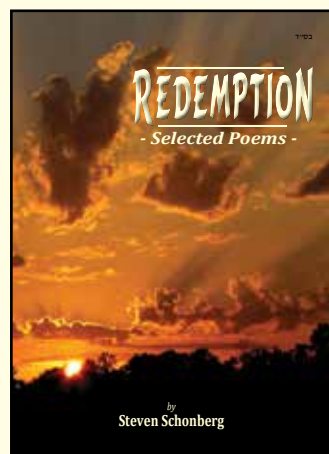
*ISBN: 978-1936778249
Soft Cover; 64 pages
USD \$15.95; NIS 49

*Included in 'Redemption – A History'



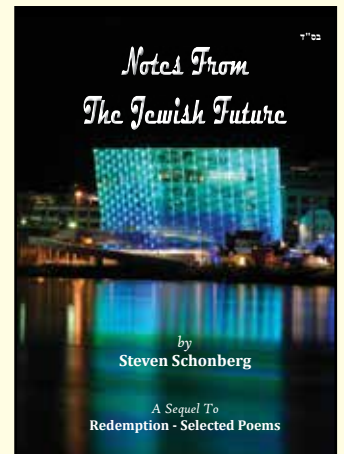
'I came to Jerusalem, in search of truth; I found G-d, and myself'

*ISBN: 978-1936778096
Soft Cover; 66 pages
USD \$15.95; NIS 49



'So please, Jews, my People, Come, together'

ISBN 978-1-946124289
Soft Cover; 60 pages
USD \$13.95; NIS 45



A vision of the nation state of Israel, based on Torah ... redemptive themes ... a pathway for Jews to return ... within the framework of Moshiach.

ISBN: 978-1-946124-49-4
Soft cover, 24 pages
USD \$7.95; NIS 35

USA: www.amazon.com
UK: www.amazon.co.uk
FR: www.amazon.fr

Order Online
www.israel.mazopub.com



Mazo Publishers

mazopublishers@gmail.com
www.mazopublishers.com

Available in Israel and
Worldwide
Pomeranz Bookshop
in Jerusalem
Be'eri St. 5,
02-623-5559





TESHUVA: TO WHOM ARE WE RETURNING?

TESHUVA AS RETURN

The word *teshuva* is often translated as repentance, but this translation somewhat misses the point because the word actually means to return. To whom or to what are we supposed to return through *teshuva*?

RETURNING TO OURSELVES

People generally associate *teshuva* with a return to G-d. Sin indeed distances us from G-d and its ultimate goal is indeed to return to Him,¹ but this return is preceded by a different return.

Before describing the return to G-d, Deuteronomy 30 describes *teshuva* as a return to **oneself** – or more specifically a return to one’s heart – והשובות אל לבבך. Meaningful, long-term character change begins with and hinges upon a change of heart. This kind of repentance is harder than merely trying to improve one’s actions. Yet it also makes *teshuva*, as the Torah emphasizes later in the chapter, more accessible and natural – פי קרוב אליך הדבר מאד בפיה – ובלבבך לעשותו, “it is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart to do it.”²

Teshuva as change of heart is described as a return to oneself because living by G-d’s Will is our true intended nature.³ This is how Chazal⁴ explain Kohelet 7:29: “G-d created Man (both Adam and all of us) straight, but he/they seek many complications.” We were created with a natural moral compass, but we veer from the path it sets thinking we will arrive at a better destination.

THE RETURN TO G-D

After describing *teshuva* as a return to one’s heart, the Torah next

describes the return to G-d: ושבתי עד ה' אלקיך ושמעת בקולו ככל אשר אנכי מצוך היום אתה ובניך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך (Deuteronomy 30:2).

At first glance, the progression seems to be that our return to our heart facilitates a genuine ‘full-hearted’ return to G-d. On a deeper level, the return to G-d is not only made possible by a return to our heart, but is also a natural extension of it. Human life begins with G-d personally ‘breathing’ our soul (and according to some Chassidic masters part of His own) into us.⁵ Returning to our natural state is essentially returning to our G-dly soul.⁶

This is why Rav Kook saw the return to G-d as an immediate outgrowth of returning to ourselves. In Chapter 15 of his *Orot HaTeshuva*,⁷ he poetically describes the backdrop of sin and both stages of the *teshuva* process: “When one forgets the essence of his own soul; when one gets distracted from seeing his internal life source, everything becomes confused and unclear. The initial return which immediately lights up the darkness is man’s return to himself, to his soul’s root source and then he **immediately** returns to G-d – the Soul of all souls – and he continues moving forward, higher and higher in sanctity and purity.”

ELOKAI NESHAMA

Upon awakening every morning⁸ we thank G-d for returning our souls to us in their original pure form. He does so in the hope that we will sustain this purity and add sanctity. *Teshuva* is the decision and commitment to do so by avoiding the sins that taint our souls and committing to maximize opportunities for spiritual development.

Let us take advantage of this period by doing just that.

¹ See Deuteronomy 4:30.

² The Ramban (30:11) explains that this verse refers to the *mitzvah* of *teshuva*. (Rashi explains otherwise.) The reference to the heart reinforces his interpretation. See Eiruvin 54a, which emphasizes that *teshuva* is only easily accessible when it begins through the heart. Also see the Torah’s description of G-d’s heart-focused assistance to the *ba’al teshuva* (verse 5) and the additional mention in verse 10. Also see the opening page of Sefer HaTanya, where he explains that the goal of the book is to explain how *teshuva* is close by when pursued through the heart.

³ This explains why the Gemara (Shabbat 105b) describes the *yetzer hara* as a foreigner within us and the basis the Rambam (Geirushin 2:9) uses for justifying coerced *mitzvah* observance as a way of helping us return to ourselves.

⁴ See Targum on the verse and Kohelet Rabbah 7:50 and Ramban (Genesis 2:9).

⁵ Genesis 2:7.

⁶ See Maharal. Netivot Olam, Netiv HaTeshuva 2.

⁷ In his introduction, Rav Kook explains that he wrote on the topic because of its extreme importance. He used to say that people should never stop learning *Orot HaTeshuva*.

⁸ We mention the return of our souls in our first words (*Modeh Ani*) and we add the soul’s purity in the full *bracha* of *Elokai Neshama*, which we recite washing our hands, a sign of purity.

Rabbi Reuven Taragin is Educational Director of Mizrahi and Dean of the Yeshivat HaKotel Overseas Program
ravtaragin@mizrachi.org



Scan here to join Rabbi Taragin’s WhatsApp group with daily Divrei Torah



THE SYMBOLISM OF RED AND WHITE

The Talmud Yerushalmi¹ contrasts the despair of non-Jews on their days of judgment, manifested through their wearing of black clothing and unshaven faces, with Am Yisrael, who approach *Yemei HaDin* with confidence, shaving their beards and wearing white. The Rema cited the custom of wearing clean white clothing on Yom Kippur to emulate the ministering angels and to wear a *kittel* “which is white and clean and also the garment of the dead; this makes the human heart submissive and broken.”² These explanations may be appreciated through a re-examination of the white clothing the Kohen Gadol wore during the Yom Kippur service.

As we read and learn the Kohen Gadol’s *Seder HaAvoda* on Yom Kippur, we note that he donned special *bigdei lavan* – white linen garments, each time he entered the *Kodesh HaKodashim*. According to the Ramban,³ these clothes give the Kohen Gadol the appearance of an angel,⁴ described as wearing a sacral linen tunic. Perhaps this is the source of the Rema’s first explanation above.

However, there are other times when the High Priest dons linen garments as a reflection of a lower status of importance. When he removes the ashes from the altar in the morning, he does not wear his standard priestly clothing, but the *bigdei haBad* (white linen garments). Similarly, his *michnasayim* (trousers), worn for a technical role of covering and not for “glory and adornment,” are also referred to as *bigdei haBad*. On Yom HaKippurim, he is to be reminded of his lowly stature, facilitating his submission before G-d in the Holy of Holies.

Rashi⁵ explains that on Yom Kippur, the Kohen Gadol – who generally wears eight golden vestments – officiates as a *kohen hedyot*, a regular kohen who wears four priestly garments. As he does so, he is reminded of the time before he became Kohen Gadol, of the seven days of *miluim*, preparing the Mishkan and its vessels. He descends from his ‘golden’ stature as he removes his usual clothing, and humbly prepares the Mishkan for renewed revelation as he changes to his ‘elevated’ priestly garments later in the day; his appointment renewed, revelation re-experienced.⁶

Furthermore, as Aharon HaKohen donned the white garments worn by the regular priests as he entered the *Kodesh HaKodashim* with the sacred incense, I can only imagine the poignant *deja vu* he must have felt remembering the initial *miluim*. After all, his sons Nadav and Avihu wore those garments as they carried the incense only to be consumed by Divine fire. Perhaps Aharon must revisit their deaths every year, reminding himself – and us – to defer to G-d’s commandments, despite his passionate and instinctive desire to come close to Him.

Lastly, the Kohen Gadol’s white garments remind us of the *metzora* – the leper whose healthy skin has turned white and is compared to a dead person.⁷ His state of *tumah* (impurity) interferes with and obstructs his relationship with *kedusha* (sanctity). He must remain outside the community and not enter the Mikdash. To purify the *metzora*, a Kohen must take two live birds, slaughter one, sprinkle the blood seven times on the person and send the live bird out to the field.⁸ The blood, symbolizing life, revives and

restores the *metzora* to a healthy state of interacting with people and with G-d in the Mikdash. Similarly, the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur must wear white, symbolizing the garments of the dead and akin to the skin of the *metzora*, representing the impediments that sin brings to our vibrant relationship with G-d. But just like the *metzora*, he takes two goats (parallel to the birds),⁹ slaughters one, sprinkles the blood on the *kapporet* seven times, and sends the live goat to the desert. And like the *metzora*, whose healthy skin and sensitivity to life are restored, the Kohen Gadol immerses and dons his vestments of scarlet and gold.

As we wear white on Yom Kippur, we each revisit death/*tzara’at*, which is designed to evoke a “submissive and broken” feeling. וְנִשְׁלְמָה פְּרִים שְׁפָתֵינוּ – it also reminds of the blood of the sacrifices, and the gifted opportunity we have to relish life anew each year.

Wishing you all a year of renewed vitality and restored relationships of closeness!

¹ Rosh Hashanah 1:3.

² Shulchan Aruch OH 610:4.

³ Leviticus 16:4.

⁴ See Ezekiel 9:3 and Daniel 10:5.

⁵ Leviticus 16:4.

⁶ See Rav Yoel Ben-Nun’s article in *Megadim* vol. 8, pp. 34-39, where he compares the Yom Kippur service to the initial consecration of the Mishkan.

⁷ Nedarim 64b.

⁸ Leviticus 14:4-7.

⁹ See Ramban Leviticus 14:4.

Rabbanit Shani Taragin is Educational Director of Mizrahi and the Director of the Mizrahi Matan Lapidot Educators’ Program shani@mizrachi.org



Guidance for Someone Unable to Fast on Yom Kippur

Some people find it very difficult to fast. In some cases, they are not allowed to fast for medical reasons. When there is a doubt as to whether one should fast, one should consult a rabbi. If this is not possible and there is real doubt (i.e. fasting could endanger life), one should avoid fasting. A sick person must not fast contrary to the doctor's instructions.

Is it permissible to use medication that helps ease the fast, before Yom Kippur?

Of course, even though it makes fasting easier. On Yom Kippur, there is no obligation of mourning or sadness. We refrain from eating and drinking, but there is no obligation to feel uncomfortable. It is preferable for a healthy person who fasts easily not to take these pills.

Prayer or eating?

The Chatam Sofer wrote that it is better not to go to synagogue if it may cause one not to fast. It is preferable to pray on one's own, rather than drink *shiurin* (small amounts) even one time. One who is weak and can only fast if he remains in bed all day, should not attempt to go to synagogue. He should pray by himself as best he can. Attending synagogue and/or praying are of secondary importance to the biblical obligation to fast.

If necessary, how should one drink?

Even in a case where drinking is necessary, it would be better to drink less than a *melo lugmav* – the fill of one's cheeks, every nine minutes. If necessary, there are opinions which allow drinking at more frequent intervals.

How do we measure *melo lugmav*?

The fill of one's cheeks is of course different for everyone. It's easy to measure. Fill the mouth with water and spit it out into a disposable cup. Divide that amount into two using another cup. The amount in both cups is now *melo lugmav*. Before Yom Kippur, mark that amount on a cup and only drink that amount each time (see Nishmat Avraham 1, 5212,9). Or measure out the majority of a *revi'it*, which is less than 44ml, and preferably less than 38ml (there are shot glasses and even plastic bags that contain the required amount nowadays, which you can even discreetly drink from in shul). Once there is no further need to drink in *shiurin*, one must stop drinking.

What is one allowed to drink?

According to the Nefesh Chayah, only water. However, most *poskim* hold that you may also drink a tasty drink. In fact, it may even be preferable to drink a tasty drink – Yom Kippur is a Yom Tov, and if you must drink it is better to enjoy it. Additionally, drinking a sweetened beverage may help prevent eating and drinking later on.

How should one eat when necessary?

When eating is necessary, it is better to eat less than the size of a "large dried date" once every nine minutes. This is about 30cc, roughly the size of a regular matchbox (even a portion of food that only becomes smaller than a matchbox after grinding it is permissible).

When a person both eats and drinks on Yom Kippur, they are allowed

to eat immediately after drinking (or vice versa) without waiting nine minutes. However, one should be careful about liquidy foods that could fall into either category (such as crushed fruit, porridge, etc.). One should not eat or drink within nine minutes of consuming them.

What *bracha* should one say when eating and drinking?

When eating or drinking in *shiurin*, it is enough to make a *bracha* over the first portion (unless there has been a long time between portions or the mind has been distracted). One should not say a *bracha* *achrona* (a *bracha* after eating) when eating in *shiurin*.

Can I shower to regain strength for the fast?

If a person is weak and feels he needs to break the fast, it is permissible to take a shower rather than to eat or drink (a shower was even allowed for a *choleh she'ain bo sakana* – a patient in no danger) if it will indeed help him get through the fast.

Pills on Yom Kippur

A *choleh she'ain bo sakana* who must continue taking pills even on Yom Kippur may swallow them without water. If water is necessary, 'damage' the water before swallowing (with something bitter or with a little salt – a way that people would not normally drink water). If the pill has a taste, wrap it in thin paper and swallow it wrapped.

Rabbi Yosef Zvi Rimon is Head of Mizrahi's Shalhevet Educational Advisory Board and Chairman of Sulamot



Into the Inner Chamber

Yom Kippur is a very special day, the day on which atonement is granted to Am Yisrael.

How does this process work?

One might expect that atonement would occur following *teshuva* (repentance), but the verses don't mention *teshuva* at all.

In Leviticus 16, the first source of Yom Kippur in the Torah, the subject is mainly what the Kohen Gadol, the High Priest, needs to do to prepare himself to enter the Holy of Holies. The Torah repeatedly stresses that it is his service that atones for Am Yisrael and allows him to enter the holiest sanctum. There is no mention whatsoever of Am Yisrael having to do *teshuva* for the process to succeed. Moreover, the sins of the people are cast upon the scapegoat, and there is no requirement for mass *teshuva*.

Seven chapters later, the second time that Bnei Yisrael are commanded about Yom Kippur, the verses focus on what the people should be doing on this day: they should fast and refrain from work, but again, no mention of *teshuva* or that it is a condition for the atonement to take effect.

Therefore, because of these verses, it is quite possible that Rabbi says that "Yom Kippur atones for all sins in the Torah, whether a person did *teshuva* or did not do *teshuva*" (Yoma 85b).

The concept of atonement without repentance is almost inconceivable to us, and indeed, the Gemara cites another opinion, according to

which Yom Kippur does atone after *teshuva*. This opinion is expressed by many commentators on the verses in Leviticus 23, who argue that the atonement on Yom Kippur is designated for those who do *teshuva*, and that the aim of the fast is for people to repent (see Rabbeinu Bachaye, Alshich, and Seforno, to name but three).

Nevertheless, the idea that Yom Kippur can atone for our sins even without repentance is a particularly interesting and significant one.



Yom Kippur is the only day in the year on which the Kohen Gadol enters the Holy of Holies, the holiest place on earth. The long atonement process he performs allows him to go in there, and to meet G-d face to face, so to speak. Reaching the highest possible level of closeness to the Divine. So when the Kohen Gadol does go in and comes out "in peace, with no injury," it is then that atonement is granted to the entire people, who witness their transformation through the scarlet thread miraculously turning white.

Yes, Am Yisrael must do *teshuva* all the time. They must examine their ways and correct their behavior on a regular basis. But Yom Kippur

offers an alternative route: a "face to face" meeting with G-d Himself, a very special closeness, which is only possible on this day. The significance of the Kohen's entry into the Holy of Holies is that it offers us the possibility of connecting to the deepest point within our souls.

For that point is pure and good in every human being, inextricably bonded with G-d: "The soul You have given me is pure." And that internal root within Am Yisrael is our special connection to the Almighty.

One day a year, G-d allows us to enter into the inner sanctum, and touch the root, the source from which our souls are bonded to G-d.

And in this state, there is no room for sin. All our sins are "sent to Azazel," and all we have left is the pristine bond between Am Yisrael and G-d.

At this zenith of individual and national awareness, atonement becomes a natural consequence.

Therefore, it certainly does appear that we really don't need to do *teshuva* in order to attain atonement on Yom Kippur.

Nevertheless, it makes perfect sense that on this day, for which we have enormous expectation, we should make full use of this once-a-year opportunity to try and bring ourselves into a state of "entry into the holiest place," and to connect to the deepest, purest place in our souls, which is "part of G-d above."

Rabbanit Sharon Rimon teaches Tanach and is Content Editor for the Tanach website www.hatanakh.com/en



Counting our Blessings

At a time when our societies are experiencing alarming levels of disunity, hatred and polarization, our Rosh Hashanah liturgy provides us with the antidote to this downward spiral. We are blessed to have a Torah tradition, which not only provides us with the solution but also with a practical guide to how it may be achieved.

This idea is articulated beautifully in our Musaf Amidah for Rosh Hashanah, which provides an invaluable insight into the way G-d feels about us. We recall a blessing given by the heathen prophet, Bilaam, “He has not seen iniquity in Jacob; neither has he seen perverseness in Israel. The L-rd his G-d is with him and the King will be his friend” (Numbers 23:21).

A modern commentary, *Iturei Torah*, provides this beautiful explanation: the Torah is referring here to one who judges others favorably and always seeks to find their virtues. Because they see no sinful behavior in others, G-d is with them and cherishes them as a friend.

Or in other words, the great pillar upon which decency stands is what Rav Kook referred to as *ahavat chinam* – the natural, unconditional love of others.

The Almighty thus delights in those who are well disposed towards others. G-d is comfortable in the presence of people who are comfortable with their fellows; He feels close to those who are close with all, regardless of their imperfections.

Yet whilst we might all readily agree in principle that we should work towards a culture of *ahavat chinam*,

it can be difficult to achieve this ideal in practice.

Every dog has his day! This is a very Jewish teaching, beautifully expressed in Pirkei Avot: “There is no man who has no hour.” Simply put, there are immeasurable qualities of goodness in every person if only we had the patience and tolerance to care enough to discover and appreciate them.

There are two simple Hebrew words which have the same three letters: נֶגַע (pleasure) and נֶגַע (plague). The only difference between them is where you put your ע – *ayin* (also means ‘eye’) i.e. how you view the situation. Two individuals can meet the same person and share an identical experience. For one, it can be a pleasure and for the other, a plague. It all depends on the attitude they adopt.

Created in the image of G-d, every human being has some virtue, coupled with immense untapped potential. If we actively seek out the goodness of others, instead of knocking them down, we will discover the hidden qualities we never imagined they had.

An appreciation of this lies behind the fascinating manner in which the Israelites were counted. At the commencement of the Book of Numbers, they were commanded, “Take the sum of all the congregations of the Children of Israel... by their polls.” This imperative is surprising in the light of the events described in Samuel (2:24), when King David and the Israelites were severely punished for taking a census, concerning which David said, “I have sinned greatly through that which I have done.”

Why did David’s action prompt the wrath of G-d, whereas Moses, on no less than four occasions, perform the same action (counting the people) at the behest of the Almighty Himself?

The answer lies in the manner in which the numerical strength of the people was ascertained. Rashi explains “by their polls” to mean through shekels, a half-shekel per person. It was the coins which were counted and not the people.

David, however, undertook a headcount, whereby each individual was reduced to a statistic. As every human being is a unique, G-dly entity, it is anathema for us to regard any person as a mere number. In our post-Shoah era, we carry the scars of what dehumanization can lead to; of what can happen when people are totally stripped of their dignity and individuality.

Commenting on the command, *שָׂאוּ אֶת רִאשׁוֹ*, “count the heads” (Numbers 1:2), the Shelah suggests that every person is a *rosh*, a head. Each one has the potential to reach great heights and must, therefore, be counted individually. Although no one is perfect, neither is anyone useless. Indeed, even a broken clock tells the right time twice a day!

As we usher in a New Year pulsating with opportunity, we recognize that G-d loves those who love their fellows. When you befriend another, you have a friend in G-d.

I extend my warm, good wishes to the global Mizrahi family for a wonderful New Year of peace, unity and joy.

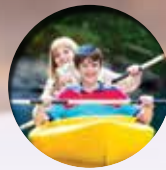
Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis is Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth

kosher
travelers
EXPERIENCE the DIFFERENCE

SUKKOT 2019

*Relaxing &
Inspiring*

OCT 13-20, 2019



Glatt Mehadrin | Gourmet food | Personally Hosted | Family Entertainment

**ALL NEWLY
REFURBISHED
HOTELS**

ELMA LUXURY HOTEL ZICHRON Yaakov ▲

INBAL HOTEL JERUSALEM ▼



www.koshertravelers.com | info@koshertravelers.com | Israel + 972 2992 9801 | USA +1646 240 411 8

Europe: +44 2070 486168 | Australia: +61 39 999 7496 | South Africa: +2783 377 1908

LUXURY CRUISES / EXOTIC TOURS / ITALIAN ALPS / AFRICAN SAFARI / PESACH HOTELS / ISRAEL TOURISM



Simanim

for Rosh Hashanah



Apple & Honey • תפוח ודבש

According to the Maharil, we eat an apple dipped in honey because: "When the Torah mentions the 'fragrance of the field' (Bereishit 27:27) that Yitzhak includes in his blessing to Ya'akov, this fragrance was the fragrance of apple orchards (according to many midrashim, this occurred on Rosh Hashanah, and apple orchards have kabbalistic significance.)"

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו
שתחדש עלינו שנה טובה ומתוקה.

May it be Your will, L-rd our G-d and G-d of our ancestors,
that You renew us for a good and sweet year.



Dates • תמרים

Tamarim is a Hebrew word, the root of which is 'tam' – to cease.

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו
שיתמו אויבינו.

May it be Your will, L-rd our G-d and G-d of our ancestors,
that our enemies meet their end.



Pomegranate • רמון

Pomegranates, fenugreek and carrots are eaten because of our request of G-d to increase our mitzvot and merits, and their associations with abundance. Pomegranates are eaten due to their abundance of seeds. Some sources say there are 613 seeds, just like the number of mitzvot.

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו
שנרבה זכיות כרמון.

May it be Your will, L-rd our G-d and G-d of our ancestors,
that we produce as much merit as the pomegranate produces seeds.



Fenugreek • רוביא

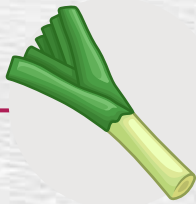
Rubya is an Aramaic word the root of which means to increase (Shulchan Aruch 583).

יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו
שירבו זכיותינו.

May it be Your will, L-rd our G-d and G-d of our ancestors,
that You renew us for a good and sweet year.



The Gemara (Keritut 6a) relates that it is customary to eat foods that have positive symbolism on Rosh Hashanah. We eat these foods and recite a prayer expressing our hope that we will be blessed in the coming year.



Leek • כַּרְתִּי

Leeks, dates and beets represent our request of G-d to protect us from our enemies, and/or our fervent prayer that our sins be nullified, by their connection to the concept of cessation. Kartee is an Aramaic word the root of which means to cut off.

**יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
שִׂיכַרְתּוּ שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ.**

May it be Your will, L-rd our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that our enemies will be cut off.



Beet • סָלְקָא

Salka is an Aramaic word the root of which means to remove.

**יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
שִׂיסְתַּלְקוּ שׁוֹנְאֵינוּ.**

May it be Your will, L-rd our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that our enemies vanish.

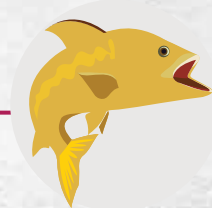


Carrot • גָּזֵר

Carrots – 'meheren' in Yiddish – the root of which means many (Chayei Adam 138:6).

**יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
שִׂתַּעֲבִיר רַע גָּזֵר דִּינָנוּ וְשִׂתַּגְזֵר עָלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה.**

May it be Your will, L-rd our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that You will remove the bad judgment upon us and decree a happy New Year.



Fish • דָּגִים

Fish is eaten as a symbol of being fruitful and multiplying like the fish in the sea.

**יְהִי רְצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֱלֹהֵי אֲבוֹתֵינוּ
שִׂנְפַרְהָ וְנִרְבָּה כְּדָגִים.**

May it be Your will, L-rd our G-d and G-d of our ancestors, that we multiply like fish.



Tekiat Shofar to Elevate Tefillah to Ze'akah

One might find it surprising that the *tekiot* blown during *chazarat haShatz* on Rosh Hashanah do not constitute a *hefsek* (break) in the middle of the *Amidah*.

Instead, it seems that these two entities blend together as one. We can better appreciate the intimate connection between *tekiat shofar* and *chazarat haShatz* based on an analysis of the efficacy and acceptance of *tefillah*.

The Gemara (*Berachot* 32b) teaches, “From the time that the Beit HaMikdash was destroyed, the heavenly gates of prayer were locked.” The Gemara’s source is: גַּם כִּי אָזַעַק וְאֶשְׁוַע שְׁתָּם תִּפְלְתִי – “Though I would cry out and plead, He shut out my prayer” (*Eicha* 3:8). Based on this Gemara, we have the practice of omitting the phrase, תִּתְקַבֵּל – “May the prayers and supplications be accepted,” from the *kaddish* after Shacharit on Tisha B’Av, since our *tefillot* are not answered to the same extent as they would be if there was a Beit HaMikdash.

This is because the Beit HaMikdash is not only the place for the offering of *korbanot*; it is also the central location for acceptance of *tefillah*. The Beit HaMikdash is termed “Beit Tefillah” in the verse, כִּי בֵּיתִי בֵּית תְּפִלָּה – “for My House will be called a House of Prayer for all the peoples” (*Yeshayahu* 56:7). Indeed, when Shlomo HaMelech offered his beautiful *tefillah* upon the dedication of the First Beit HaMikdash, he made no mention of the offering of *korbanot*, but instead emphasized: וְהִתְפַּלְלוּ וְהִתְחַנְּנוּ אֵלַי בְּבַיִת הַזֶּה, “And [Your people] shall pray

and supplicate to You in this House” (*Melachim* I 8:33).

Even when one finds himself at a distant location, he should face the Beit HaMikdash when praying. In this way, the *tefillah* gains acceptance, as Shlomo continued: וְהִתְפַּלְלוּ אֵלַי דְּרָף אֲרָצָם אֲשֶׁר נָתַתָּה לְאֲבוֹתָם הָעִיר אֲשֶׁר בְּחַרְתָּ וְהַבַּיִת אֲשֶׁר בָּנִיתָ לְשִׁמְךָ, “And they shall pray to You by way of their Land that You gave to their forefathers, and [by way of] the city that You have chosen, and [by way of] the House that I built for Your Name” (8:48).

Nevertheless, the Gemara continues, “Even though the gates of *tefillah* have been locked, the gates of tears have not been locked.” If one prays with such sincerity that he is brought to tears during his prayers, that higher form of *tefillah* is answered, even if the Beit HaMikdash is in a state of *churban*. The Targum translates the phrase, יוֹם תְּרוּעָה יִהְיֶה, לְכֶם, as יוֹם יִבְכָּא יִהְיֶה לְכוֹן – “it shall be a day of crying for you.” The shofar blasts are described as sounds of crying because *tekiat shofar* can elevate the *tefillah* to one offered with tears, to a level of תְּפִלָּה שֶׁעִם דְּמֵעוֹת. This is what is gained by blowing the shofar in conjunction with *Malchuyot*, *Zichronot* and *Shofarot*, and that is why, according to Rashi, joining these two *mitzvot* is a fulfillment of a *mitzvah d’oraita*. Through this combination, the *tefillah* is elevated to a status of *ze’akah* (cry).

Similarly, the Rambam¹ writes, in reference to a public fast during an *eit tzarah* (difficult time), that it is a *mitzvah d’oraita* לְזַעַק וּלְהִרְיֵעַ בְּחֻצוֹצְרוֹת – “to cry and to sound the *chatzotzrot* (trumpets).” The

regular, daily obligation of *tefillah* is converted into an obligation of *ze’akah* during an *eit tzarah*. Indeed, the Ramban² likens the blowing of the shofar during Mussaf to the blowing of the *chatzotzrot* following each of the additional six blessings added to the *chazarat haShatz* on a public fast.³ The shofar converts the *tefillah* of Rosh Hashanah into *ze’akah*. This is the Gemara’s intent in describing *tekiat shofar* with the phrase, כִּיּוֹן דְּלִזְכְּרוֹן הוּא כְּבִפְנֵי דְמִי.

The Gemara (*Rosh Hashanah* 26b) which discusses which is the optimal shape of the *shofar*, a bent or a straight one, should be understood similarly. The Gemara relates this question to the optimal posture that one should maintain when he prays on Rosh Hashanah because it is through the shofar that one beseeches G-d. According to one Tannaitic opinion, the more a person “straightens his mind,” the better. Thus, a straight shofar and an erect posture are preferable. We follow the opinion that the more one “bows his mind” the better. Accordingly, a bent shofar and a bowed posture should be used to reflect an attitude of submission.

Thus, *tekiat shofar* combines with the *tefillah*, and together we offer a *ze’akah* on the *eit tzarah* of the *Yom HaDin* (Day of Judgement).

¹ Hilchot Ta’anit 1:1.

² Milchamot, *Rosh Hashanah* 11a in *dapei haRif*.

³ Mishnah, Ta’anit 2:3-5.

Rabbi Hershel Schachter is Rosh Yeshiva and Rosh Kollel at Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary of Yeshiva University



MIZRACHI
WORLD MOVEMENT

JOURNEY TO **POLAND**

NOVEMBER 12-17, 2019

Join us on a meaningful journey focusing on the experiences of pre-war European Jewry, visiting synagogues, centers of Chassidut and key sites of Religious Zionism. We'll also examine the Holocaust years by visiting Jewish ghettos, death and labor camps, and more.

Janusz Korczak, Oscar Schindler, Rabbi Yitzchak Reines, Rabbi Shmuel Mohilever, the Rema and Reb Elimelech are some of the personalities we'll meet along the way.

LED BY HOLOCAUST EDUCATORS:



**RABBI DAVID
MILSTON**



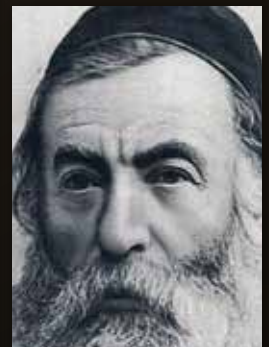
**RABBI DORON
PEREZ**



**JEREMY
KURNEDZ**

**FOUR AND FIVE-STAR ACCOMMODATION › AIR-CONDITIONED BUSES
SHABBAT IN KRAKÓW › DAILY KOSHER MEALS › LIMITED PLACES**

For details, please email office@mizrachi.org



WARSAW › TYKOCIN › ŁOPUCHOWO › BIAŁYSTOK › TREBLINKA › LUBLIN › MAJDANEK › LEŻAJSK › TARNÓW › KRAKÓW › AUSCHWITZ › BIRKENAU



That Very First Melody

When we begin singing the tingling melody for **מְלִכּוּת** on the first night of Rosh Hashanah – or when some communities sing **אַחֲזֵת קֶטְנָה** beforehand – we are expressing what words cannot express.

The tune carries two themes. One is that we are now proclaiming G-d as King of the Universe. Through this tune, we are about to shed the way we've been living for 354 days of the year. We have been operating naturally and were convinced that it is our actions that determine our fate and that it is the people we are dependent on who decide what our future is to be.

And then comes Rosh Hashanah, to shake us out of this illusion. Here we declare to ourselves – and blow the shofar to spread the message throughout the universe – that G-d is “King over the entire world” and that we've been missing the mark for the rest of the year.

There is a King, and it is He who determines the results of our actions. This does not mean our actions have no meaning, or that all we need to do is observe what G-d does. He Himself taught us that the world He created runs according to the way of nature, “the way of the world,” and that human deeds have deep significance.

Already when creating us, He said, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the

land and subdue it, and rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the heavens...” thus establishing Divine laws for the world. Indeed, we remind ourselves that “If G-d will not build the house, its builders labor on it in vain...” (Psalms 127:1). Everything depends on the King of the Universe and his leadership.

This is the reason for our great celebration **בְּכֻסָּה לַיּוֹם הַזֶּה** – at the time appointed for our festive day (Psalms 81:4). First and foremost, Rosh Hashanah is a Yom Tov, and that is its halachic status too. It is a *chag* because we are celebrating the day of coronation. That is why the Rishonim discussed whether it is even permissible to fast on it and our prayers do not mention *vidui* (confession, as on Yom Kippur), sins or the 13 Divine attributes of mercy. Nevertheless, we remember – *Zichronot* – that coronation also means judgment, for at the time G-d appears in the world, He is accompanied by the attribute of judgment. Still, the day's theme remains Crowning Him as King.

However, our tunes carry another theme as well – the sound of request, hope and faith. The past year has not been easy in Israel. The hatred, divisions and vitriol of the elections, the pain of those unable to cope with the financial demands of reality, huge security expenses, etc. We must reconstruct a people after so much pain and hurt has

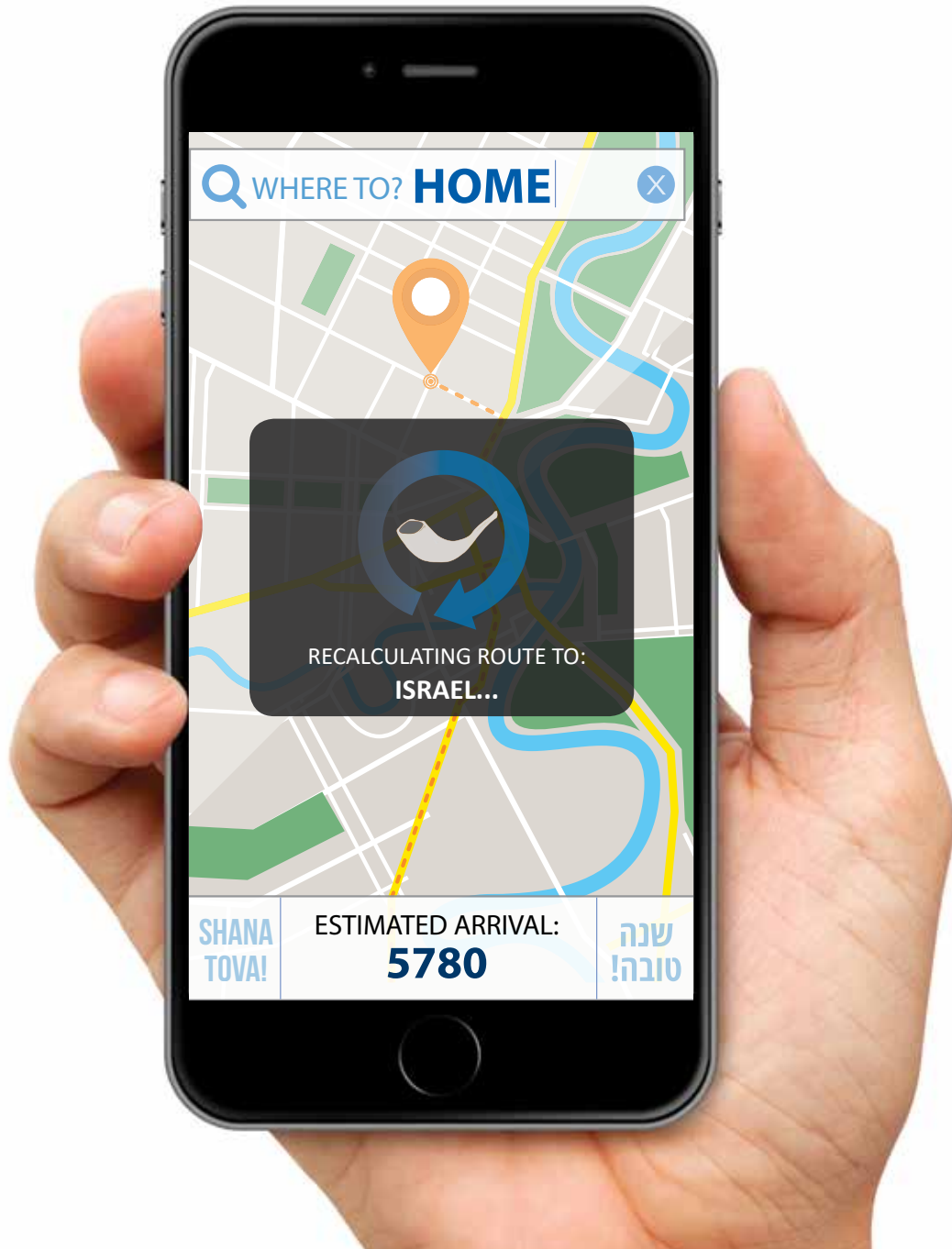
been inflicted upon sections within it. And we're still embroiled in scandals and corruption, violence and other social ills...

So our tunes at the advent of Rosh Hashanah are notes of request: that the coming year will be better. A year in which we will build the infrastructure for a just and honest society. A year in which we will engage in constant repair and correction; a year in which the sound of the sirens will be sounds of joy and not testimony to further security quicksand; a year in which the people of Israel find more and more ways to connect to our Jewish and faith-based identity, and that the Jewish melody will melt the hearts and souls of all Jews; a year in which people will be smiling and loving each other and seeking – and seeing – the good in everyone; a year in which those who have not yet found their place find it; a year in which older singles will hear their wedding bands, and become submerged in worlds of happiness.

This is why these opening tunes are so powerful and meaningful for us. Because in them we are investing all these thoughts and more. And praying with all our being that it will indeed be a fresh, joyous and healthy new year for us all.

Rabbi Yuval Cherlow is a Rosh Yeshiva and a founding member of an organization devoted to bridging the religious-secular divide in Israel

Reflecting on life's direction
requires a clear destination.



1-866-4-ALIYAH



ALIYAH@NBN.ORG.IL



(551) 800-5414

WWW.NBN.ORG.IL/DESTINATION



Not In Heaven

When I was a student at university in the late 1960s, there was a well-known story about an American Jewish woman in her sixties traveling to north India to see a celebrated guru. Huge crowds were waiting to see the holy man, but she pushed through, saying that she needed to see him urgently. Eventually, she entered the tent and stood in the presence of the master himself. What she said has entered the realm of legend. She said, “Marvin, listen to your mother. Enough already. Come home.”

Starting in the ‘60s, Jews made their way into many religions and cultures with one notable exception: their own. Yet Judaism has historically had its own mystics and meditators, its poets and philosophers, its holy men and women, its visionaries and prophets. It has often seemed as if the longing we have for spiritual enlightenment is in direct proportion to its distance, its foreignness, its unfamiliarity. We prefer the far to the near.

I used to think that this was unique to our strange age, but in fact, Moses already foresaw this possibility that in the future Jews would say that to find inspiration we have to ascend to heaven or cross the sea. It’s anywhere

but here. And so it was for much of Israel’s history during the First and Second Temple periods. First came the era in which the people were tempted by the gods of the people around them: the Canaanite Baal, the Moabite Chemosh, or Marduk and Astarte in Babylon. Later, in Second Temple times, they were attracted to Hellenism. It is a strange phenomenon, best expressed in the memorable line of Groucho Marx: “I refuse to belong to a club that would accept me as a member.” Jews have long had a tendency to fall in love with people who don’t love them and pursue almost any spiritual path so long as it is not their own.

When great minds leave Judaism, Judaism loses great minds. When those in search of spirituality go elsewhere, Jewish spirituality suffers. And this tends to happen in precisely the paradoxical way that Moses describes several times. It occurs in ages of affluence, not poverty; in eras of freedom, not slavery. When we seem to have little to thank G-d for, we thank G-d. When we have much to be grateful for, we forget.

The eras in which Jews worshipped idols or became Hellenized were Temple times when Jews lived in their Land, enjoying either sovereignty or autonomy. The age in

which, in Europe, they abandoned Judaism was the period of emancipation, from the late 18th to the early 20th century when for the first time they enjoyed civil rights.

In most of these cases, the surrounding culture was hostile to Jews and Judaism. Yet Jews tended towards adopting the culture that rejected them rather than embracing the one that was theirs by birth and inheritance, where they had the chance of feeling at home. The results were often tragic.

Becoming Baal worshippers did not lead to Israelites being welcomed by the Canaanites. Becoming Hellenized did not endear Jews to either the Greeks or the Romans. Abandoning Judaism in the 19th century did not end antisemitism; it inflamed it. Hence the power of Moses’ insistence: to find truth, beauty and spirituality, you don’t have to climb to heaven or cross the sea. “The word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.”¹

The result was that Jews enriched other cultures more than their own. Part of Mahler’s Eighth Symphony is a Catholic mass. Irving Berlin, son of a chazzan, wrote the famous song: “I’m Dreaming



Of a White Christmas.” Felix Mendelssohn, grandson of one of the first “enlightened” Jews, Moses Mendelssohn, composed church music and rehabilitated Bach’s long-neglected St. Matthew Passion. Simone Weil, one of the deepest Christian thinkers of the 20th century, described by Albert Camus as “the only great spirit of our times” was born to Jewish parents. So was Edith Stein, celebrated by the Catholic Church as a saint and martyr, but murdered in Auschwitz because to the Nazis she was a Jew. And so on.

Was it the failure of Europe to accept the Jewishness of Jews and Judaism? Was it Judaism’s failure to confront the challenge? The phenomenon is so complex it defies any simple explanation. But in the process, we lost great art, great intellect, great spirits and minds.

To some extent, the situation has changed both in Israel and the Diaspora. There has been much new Jewish music and a revival of Jewish mysticism. There have been important Jewish writers and thinkers. But we are still spiritually underachieving. The deepest roots of spirituality come from within: from within a culture, a tradition, a sensibility. They come from the syntax and semantics of the native language of the soul: “The word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart so you may obey it.” The beauty of Jewish spirituality is precisely that in Judaism, G-d is close. You don’t need to climb a mountain or enter an ashram to find the Divine presence. It is there around the table at a Shabbat meal, in the light of the candles and the simple holiness of the kiddush wine and the *challot*, in the praise of the *Eishet Chayil* and the blessing of children, in the peace of mind that comes when you leave the world to

look after itself for a day while you celebrate the good things that come not from working but resting, not from buying but enjoying, the gifts you have had all along but did not have time to appreciate.

In Judaism, G-d is close. He is there in the poetry of the Psalms. He is there listening in to our debates as we study a page of the Talmud or offer new interpretations of ancient texts. He is there in the joy of the festivals, the tears of Tisha B’Av, the echoes of the shofar of Rosh Hashanah and the contrition of Yom Kippur. He is there in the very air of the Land of Israel and the stones of Jerusalem, where the oldest of the old and the newest of the new mingle together like close friends.

G-d is near. Judaism needed no cathedrals, no monasteries, no abstruse theologies, no metaphysical ingenuities, beautiful though all these are, because for us G-d is the G-d of everyone and everywhere, who has time for each of us, and who meets us where we are, if we are willing to open our souls to Him.

I am a Rabbi. For 22 years I was a Chief Rabbi. But in the end, I think it was we, the Rabbis, who did not do enough to help people open their doors, their minds, and their feelings to the Presence-beyond-the-universe-who-created-us-in-love that our ancestors knew so well and loved so much. We were afraid. Of the intellectual challenges of an increasingly secular culture. Of the social challenges of being in, yet not entirely of, the world. Of the emotional challenge of finding Jews or Judaism or the State of Israel criticized and condemned. So we retreated behind a high wall, thinking that made us safe. High walls never make you safe; they only make you fearful.² The only thing that makes you safe is confronting

the challenges without fear and inspiring others to do likewise.

What Moses meant in those extraordinary words, “It is not up in heaven ...nor is it beyond the sea,” (Deuteronomy. 30:12-13) was: *Kinderlach*, your parents trembled when they heard the voice of G-d at Sinai. They were overwhelmed. They said: if we hear any more we will die. So G-d found ways in which you could meet Him without being overwhelmed. Yes, He is Creator, Sovereign, supreme power, first cause, mover of the planets and the stars. But He is also parent, partner, lover, friend. He is *Shechinah*, from *shachen*, meaning the neighbor next door.

So thank Him every morning for the gift of life. Say the *Shema* twice daily for the gift of love. Join your voice to others in prayer so that His spirit may flow through you, giving you the strength and courage to change the world. When you can’t see Him, it is because you are looking in the wrong direction. When He seems absent, He is there behind the door, but you have to open it.

Don’t treat Him like a stranger. He loves you. He believes in you. He wants your success. To find Him you don’t have to climb to heaven or cross the sea. His is the voice you hear in the silence of the soul. His is the light you see when you open your eyes to wonder. His is the hand you touch in the pit of despair. His is the breath that gives you life.

¹ Deuteronomy 30:14.

² See Rashi to Numbers 13:18.

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks is Emeritus Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations of the Commonwealth @RabbiSacks · www.RabbiSacks.org



Smartphones, Elul and the Real Simanim



This month I received at least 10 different emails, all with similar subject lines: Help! My smartphone is taking over my life! There seems to be a widespread desire to fix something, however small, in our relationship with our devices. An attempt to regain some control.

Michal, a teacher from Tel Aviv, wrote: “I’m on maternity leave, and I can really compare the previous leaves to this one. In the past, I was focused on the baby: putting him to sleep, breastfeeding him, bathing him, just looking at him. I feel very strongly that something has changed, and not for the better.

This time I spend many hours aimlessly surfing through Facebook, where every piece of information makes my heart jump and makes me nervous. Obviously, there are also parenting groups that help me, and information about sales and shows, etc., and this is why I believe that I won’t be able to be completely weaned off. I feel myself cheat again and again: I seemingly log in just to check, for example, how our brethren in the Gaza periphery are doing, but in truth, I get carried away and sink into Facebook more and more...

On Tisha B’Av I decided to have an entire day of ‘fasting,’ of abstinence from Facebook. It was harder than the real fast! I realized that I have an addiction. I felt ‘turned off’ the whole day.

So together with a friend of mine, I decided to take on a special operation for the month of Elul. We

will try to do Teshuva (repentance). To fix things slowly and gradually. We started with an hour a day in which we are not allowed to log onto Facebook. This week we brought it up to two hours a day without Facebook.

It’s hard, but it’s worth it. Our goal is to add another hour without Facebook every week. I’m a bit ashamed that this is where I am. I wouldn’t have believed a few years ago that I would be in this situation, but we must start somewhere, right? Perhaps this will give strength to others as well, especially now in Elul.”



All the weekly portions we read during the month of Elul serve as reminders of how we can fix and improve our lives before Rosh Hashanah. Even their opening verses show us the right way to move forward:

הָאֵלֹהִים – “Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse” – we started Elul with the most fundamental idea: free choice. There is both blessing and curse in the world, and every day we can choose anew between good and bad.

שׁוֹפְטִים – “Judges and officers shall you make for you in all your gates” – one must carefully watch the “gates” of the body (eyes, ears, mouth) and place “judges and officers” over them. That is, one must pay attention to what one hears, sees and says. Filter the content one is exposed to every day and think before one speaks.

כִּי תִצֵּא – “When you go out to battle against your enemies” – there is a struggle here. In the framework of the soul searching we do in Elul, one must recognize one’s enemies (laziness, selfishness, anger, routine, etc.) and think how to prevail over them.

כִּי תָבוֹא – “And it shall be when you come into the Land which the L-rd your G-d gives you for an inheritance, and do possess it, and dwell therein” – this portion tells us about “a Land flowing with milk and honey.” All of these beautiful ideas must be turned into reality through our eternal connection to Eretz Yisrael.




Once, at a Rosh Hashanah meal, when it was time to eat the *simanim* (symbols or signs), the Chafetz Chaim told his guests: “As we know, there is validity and purpose in the *simanim* we show on Rosh Hashanah. We try to eat sweet things, to bless and pray through the symbolism of the food for a good, sweet year. But there is no better *siman* than showing a loving face to others, smiling at them and exhibiting patience. There is no worse sign than anger and strict judgment of others. Our behavior has consequences, good and bad: ‘One who has mercy on others is shown mercy from the heavens.’ Especially on Rosh Hashanah, we must be strict about showing signs of affection, love and cordiality.”

Sivan Rahav-Meir, a popular Israeli journalist, broadcaster and author, is the World Mizrahi Shlicha to North America

ISRAELI INNOVATIONS



 TESTFORCE



LOGIN

NAME OF COMPANY

TESTFORCE



CO-FOUNDER AND CEO

HANANEL COHEN

Salesforce development expert with 4.5 years of experience as a software developer and team leader.



CO-FOUNDER AND VP BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

GIL RAVEH

10 years experience in IT management and operations leadership.

STAGE

Testforce is an operating company with an existing product and solid revenue potential.

CATEGORY

Hi-tech/business development-Salesforce App

ESTIMATED VALUE

\$30 million

MARKET AIM

\$1 billion

ABOUT THE COMPANY

Testforce provides a platform for development and testing solutions. Founded by a Salesforce developer and a platform analyst – both IT leaders, in 2017.

PITCH

Over 250,000 companies, both big and small, are growing their businesses using Salesforce. Salesforce provides companies with an interface for case management and task management, and a system for automatically routing and escalating important events. Each and every Salesforce customer is a potential Testforce customer in need of our solutions.

WHAT NEED IS TESTFORCE COMING TO FILL

At this time, Salesforce does not allow users to automatically test updates before putting them into use. There is no app that allows customers to do this either, leading many companies to waste money in the development cycle.

WHAT DOES TESTFORCE DO TO FILL THIS NEED

Testforce is a visual tool which allows companies to run automatic tests while using Salesforce. This is the only app to allow this at this time. Testforce allows users to create powerful, complex unit tests for their Salesforce environment without having to write unique code, while dramatically reducing production bugs. The app closely monitors broken processes and connects users' assignments with live tests. It provides a description of where broken code is located upon detection and immediately recognizes if new development/customization has broken existing logic - before uploading to production. The Test-Driven Development process declares tests before development and reduces back-and-forth between the developer and the task declarator. Testforce does all this while simultaneously reducing time spent creating unit tests.

FOR FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS AND MORE INFORMATION:

Hananel Cohen | (+972)-54-777-5098 | hananelchoen@gmail.com

Have a Start-Up? To be featured in this section, email production@mizrachi.org



THE ULTIMATE *Shofar*

A month before Rosh Hashanah, the sound of the shofar is what inspires within us the mood for these awesome and life-shaping days. It is the tool which according to the Rambam (Teshuva 3:4) is needed to wake us up from our spiritual slumber. The shofar tells us to wake up from sleepwalking through life and get on the *teshuva* (repentance) train.

Our *minhag* is to blow many more sounds than what is minimally required. Tosfot (Rosh Hashanah 33b) quotes from earlier sources that the 100 round number that *klal Yisrael* has accepted to blow is meant to remind us of the cries of Sisera's mother. When Sisera did not return from battle against the Jews, his mother cried 100 wails, and that is remembered in the Rosh Hashanah service.

The question is obvious. Sisera's mother? Is that the most appropriate person for us to invoke on this holiest of days? Surely there are many other more appropriate women who should be filling our national memory today? An antisemitic general who took pleasure in fighting our nation, and who symbolizes so much evil? What are Chazal trying to teach us?

Let us examine the story in Shoftim to try to put ourselves into the mind of Sisera's mother:

She was looking out the window, waiting impatiently for her son to return. "Where is my adorable son? When will he return?" Her friends calmed her, suggesting excuse

after excuse. "Don't worry, he's surely splitting up spoils, enjoying himself on the battlefield." Only as the sun sets on Sisera, literally and figuratively, the reality sets in and she cries uncontrollably for her lost son. When someone is confronted with the stark truth, with the reality unclothed from excuses and masks, there is an intense and deep recognition, which is painful but ultimately helpful in dealing with life's situations.

Rosh Hashanah is a day to seek out our reality, to look at ourselves in the mirror, letting all the excuses fall away. With a clear and direct outlook, we need to ask what G-d wants, demands, and expects of me? How can I truthfully and fully fulfill my potential in all areas of *Torah*, *Avodah* and *Gemilut Chasadim*? And let's add one more: how can I maximize my connection to our homeland, to the Land of our forefathers?

On Rosh Hashanah 5694, in the fall of 1933, Rav Kook gave a *drasha* explaining that there are three halachic levels of shofars. The preferred is a ram's horn. Next level is a horn from any kosher animal, except for a cow. Finally, if there is no kosher animal shofar available, one should use a non-kosher animal shofar, but no bracha can be made.

Rav Kook homiletically explained that there are three awakenings of Jews to join the redemption process. The first is the 'great shofar'— when a Jew is inspired, he feels the pull, he feels the spiritual magnet in his deepest core, as he

yearns to rejoin his people in the Chosen Land. He comes of his own volition based on his own choosing.

The second awakening also merits a bracha. It is from a kosher animal but represents a lesser quality awakening. One who comes for nationalistic reasons. It is a Jewish State, I feel proud in Israel, I feel comfortable amongst exclusively fellow Jews. This is also a kosher sound, albeit second tier.

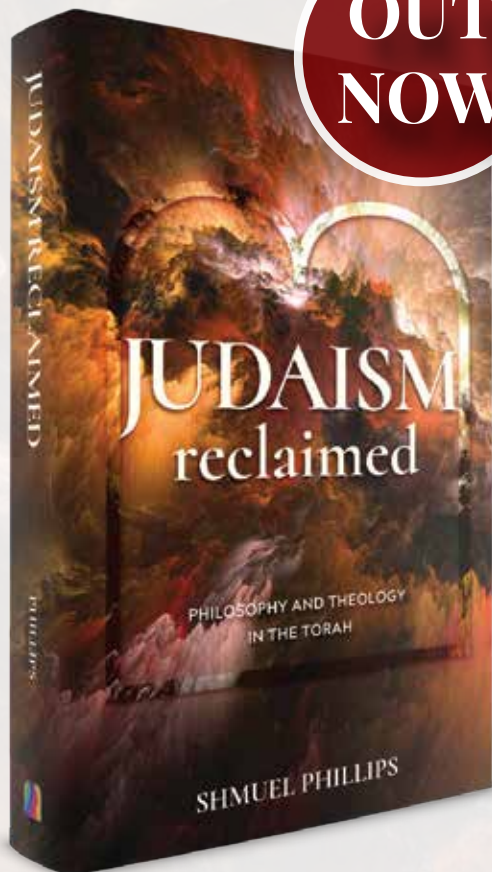
Finally, Rav Kook explained, as he started to cry, there is a third shofar, not a shofar of choice, but a shofar forced upon us, when it's not the pull from within but the push from without, when the shofar of terror and antisemitism forces Jews to return to their roots, to the place which will always accept them. Yes, it is also a shofar of redemption, but it is a painful and difficult one, so no bracha is recited.

We pray each day תַּקַע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל לְחַרְוֵנוּ. Sound the great shofar for our freedom. All Jews should be inspired by the 'great shofar,' by holiness and purity, by the pull and not the push. Let all Jews see the reality of what Eretz Yisrael should mean to them and how they should shape their lives with Eretz Yisrael at the center. Let this year truly be a year of *kibbutz galuyot* (ingathering of the exiles) of the highest caliber, the 'great shofar' reigning in all Jews to come home, back to the palace and the Beit HaMikdash.

Rabbi Shalom Rosner is a Rebbe at Yeshivat Kerem B'Yavneh and Rabbi of the Nofei HaShemesh community

A journey through Judaism's most controversial issues...

**OUT
NOW**



Explore intriguing topics such as:

- How Jewish philosophy guides Torah interpretation
- Can Jewish tradition combat Bible criticism?
- Divine providence and the existence of evil
- The origin and development of the oral tradition
- Rabbinic law vs. the spirit of halachah
- Rambam's Judaism in a post-Aristotelian world



“A remarkable new philosophical approach to Torah and Jewish faith, outstanding in its erudition... thoroughly engaging... This is the work of a major new talent in Jewish thought.”

Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks, *Former Chief Rabbi of the UK*



“Sophisticated discussion of many controversial philosophical and theological topics...sorely needed in this generation”

Rav Zev Leff, *Rav/Rosh Yeshiva in Moshav Matityahu*



www.JudaismReclaimed.com

USA: Available on Amazon and at Jewish bookstores.
ISRAEL: On sale at Pomeranz Bookseller, 5 Be'eri St. Jerusalem.
Order at: 02-623-5559 ~ pomeranzbooks@netvision.net.il





The Unique Quality of TORAT CHESSED

Chazal say that Rosh Hashanah is the day that humanity was created,¹ arguably the greatest act of *chesed* in history. Thus, it is not surprising to discover that Rav Yitzchak Hutner dedicated several articles to the topic of benevolence in his *Pachad Yitzchak* on Rosh Hashanah. The volume begins with a *Kuntress HaChesed*. This brief essay explores the second piece in that series.

The Gemara (Sukkah 49b) differentiates between a *Torat Chesed* (Torah of loving-kindness), involving learning in order to teach, and a Torah not of *chesed*, when a person learns only for himself. In accordance with his consistent literary sensitivity, Rav Hutner analyzes the terminology very carefully. The reference is not to Torah and *chesed* but to a *Torat Chesed*. If a person reads Torah to a blind individual, that person engages in both Torah and *chesed*. Yet that does not constitute a *Torat Chesed*. Apparently, the compassion element redefines the nature and quality of the Torah being studied. How does this work?

The Mishnah (Peah 1:1) states that a person who performs acts of kindness merits to eat the fruit of reward in this world while the principal reward remains for the World to Come. Rav Hutner explains that every human expression of benevolence is an act of emulating G-d. The primordial divine act of compassion was the creation of the world *yesh me'ayin* (ex nihilo). Clearly, that act would not involve the loss of the principal since the world emerged out of nothingness. Thus, we associate benevolence with producing

fruit while not destroying the root principal. Giving birth and growing produce are aspects of the world that approach this ideal of maintaining the principal.

Rav Hutner frequently works off the Maharal and does here as well. After the war against the four kings, G-d reassures Avraham: “Do not be afraid, Avraham. I will protect you; your reward will be exceedingly great” (Bereishit 15:1). According to the Maharal,² the biblical word for protect, *magen*, alludes to its Aramaic meaning of “nothing.”³ Avraham, as the paradigm of *chesed*, receives a great reward that subtracts nothing from the principal.

Human acts of kindness come close to the ideal of not diminishing the principal. Of course, most acts of compassion do reduce the principal. If I give you a slice of cake, then I no longer have that slice. Rav Hutner explains that once compassion is manifest in physicality, the corporeal nature of physicality mandates that giving entails a loss. However, some giving, such as the teaching of Torah, transcends physical limitations and allows for a gift that causes no diminution.

Indeed, someone who teaches a profound Torah idea still retains that idea. Even more so, he or she actually benefits from that teaching. As Chazal note (Ta’anit 7a), a person learns the most from his or her students. Experienced teachers confirm that preparing *shiurim*, delivering *shiurim*, and hearing student comments and questions all profoundly enhance their own understanding. Sharing Torah not only does not diminish

the principal; it increases it. Thus, Torah study for the purpose of teaching takes on a new dimension in which we emulate G-d in creating bounty and blessing without any diminution. This is the ideal of *Torat Chesed*.

I would like to add one aspect of the Maharal’s commentary not cited by Rav Hutner. The Mishnah mentions honoring parents, acts of kindness, fostering peace between others, and Torah study, as items which generate fruit without diluting the principal. The Maharal suggests that this Mishnah incorporates three models of *chesed*. One pays back a debt of gratitude and is absolutely obligatory (honoring parents), one is fully voluntary (*gemilut chasadim*), and one is somewhere in between (making peace). If so, all the examples in the Mishnah highlight the uniqueness of *chesed* as a *mitzvah* that provides fruit without any loss.

The Mishnah then proceeds to state that Torah learning equals all other *mitzvot*. For Rav Hutner, this must refer to the *Torat Chesed* in which people learn and share their insightful knowledge with others. Such study creates a unique dynamic in which sharing and giving leads to increased abundance for both giver and recipient.

¹ Devarim Rabbah 1:13, Lieberman edition.

² Gevurat Hashem 6.

³ See Bava Kama 85a.

Rabbi Yitzchak Blau is a Rosh Yeshiva at Yeshivat Orayta. He is the author of *Fresh Fruit and Vintage Wine: The Ethics and Wisdom of the Aggadah*



The Right Place

The Right Time

As confident as we may be throughout the year, the period leading up to Rosh Hashanah is always a sobering series of wake-up calls that intensify as the Day of Judgment nears. We become more conscious of the solemnity and magnitude of the hour, and particularly of the opportunity and obligation to repair anything in need of spiritual mending. Simultaneously, we pray and take action toward a renewed year that will hold only revealed good – not only for ourselves, but for our nation and the entire world.

It is no coincidence that on Rosh Hashanah, and throughout the Yamim Noraim, our prayers are filled with references to Eretz Yisrael, the *Holy Land*. The Jewish people have a special relationship with the two key dimensions of *Olam haZeh* (this world), time and space, and an intrinsic power to add *kedusha* to both of these dimensions by sanctifying them with our actions. We see this not only in our obligation to “observe the Sabbath and *keep* it holy” but also in our ability to establish Rosh Chodesh and thus the *Yamim Tovim*. In terms of space, while we do not necessarily have the power to be *m'kadesh* (to sanctify), we add a permanent *kedusha* to a physical article by connecting its purpose to holiness (e.g., by dedicating objects to the Beit HaMikdash). While everything in the physical world is bound by time and space, it is integral to our faith that the essence of Divinity is also infused in both.

Thoughts of the Land of Israel actually begin intensifying several

months before Rosh Hashanah as *parshiot* discuss the approach that Bnei Yisrael took to taking possession of the Land that G-d was giving us. This gift did not come without struggle as we physically acquired the Land.

Soldiers who have been through the stress of battle will relate that such mutual experiences deepen the bonds between comrades in arms; that individuals preparing for and engaging in battle become a band of brothers, literally related through the shared force of physical warfare. How much greater must the bond be between those who share the experience of spiritual battle: the war to subdue the *yetzer hara* and the cold war, so to speak, necessary to set Klal Yisrael apart from other nations so it can shed light unto all. This spiritual battle culminates on Rosh Hashanah as we coronate G-d as King and completely subject our will to His.

One of the factors that made Bnei Yisrael successful in the physical conquest of Eretz Yisrael was the unity they experienced as a nation in accepting and receiving the Torah together. We experience this unity again on Rosh Hashanah when we come together to pray. We ask to see our behavior modified and improved and to have our intentions accepted as sincere. We make this first step of behavioral modification by seeing our fellow Jews through different eyes; judging everyone on the side of merit, as we ourselves wish to be judged. This is not entirely altruistic – nor does it need to be. We understand that

the way we judge others will impact how we will be judged. But the ultimate judgment we seek is one of such complete forgiveness, such genuine *teshuva*, that we will merit redemption – not just for ourselves, but for the entire nation.

The Baal HaTanya noted that every matter in Torah exists on a level of *Olam*, in a *place* in the world, and *Shana*, at a *time* of the year. Just as there was a covenant prior to entering Eretz Yisrael, so is there a covenant embraced before Rosh Hashanah. Parshat Ki Tavo is read before Rosh Hashanah, as the words *ki hayom hazeh* (for this day) also refer to the holiday. Every year, the Jewish people require a renewed pact over the acceptance of the Torah, as on Rosh Hashanah we are newly commanded to fulfill the *mitzvot*. On Rosh Hashanah, we make requests for everyone. Within those prayers, we reveal the special relationship we have with the Land itself and all of the blessings that are only to be found there.

Every Jew in the world understands that no matter what happens, regardless of any political upheavals, the one place where Jews can go and be received with open arms and a warm embrace is the Land of Israel. May it be the will of the Almighty, as we begin our relationships with Him anew, that we merit a year of progress, achievement, success and peace for all of us, and for all mankind.

Rabbi Moshe D. Krupka is Executive Vice President of Touro College and University System



MERCY *and* JUDGMENT

We all know that Rosh Hashanah marks the Jewish new year. Presumably, this day commemorates the Creation of the world, the beginning of time.

The Talmud, however, reports a difference of opinion regarding Creation: “It has been taught: Rabbi Eliezer says: In Tishrei the world was created... Rabbi Yehoshua says: In Nissan the world was created” (Rosh Hashanah 10b-11a).

Rabbeinu Tam sees no contradiction between the opinions of Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Yehoshua: “These and these are the words of the living G-d, and one may say that the thought to create was formed in Tishrei, while the actual creation did not take place until Nissan” (Tosfot Rosh Hashanah 27a).

According to Rabbeinu Tam, the two concepts are not at odds; they simply emphasize two different aspects of Creation – theory and practice.

This notion, that Creation began with a “thought” or concept, may also be found in Rashi’s commentary to the first verse in the Torah. Drawing on the Midrash, Rashi notes that the Divine Name found in the verses describing Creation is *Elokim*, the aspect of G-d associated with justice. In later chapters, when the account of Creation is restated, *Hashem Elokim*, the Divine Name that combines the attributes of judgment and mercy, is used (Bereishit 2:4).

“Hashem Elokim [made the heavens and the earth]... Said the Holy One, blessed be He: ‘If I create the world on the basis of mercy alone, its sins will be great; on the basis of

judgment alone, the world cannot exist. Hence I will create it on the basis of judgment and of mercy, and may it then stand!’ Hence the expression, ‘*Hashem Elokim*’” (Bereishit Rabbah 22:15).

The combination of justice and compassion in the second chapter of Bereishit now becomes clear, yet the Midrash does not explain why the first verse of the Torah uses only *Elokim* – implying that G-d created the world using only the attribute of justice.

Rashi addresses this problem, explaining that the idea of Creation was formulated by *Elokim*. The concept underlying Creation is based on justice, although the actual Creation had to be carried out with mercy and justice fused together if humankind was to survive.

Rav Gedalia Shore suggested the following formulation: the concept of Creation is based on justice; the actual Creation is based on mercy and justice. The concept of Creation arose in Tishrei, while the actual Creation took place in Nissan. Therefore, Tishrei is a time of judgment, while Nissan is a time of mercy.

Perhaps we can take this one step further. The strict aspect of judgment relates to G-d’s concept of Creation, to the realm of thought, to *Elokim*. This type of judgment, which holds sway in the month of Tishrei, relates to the thoughts of each and every individual. Just as G-d Himself created a plan, a concept of Creation, we as individuals are given Rosh Hashanah to formulate our own plan. What sort of life do we intend to lead in the coming year? What

are our goals and aspirations, our blueprint for the future? In the month of Tishrei, *Elokim* judges each individual’s plan with the strictness He applied to the concept of Creation. However, when it comes to judging our actions, our ability to live up to that plan, *Hashem Elokim* fuses compassion with judgment, just as He did in the actual Creation of the universe. Then, as now, G-d understands human frailty.

The quintessential example is the *Akeida*. When Avraham is called upon to sacrifice his son, he formulates a plan to obey G-d’s command without question. The plan was enough; the actual sacrifice was no longer necessary. *Elokim* judged Avraham for his intention, for his plan.

Rosh Hashanah, literally the ‘head’ of the year, alludes to this same dynamic. As we approach Rosh Hashanah, we are obliged to formulate a plan using our intellect, the Divine Image with which we have been endowed. Nonetheless, G-d understands that we will fail at times. We are judged for these failings, but the judgment is tempered with compassion.

The days that lead up to Rosh Hashanah, when mankind will stand before G-d in fear and dread of His judgment, are the time to formulate our plans for life. May we be blessed with the strength to implement our plans, and may G-d judge us with mercy on the occasions when we fail.

Rabbi Ari Kahn is Director of the Overseas Student Program at Bar-Ilan University, where he is a senior lecturer in Jewish Studies



The Day of Great Opportunity

Yom Kippur is not only the day of holiness and forgiveness of sin – but it is also the great day of hope and optimism. Each of us is born anew on that day. Each one of us has an opportunity to reexamine ourselves. Though we spend much of our prayer time admitting our sins, failures and shortcomings, we do so confident that these errors will be erased in G-d's compassion for His creatures. We confess to the entire litany of sins, so that we will be cleansed of all possible guilt and allowed to move forward unburdened by past impediments.

Long ago, when I was an attorney in Chicago, I knew a colleague who specialized in guiding people through the process of voluntary bankruptcy. He told me that most of his clients were guilty of not listing all of their debts and liabilities in their original application for bankruptcy protection. They either forgot or for some strange but prevalent psychological reason, were too embarrassed to list all matters in their bankruptcy petition. It is one thing to default on a bank loan. It is another matter to do so to those who are near and dear to you.

When we ask for Divine forgiveness on the holiest day of the year, the litany of sins and shortcomings, which are the core of the Yom Kippur prayer service, comes to correct this psychological and emotional deficiency. We confess to every sin possible because humans are able, if not even prone, to commit every sin possible. Our memories are selective and oftentimes faulty.

Embarrassment before our Creator is a human trait inherited from Adam who displayed it in his confrontation with G-d at the dawn of human civilization. Therefore the complete listing of all possible sins is a necessary component to obtain forgiveness on Yom Kippur.

As mentioned above, Yom Kippur is a singular day of opportunity. Freed from the mundane tasks that encompass our existence all year long, we have time to think about what ultimately matters in life – family, community, tradition and our legacy to those that come after us. We honestly confront our mortality and human state of being.

We also think about our souls, that we have oftentimes ignored and neglected because of the pressures of our daily pursuits. We can recharge that reservoir of Jewish pride that lies within each of us – how special we are as individuals and as a collective nation. Identifying as a Jew, and understanding the demands and privileges that this identity bestows, gives one a true sense of importance and purpose in life.

The alienated, the scoffers, the confused and the ignorant will find little comfort for themselves on this holy day. But for those who seek to know themselves and thereby glimpse their Creator and their own immortality, the day of Yom Kippur is one of unmatched opportunity and wrenching satisfaction. It is akin to the renewal of an old and cherished friendship and of finding a long-lost object of emotional value. Our inner essence, uncovered by the holiness of the day of Yom Kippur, is that long-lost valuable

object; it is our old and best friend.

The physical deprivations that Yom Kippur demands of us are a reminder that nothing important and lasting in life can be achieved without sacrifice and some form of deprivation. Judaism does not preach a life of asceticism. The Torah looks askance at those who willfully deprive themselves of the permitted pleasures of life. The rabbis taught us that the rewards and benefits of life are commensurate to the effort and sacrifice that we invest in achieving these goals.

There is no free lunch in the physical and spiritual worlds that we inhabit. The mandated deprivations of our bodily wants on Yom Kippur serve to remind us of this truism. In the prayers of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we confess that we risk everything in order to place food on our table. Yom Kippur and its bodily restraints teach us that we must also risk discomfort in order to attain any form of spiritual level and composure.

The absence of the chomping sound of eating, the gurgle of drinking and the clicking sound of sturdy leather shoes, allows us to hear the still small voice within us, the sound which our soul generates. It is that voice that elevates us and puts us in touch with our Creator. That is what makes the day of Yom Kippur the supreme day of human greatness and opportunity – the holiest day of the year.

Rabbi Berel Wein is Senior Rabbi of Beit Knesset HaNassi in Jerusalem and Director of the Destiny Foundation



HOW DID JERUSALEM COME TO BE SO HOLY TO MUSLIMS?

When Islam came to the world in the 7th century CE, Islamization was practiced on places as well as persons: Mecca and the holy stone – al-Ka’bah – were holy sites of the pre-Islamic pagan Arabs. The Umayyad Mosque in Damascus and the Great Mosque of Istanbul were erected on the sites of Christian-Byzantine churches – two of the better-known examples of how Islam treated sanctuaries of other faiths.

Jerusalem also underwent the same process of Islamization. At first Muhammad attempted to convince the Jews of Medina to join his young community, and by way of persuasion, established the direction of prayer (Qiblah) to be to the north, towards Jerusalem, in an attempt to convince the Jews of Medina to convert to Islam. However, after he failed in this attempt, he turned against the Jews, killed the men, took the women and directed the Qiblah southward, towards Mecca.

Muhammad’s abandonment of Jerusalem explains the fact that this city is not mentioned even once in the Koran. After Palestine was occupied by the Muslims in 638 CE, six years after Muhammad died, its capital was Ramlah, 30 miles west of Jerusalem, signifying that Jerusalem meant nothing to them.

Islam rediscovered Jerusalem almost 50 years after Muhammad’s death in 682 CE, when ‘Abd Allah ibn al-Zubayr rebelled against the Islamic rulers in Damascus, conquered Mecca and prevented pilgrims from reaching Mecca

for the Hajj. Yazeed, the second Umayyad Calif, needed an alternative site for the pilgrimage and settled on Jerusalem, then under his control. To justify this choice, a verse from the Koran was chosen (Sura 17, verse 1) which states:

“Glory to Him who took His servant by night from the Sacred Mosque (Mecca) to the Further Mosque, whose precincts We have blessed, in order to show him some of Our wonders, He is indeed the All-Hearing, the All-Seeing.”

It should be noted that at the time of Muhammad, the “further mosque” was in the Arab peninsula, near a village called Ju’rrana, between Mecca and Ta’if.

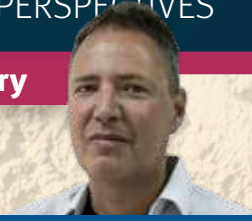
In order to justify the transfer of the Hajj to Jerusalem, the meaning ascribed to this verse was that “the furthest mosque” (al-Masgid al-Aqsa) is in Jerusalem and that Muhammad was conveyed there one night, on the back of al-Buraq, a magical horse with the head of a woman, the wings of an eagle, the tail of a peacock, and hoofs reaching to the horizon. He tethered the horse to the Western Wall of the Temple Mount and from there ascended to the seventh heaven together with the angel Gabriel. On his way he met the prophets of other religions who are the guardians of the Seven Heavens: Adam, Jesus, St. John, Joseph, Idris (Seth?), Aaron, Moses and Abraham who accompanied him on his way to Allah and who accepted him as their master by praying behind him. Thus Islam tries to gain legitimacy over other, older religions, by

creating a scene in which the former prophets agree to Muhammad’s mastery, thus making him Khatam al-Anbiya’ (“the Seal of the Prophets”). The deep meaning of this legend is that Islam came to the world in order to replace Judaism and Christianity rather than to live with them side by side.

This legend was attached to Jerusalem to convince the people to go to Jerusalem for Hajj rather than Mecca. In addition, thousands of Hadith (oral tradition) stories were concocted by the Ulama’ (learned people) who served in the Calif Yazeed’s court, to support the idea that Bayt al-Maqdis (the classic name of Jerusalem in Arab sources) should replace Mecca as a place for Hajj. It is important to mention here that the Shi’a, the enemies of the Calif Yazeed and the entire Umayyad dynasty, have not accepted the idea that Jerusalem is the third holiest place after Mecca and Medina; for them, traditionally, the third place is Najaf, in southern Iraq. It was only after the Khomeini revolution in 1979 that the Shi’a started to speak about Jerusalem.

Conclusion: the sacredness of Jerusalem in Islam was, and still is, no more than a myth, caused by political problems the Islamic empire has suffered from since its dawn. The question which we – Jews and Christians – face today is: will we give up on our sacred city only because Muslims concocted their own stories about this city?

Dr. Mordechai Kedar is an Israeli scholar of Arabic culture and a lecturer at Bar-Ilan University



SHARING THE OLD CITY MIGHT BE BETTER THAN DIVIDING JERUSALEM

Although Israeli politicians on all sides seem inclined to ignore the festering sore of the conflict with the Palestinians at present, the Temple Mount issue and the status of Jerusalem have scuttled peace efforts in the past and bubbled to the surface all the time. The 2019 election season in Israel has seen stabbings and protests and a suggestion from Israeli Internal Security Minister, Gilad Erdan, to change the status quo in which Jews do not have free access to pray on the Temple Mount (which drew protests from Jordan, a stakeholder in the site).

Those who want to fix the problem generally hold two core beliefs. First, the status of the city will only be resolved in a final peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians. Second, it must ultimately be divided between Israel and a future Palestine. If the first was ever to arrive and the second was somehow feasible, I for one would not stand in the way.

Meanwhile, peace professionals talk about partitioning the city. But 51 years of Israel's machinations with municipal borders, discouragement of Palestinians from staying, and construction of Jewish neighborhoods have made a mishmash of the map and created a Jewish majority even in the occupied-and-annexed formerly Jordanian part of the city. Almost no one (except the Palestinians) speaks of removing these east Jerusalem "settlers" as they do of the ones in the West Bank (most Israelis would be perplexed to even hear them spoken of as "settlers").

So given the patchwork of Jewish and Arab areas, any demographic division would require either a snaking border a hundred miles long or no border at all.

The former would be the strangest border in the world, with crossing points at every cigarette stand.

The latter would be a security nightmare. There will be people on both sides who will consider peace a sellout and want to disrupt it. Terrorists (from either side) could wander around at their leisure. What will happen when there is an attack in the Israeli part and the attackers slip back into the Palestinian sector by walking down the street?

If Israel were to *voluntarily* alter the arrangement in the Old City, it would dramatically change the game. Severing the Jerusalem problem from final status efforts, the discussion could be broadened to the entire Muslim (and Christian) worlds; everybody has a stake. Craftily designed, this might make things easier, not worse.

Think of the Old City as a kind of Vatican of the Levant. In effect, the Vatican is part of Rome, but officially and legally the area is ex-territorial. Still, it's surrounded by Italy, which enjoys many of the accompanying tourist benefits.

Around the Old City, the huge stone walls built in the 16th century by the Ottoman Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent provide a fantastically useful existing physical designator around the area.

The place would have its local police with all the players invested in success. Israel would be able to send troops in when necessary. Palestinians would be able to enter through the Ramallah and Bethlehem crossings after a security check with guaranteed safe passage.

Officially it would no longer be fully Israel, but it would be surrounded by Israel as Rome surrounds the Vatican, much containing the risk.

The security price is small. The symbolic impact would be huge.

It would be electric in the Arab world. People there want a just solution for the Palestinians, but few are wedded to the Palestinians' specific demands. The "right of return" for refugees' descendants is widely understood by the elites to be impractical. The issue that deeply resonates and animates is Jerusalem. And there is even *opposition* in the Arab world (especially in Jordan) to handing the Old City solely to the Palestinians, as they would wish.

Such a change could coincide with or spark a process that includes positive changes vis-à-vis the Arab world. And while possibly separate, it could jump-start or be part of a deal with the Palestinians that is not necessarily final yet moves the needle and finally gives them their state. It also can only be the beginning of something: maybe one day the city *will* somehow be totally and peacefully divided.

Dan Perry was the Cairo-based Middle East Editor of the AP and Chairman of the Foreign Press Association in Israel

Looking back at World

FEBRUARY

SHLICHUT INFORMATION FAIR



JANUARY

**TZURBA M'RABANAN
GLOBAL LAUNCH**



NOVEMBER

JOURNEY TO POLAND AND LITHUANIA



APRIL

**BRANCHES OPENED
ARGENTINA & FRANCE**



MARCH

MIZRACHI LEADERSHIP SHABBATON IN EIN GEDI



Mizrachi in 5779



MIZRACHI
WORLD MOVEMENT

JUNE

SHAVUOT PROGRAM



MARCH

JERUSALEM MARATHON



JULY

SHLICHUT FAREWELL CONFERENCE



MAY

ISRAEL360: MIZRACHI SPEAKERS ALL OVER THE WORLD IN CELEBRATION OF ISRAEL



AUGUST

SIVAN RAHAV MEIR AND YEDIDYA MEIR START THEIR MIZRACHI SHLICHUT IN NORTH AMERICA





The Divine Gaze of Compassion

The students of the great Tannaic scholar Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakai (Ribaz) went to visit their Rabbi on his deathbed (Brachot 28b). Realizing that this might be the last time, the students ask him for a blessing. What last words would he choose to say? His parting message amazed them with its simplicity: “May the fear of Heaven be upon you like the fear of flesh and blood.”

They were puzzled. “Is that it? Is that the highest standard you expect of us?”

Ribaz replied, “You wish! We all know that when one commits a transgression, he says to himself, ‘I hope no one saw me.’” If one was as concerned about avoiding shame before G-d as he is before man, he would never sin.

We are required to feel those Divine eyes upon us at every moment, reminding us of an expectation for high standards, with self-criticism and perspective, preventing us from shaming ourselves.

The thought of this Divine gaze looking over our shoulder, so to speak, reminds me of a famous image from the Talmud (Sota 36b). According to one opinion, Yosef was about to sin with Potiphar’s wife, but upon entering her room, he suddenly saw an image in the window that stopped him from sinning – a portrait of his father. (According to the Yerushalmi it was of both his father and his mother.)

What did Yosef see in his father’s eyes? What made him halt at the precipice of sin? What was it about his father’s gaze that saved him from disgrace?

Perhaps it was a look of criticism, deep disappointment, anger? On second thoughts we are reminded of the relationship between Ya’akov and his favorite son. The father’s expression must have also transmitted great love, and full confidence in his son’s ability to withstand the test of temptation.

According to a fascinating commentary mentioned in Rabbi Chaim Sabato’s book, *BeShafrir Chevyon*, “his father’s image” was actually a reflection of himself in a mirror. After a long period of incarceration and hardship, Yosef finds himself in the First Lady’s dressing room! He sees himself in a mirror for the first time. No longer a child, suddenly a grown man, looking so much like his father... (a similar scene appears in Lion King, when the older Simba first sees his reflection in a puddle.)

So the question remains. How do we view these eyes watching us? As a scary and threatening standard, or as a parental expression of affection and faith? And how do we react? With paralyzing self-criticism and guilt, or with compassion, love, and trust?

I know a young man who had been an outstanding student all his life. When he arrived at his prestigious college, things began to deteriorate. So much so that his father went with him to the Dean, who told him, “I see these things every year. I call it the three P’s: Perfectionism, Procrastination, Paralysis.”

Our high standards, our aspiration for perfection, the need to be painfully honest over these days of repentance and atonement, may

make us despair of compassion and thrust us into the arms of paralysis.

According to the Baal Shem Tov, the *Yetzer Hara* (evil inclination) sometimes misleads a person by telling him he has committed a major offense when he hasn’t. The *Yetzer Hara’s* intention is that one would be saddened and ashamed by this, and that will prevent him from worshipping G-d. People must understand this trick and say to the *Yetzer*, “I will not listen to your lies. Even if I am a little sinful, it would please the Creator more if I did not listen to your attempt to make me sad and stop serving G-d. On the contrary, I will serve Him with even greater joy.”

Similarly, during the period of Selichot, we notice something perplexing: we sing the words *Ashamnu, Bagadnu* – we have sinned before you, in a joyous melody. Why? It seems as though we are saying to G-d, ‘Woe to us for sinning but good for us for being capable of feeling guilty.’ We are not hiding behind excuses and denial. Yes, we are guilty, and we may not be able to correct it all this year. But the Divine eyes, the presence of G-d we feel, see beyond the guilt. They instill us with confidence and compassion. If we can only internalize G-d’s point of view and relate to ourselves with an *Ayin Tova*, a favorable eye, we would be safely on the difficult but joyous path to *teshuva*.

Rabbanit Rachelle Fraenkel teaches Torah at midrashot in Israel



ME and WE

Individualism defines much of our modern experience. Everything from the most profound to the most banal aspects of our lives rests on assumptions about the value of the individual. We assume we should be able to live where we want, marry people we fall in love with, and construct our lives based on personal preferences. The “I” is as important, if not more important at times, than the “we.” This hasn’t always been the case of course.

For most of human history, individuals were dependent on clans for their day-to-day survival. Ancient man couldn’t rent a studio apartment and microwave his dinner from a mini-mart. Ancient clans had members to farm, produce food, weave clothing, and bear arms. Interdependence simultaneously empowered the whole and disempowered the individual. Yearnings of individuals were met at times, but they were always secondary to, and subsumed within, the needs of the group.

These cultural differences have also affected our religious experiences over the years. And while Chazal went out of their way to guarantee the necessity of the community in the holistic Jewish experience, through various halachic applications we are still products of our modern cognitive landscape.

This can be acutely felt during the period of the *Yamim Noraim*. For most, the 40 days spent preparing for the Day of Judgement are ones of personal reflection. How have I changed over the last year? Where do I need to improve? Yet the liturgy of Yom Kippur, formulated in the first-person plural (“we have

sinned,” etc.) seems to indicate that this individualistic experience is not necessarily the way the day was conceived. Certainly, if we look at the Torah’s designation of the day, individualistic teshuva is not mentioned at all.

Leviticus 16 delineates the service of the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur. It describes the sacrifices, the scapegoat ritual, and most prominently, the purification of the Temple precincts through the sprinkling of the animals’ blood. The impurity being purged is an impurity generated by sin. It is not the same as the impurity generated by natural bodily functions, such as emissions and death. That impurity stands in opposition to sanctity and as such, renders one temporarily barred from the Sanctuary. On the other hand, the impurity purged on Yom Kippur is engendered by unethical behaviors and conduct, which oppose the Torah’s concept of holiness. While this type of impurity is not contracted by the human body the way other impurities are, it seems to have a polluting effect on the Land and the Temple.

Numbers 35:34 tells us: וְלֹא תִטְמֵא אֶת הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אַתָּם יֹשְׁבֵיהֶּ בָּהּ אֲשֶׁר אֲנִי שׁוֹכֵן בְּתוֹכָהּ, “And you shall not defile the Land which you inhabit, in the midst of which I dwell.”

There is a cumulative polluting effect from the sins of individuals, and when the Land becomes oversaturated, it rejects those responsible for its defilement. The list of prohibited behaviors in Leviticus, for instance, ends with an implicit warning (18:25): וְאֶפְקֹד עֲוֹנָהּ עָלֶיהָ וְתִקָּא הָאָרֶץ אֶת יִשְׁבֵיהָ, “And the Land was defiled, therefore

I did visit its iniquity upon it, and the Land vomited out her inhabitants.”

To live on the Land and benefit from G-d’s imminence in the Temple, Israel must engage in ethical behaviors as prescribed by the Torah. The Yom Kippur *Avodah* exclusively provided the means by which the Temple, the Land’s epicenter, could be purified from the aggregate effects of the sins of individuals. Because the nation’s existence on the Land, and the nature of its relationship with G-d, was contingent on the collective *teshuva* process, there was an acute awareness of the inextricable link between the actions of individuals and the fate of the collective. There were no illusions about the inconsequentiality of people’s choices – religious and physical interdependence were equally conspicuous.

Our modern world challenges this conception of *teshuva* but our liturgy urges it. Perhaps this year, as we utter the words “we have sinned,” we can take time to reflect on how we, as individuals, function within the whole. Perhaps we can reconnect to the rituals of our past that make our actions reverberate with a magnitude we aren’t even always aware of. Perhaps we can begin to broaden our focus and reflect on what our behaviors contribute to the moral fabric of our nation. Perhaps we can choose to do better, not just for ourselves, but to enhance the overall spiritual well-being of our people.

Yael Leibowitz has taught Continuing Education courses and served as Resident Scholar in New York. She is currently teaching as she continues her studies at Bar-Ilan University



Embracing Vulnerability

Kol Nidrei. The mention of these famous words immediately brings to mind the powerful and haunting melody. We can't imagine beginning Yom Kippur any other way.

Why do we begin Yom Kippur with *Kol Nidrei*? If you asked those unfamiliar with our liturgy how we begin our Day of Atonement, would they not suggest that we begin by disavowing our sins? By declaring that we will be better Jews and better people this coming year? With an appeal to G-d's mercy, through the 13 attributes of mercy? Why begin with the annulment of vows?

The first time we encounter a *neder* (vow) is when Ya'akov makes one as he runs away from Esav after buying the birthright from him (Genesis 28). Ya'akov is alone in the darkness, running for his life, and he begs G-d – if You take care of me, and bring me home safely, I will make this place into a place of worship for You, and I will give You a tenth of everything I have. The *neder* here is a deal – if You do this for me, I'll do this for You.

Again, we find a *neder* when the Canaanite King of Arad attacks Bnei Yisrael in the desert (Numbers 21) and takes captives. The Jewish people respond with a vow – if G-d helps us in the war, we will sanctify the cities we capture. G-d hears our vow and with His help, we are victorious.

Yiftach makes his infamous *neder* to sacrifice the first thing that comes out of his house (Judges 11) if G-d helps him in the battle against Amon. In the Rosh Hashanah *haftarah*, we see that Chana makes a *neder* – if G-d grants her a son, she will give him to G-d. In the story of Yonah, read on Yom Kippur afternoon, he implies that he made a *neder* to G-d in order to get himself out of the fish that had swallowed him (Yonah 2:10).

In all of these cases, the protagonist is telling G-d – I have something to offer You. If You help me, I will do something for you in return. On the one hand, this is an impressive gesture. We are not asking G-d to simply save us, but rather offering something in return. Upon reflection though, how can we possibly have anything to offer G-d?

22 years later, when Ya'akov is on his way back and about to encounter Esav again, we find a contrast to the *neder* he made when he was running away. When he hears that Esav is approaching with 400 men, Ya'akov is once again terrified. He turns to G-d, and poignantly begs (Genesis 32):

"I am humbled by all of the kindness and all of the truth You have done for me, for I crossed this Jordan with my stick, and now I have become two camps. Save me, please, from my brother, from Esav, for I fear him, lest he come and kill me, the mother with the children. And You

said, 'I will surely do good for you, and I will make your descendants like the sand of the shore...'"

Why does Ya'akov not make another vow?

Perhaps he has learned something crucial in his many years away from home, with the challenges of raising a family, and managing a very crafty father-in-law/employer. Ya'akov has learned that he has nothing to offer G-d. He is deeply humbled by all that G-d has done for him, and he realizes that he deserves no more. So he throws himself at G-d's mercy and movingly cries for help.

As Yom Kippur begins, and we face the final judgment for our year ahead, *Kol Nidrei* comes to tell us – forget the *neder* method. We are overwhelmed by our great needs, and, admitting our lack of merits, let us undo all the vows. We have nothing to offer, we are humbled by G-d's kindness to us. We cry out and beg for His mercy in granting us life, peace and tranquility. We embrace our own vulnerability and recognize that כְּדָלִים וּכְרָשִׁים דִּפְקוּנוּ דְּלִתְךָ – we knock at Your door cognizant of being poor in merits, and we ask for mercy as we commit ourselves to improve next year, B'ezrat Hashem.

Rabbanit Sally Mayer serves as Rosh Midrasha at Midreshet Lindenbaum's Overseas Program and teaches Talmud and Halacha

JOIN THE REVOLUTIONARY TZURBA M'RABANAN LEARNING PROGRAM NOW IN ENGLISH!

VOLUME 3 NOW AVAILABLE!

VOLUME 3 LEARNING SCHEDULE STARTS SEPTEMBER 1

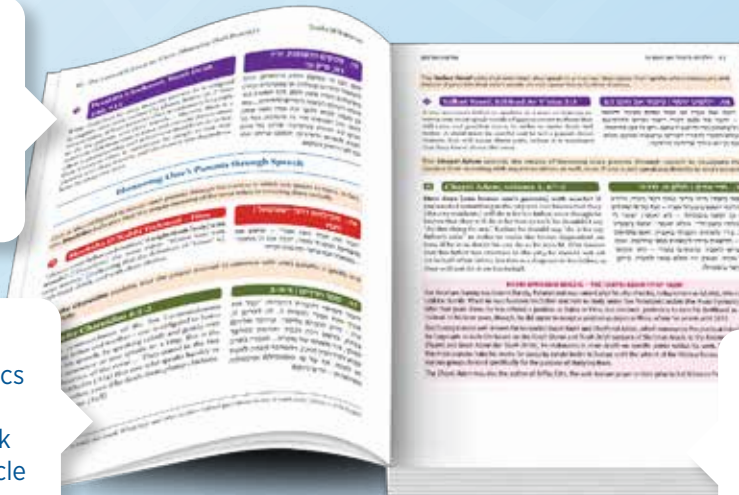
TOPICS INCLUDE:

**ROSH HASHANAH • YOM KIPPUR • MEZUZAH • SHATNEZ
BIKUR CHOLIM • AVEILUT • IVF • COSMETIC SURGERY**



OVER 20,000 LEARNERS IN HUNDREDS OF COMMUNITIES ALL OVER THE WORLD

A systematic and concise learning method, from the Talmudic source through modern-day halachic application



Clear and concise introductions and a modern English translation alongside the original Hebrew text

Cover 300 major topics in Shulchan Aruch, learning once a week during a four-year cycle

Color-coded sections, icons and elucidation to guide the learner, in addition to in-depth essays and responsa to complement the learning



Tzurba M' Rabanan is available as a podcast on all major platforms, including iTunes, Spotify and Google

VISIT WWW.TZURBAOLAMI.COM TO ORDER BOOKS OR TO FIND A LOCAL SHIUR



YOM KIPPUR

The Ultimate Near-Death Experience

One of the most powerful portions of the Yom Kippur *tefillah* is the *Avoda*, the intricate ceremony performed by the Kohen Gadol in order to effect *kapara* (forgiveness) for the entire nation.

A dramatic adjunct to the *Avoda* is the *Eleh Ezkerah* or ‘martyrology;’ it is read just twice each year, on Tisha B’Av and on Yom Kippur. The account of the murder of 10 of the greatest Sages in Jewish history at the hands of the Romans is a gripping account of the terror that has all too often struck our nation. But what is it doing in the middle of the *Avoda*, a ceremony so uplifting and charged with G-dliness and optimism? Why cast us into despair, particularly after the exuberant, joyous song of “*Mareh Kohen?!?*” Would *Yizkor* not have been a more appropriate place for it?

The classic answer is that the death of the righteous is in itself a form of atonement, as potent as the Kohen Gadol’s prayers. But I want to suggest that the *Eleh Ezkara* is just one more component of a pervasive Yom Kippur theme: the near-death experience. Consider all the things we do for Yom Kippur that focus on our mortality:

Before Yom Kippur, we perform *kaparot*, originally done with a chicken. Whatever else you may say about it, the clear message being sent is that one minute you are holding a live, squawking, jumping bird, and the next second it lies lifeless. And you ponder how short life can be, and how quick the end can come; for a chicken – and for you.

Then there is the beautiful custom of asking *mechila* (forgiveness) from everyone we know, akin to a person who fears his life is slipping away and wants to make amends, to clear his conscience before he dies, so he doesn’t leave this world with any bad karma.

Men immerse in a *mikvah* on *erev* Yom Kippur. Part of this is connected to the concept of purity, as we express our desire to be spiritually clean. But the act of dunking in the *mikvah* is deeper; it is literally a *tahara* for us – a ritual washing of the body, like that which takes place before our funeral! Similarly, visiting the graves of *tzadikim* before Yom Kippur is meant to be a sobering experience, prompting us to think: If a *tzadik* could die, then certainly we can too!

And the white *kittel* worn throughout Yom Kippur? It approximates the *tachrichim* (burial shrouds) we will someday wear on our final journey to the *Olam HaEmet* (World of Truth) and serves to remind us that life is finite and fleeting.

I suggest this is also the rationale behind the suspension of our physical and sensual component during Yom Kippur. All those things which make us ‘alive’ – food, drink, sexual relations – are temporarily put on hold. For this one day, we are in a ‘twilight’ zone between life and death; still alive, technically, yet purposely placing ourselves in a semi, death-like state so that we can truly discover the meaning of life.

And we might add the stunning *minhag* cited in the Shulchan Aruch

to light a *yahrzeit* candle – for ourselves! – on Yom Kippur, as well as for our loved ones.

But there is more. Each of our forefathers had his own near-death experience. Avraham was thrown into a fiery furnace by the evil Nimrod; Yitzchak, at the *akeida*, felt the knife pressed upon his throat; Ya’akov wrestled with the angel sent to kill him. All these perilous events played a crucial part in shaping the lives of our patriarchs and implanting in our Jewish DNA the traits of courage, *mesirat nefesh* and faith.

Yom Kippur is a near-death experience for each and every one of us, granting us the moment of decision when we glimpse what is real and what is important, what is illusory and what is trivial.

This is the idea behind *Eleh Ezkerah*. As we relive the demise of the Sages, we ask ourselves: if indeed I am to imminently die, what will my legacy be? How will I be remembered by my family, my community, my G-d? Will my name long be spoken of with pride, or will it soon be forgotten? Will I simply fade away, or will I ultimately enter the holy place, bathed in white light, like the Kohen Gadol in the *Avoda*?

The choice, as always, is ours.

Rabbi Stewart Weiss is Director of the Jewish Outreach Center of Ra’anana
jocmtv@netvision.net.il



Remember!

The gripping, challenging story of the Binding of Yitzchak ends with strange verses that appear to have little importance, meaning or relevance, certainly to the holy day of Rosh Hashanah: “And it came to pass after these things, that it was told to Avraham, saying, Behold, Milcah, she has also born children to your brother Nachor; Utz his firstborn... And Betuel fathered Rivka... And his concubine, whose name was Reumah, she bore also Tevach, Gacham, and...” (Genesis 22, 20-24).

And even if these verses are important to teach us of the birth of the future matriarch, why include them in the morning’s reading? They appear to be an anticlimax, filled with petty family gossip of babies and concubines. Certainly, they pale in comparison to the great testimony of faith and sacrifice.

The Akeida should have shaken the world at its very foundation. It is the only thing that people should have talked about. They should have rushed Avraham, asked him questions, and listened to his take on how it affected him, the impact the experience was to have on world history, on relationships with G-d. Instead, he encountered a world that was uninterested, unaffected, unmoved. One of the greatest moments in spiritual history was trivialized into nothingness. A world in which no one understood, in which no one paid attention.

Or perhaps this was another aspect of the great test of the Akeida: to be misunderstood, unnoticed, and forgotten and yet to persevere. These verses seem to indicate that after this life-altering,

transformative, monumental event, nothing seemed to have changed; life seemed to return to normal. This epitomized Avraham’s fate in the world in which he lived. No wonder he was called *Ivri...* all alone, from the other side.

We can all relate to this phenomenon of being unnoticed. It happens so often by others, by spouses, friends, parents, children, rabbis and congregations. People live lives and yet many do not notice them or their problems or their troubles or their cares or their nightmares or their dreams.

We often misjudge and feel misjudged. We often feel unnoticed or abandoned by others. Perhaps one of the greatest of human miseries is to feel unnoticed by G-d, unanswered, even deserted, especially at vulnerable moments of loss or sickness or fear. This problem is not mine or yours alone. King David himself, in Psalms, pleads, “My G-d, my G-d, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my loud complaint?” “O my G-d, I cry in the daytime, but you do not hear; and in the night, and I have no rest.” “Do not forsake me, O L-rd! O my G-d, do not be far from me!” “Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength fails.” This longing becomes the impetus for prayer... remember me, notice me.

On Rosh Hashanah, G-d models for us the great capacity for remembering, for taking notice, for caring. It is the day on which G-d remembered Sarah and Chana and answered their prayers. It is the day on which G-d remembered Yosef

in Egypt and he was released from prison. It is the day on which He remembers us. The great challenge for us on this *Yom HaZikaron* is to notice others and be sensitive to their circumstances.

In determining when the night has ended and the day has begun, the rabbis offer many opinions. One suggests it is the time when a person can distinguish between the white and blue threads of the *tzitzit* in natural light. Another, significant for us, is the time when you can recognize your friend from a distance of four cubits. The night is when we cannot see each other. Darkness is when we cannot recognize what others need, why others cry, who the other is. And the dawn breaks when we begin to take notice. Light of day comes when we become aware of each other’s hopes and dreams and needs. It is when we can look at the face of any man or woman and see that it is our sister or brother. Because if we cannot see this, it is still night.

May the night of indifference turn into a dawn of caring. May the darkness of indifference transform into the light of respect and kindness. *Or chadash al Tzion ta’ir...* May we merit a new light of care and respect dawn on Zion, on our families and on our community, and may we bathe in its brightness and warmth soon. Achievement, success and peace for all of us, and for all mankind.

Rabbi Mark Dratch is Executive Vice President of the Rabbinical Council of America

Continuing our series about the leaders who have shaped Religious Zionism over the last 150 years

RABBI YITZCHAK YA'AKOV REINES

Born on 19 Cheshvan 5600 (October 27 1839) in Karolin, Belarus, Rabbi Yitzchak Ya'akov Reines studied at Volozhin Yeshiva under the Netziv. His ability to immediately grasp and memorize information while he was still very young was renowned. By the time he was 18, he had been ordained by some of the most famous and well-respected rabbis of the time.

In 1867 he was appointed Rabbi of Saukenai, Lithuania, where he spent less than two years. He then moved to Sventsyany (a district of Vilna) to serve as Rabbi and Av Beit Din.

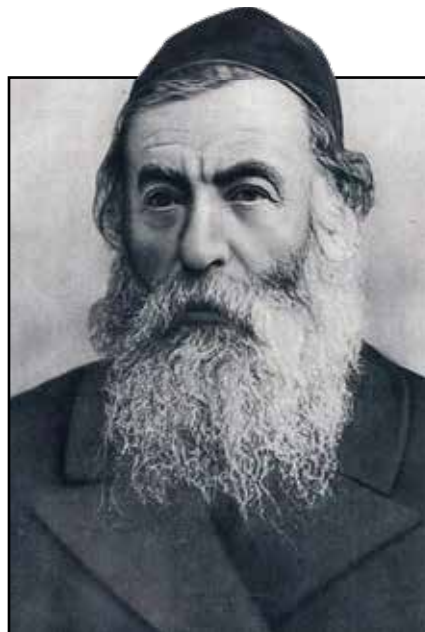
It was in Sventsyany that Rabbi Reines set up a revolutionary yeshiva in which secular subjects were taught along with the regular yeshiva curriculum. He wished to narrow the gap between yeshiva students and enlightened Jews so that a yeshiva graduate would be able to understand and deal with the world around him.

However, this aroused great opposition among the religious and more established members of the community. They viewed the inclusion of secular subjects as a desecration of the holy, and the yeshiva was forced to close after a short time. Yet Rabbi Reines never abandoned the idea and was destined to see its fruition many years later.

He then went to Lida, where he served as Rabbi and Av Bet Din and by 1905 his reputation gave him the ability to establish a yeshiva called *Torah UMada* (Torah and Science). During its 10-year existence, the yeshiva enjoyed a well-earned reputation and produced hundreds of graduates.

ACTIVITIES FOR ERETZ YISRAEL

Two years after the establishment of the World Zionist Organization, Rabbi Reines began to actively work on its behalf. He was one of the first rabbis to answer Herzl's call to become part of the Zionist Movement, and beginning with the Third Zionist Congress in 1899, he attended almost all meetings and congresses of the world body.



In 1901, at the Fifth Zionist Congress, when the National Federation (or Democratic Federation) attempted to have all education placed under the auspices of the World Zionist Organization (WZO), he fought strongly against the idea.

Under his guidance and influence, the First Congress of Religious Zionists met in Vilna in 1902. There, they chose to call themselves *Mizrachi*, an abbreviation of *Merkaz Ruchani* (spiritual center).

Indeed, the Mizrachi party envisioned itself as the spiritual center of the Zionist organization and desired to make Eretz Israel

the spiritual center of Judaism. Their purpose was twofold: on the one hand, they wanted to heighten awareness among religious Jews towards the possibility of Aliyah, and on the other, they wanted to influence the non-religious Zionists by creating an atmosphere of tolerance and equality between the two factions.

During Mizrachi's first year, 210 groups were established in Russia, Poland and Lithuania, aside from the Mizrachi groups in other countries. In the general gathering of Zionists in Minskin in 1902, 160 Mizrachi members attended the congress. Previously, at the Fifth Zionist Congress, Rabbi Reines fought strongly to keep the Zionist Movement from splitting and thus voted for the Uganda Resolution. After the 10th Zionist Congress in 1911, when the responsibility for education did indeed fall under the wings of the WZO, the Mizrachi Movement split. However, through Rabbi Reines' personal intervention and efforts, Mizrachi remained within the organization apart from the Frankfurt branch. Rabbi Reines remained head of Mizrachi until his death.

Rabbi Reines died on 10 Elul 5675 (August 29 1915) and his name has been memorialized in many areas in Eretz Yisrael. Neve Ya'akov, a suburb of Jerusalem established in 1924, rebuilt after the Six-Day War of 1967, is named after him. The first moshav of HaPoel HaMizrachi, Sede Ya'akov, established in 1927, is also named in his honor, as are many streets in Israeli cities.

Rabbi Reines' importance rests not only with the fact that he established Mizrachi – the Religious Zionist Movement – but also that many of his ideas became reality in the modern State of Israel.



THE MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE

Before reciting the Yom Kippur *vidui* (confessional prayer), we offer a special prayer:

אתה יודע רזי עולם ותעלומות סתרי כל חי.
אתה חופש כל חדרי בטן ובוהן כליות ולב. אין
דבר נעלם ממך ואין נסתר מנגד עיניך. ובכן
יהי רצון מלפניך ה' אלוקינו ואלקי אבותינו,
שתסלח לנו על כל חטאתינו, ותמחל לנו על
כל עונותינו, ותכפר לנו על כל פשעינו.

“You know the mysteries of the universe and the hidden secrets of every living soul. You search the innermost chambers of the conscience and the heart. Nothing escapes You; nothing is hidden from Your sight. Therefore, may it be Your Will to forgive all our sins.”

Why do we introduce the Yom Kippur *vidui* by acknowledging G-d's infinite knowledge? What does G-d's knowledge of the hidden mysteries of the universe have to do with our efforts to repent and atone for our deeds?

There are three components to the *teshuva* process, corresponding to the past, the present, and the future. *Teshuva* should include regret for improper conduct in the past, a decision to cease this conduct in the present, and a resolve not to repeat it in the future.

And yet, complete performance of all three aspects of *teshuva* requires profound knowledge. In fact, *teshuva sheleima*, complete repentance, requires a level of knowledge far beyond our limited capabilities.

Only if we are fully aware of the seriousness of our actions will we truly feel remorse over our past failings. The Kabbalists taught that our actions can influence the highest spiritual realms. The more

we are aware of the damage caused by our wrongdoings, the greater our feelings of regret. For this reason the request for forgiveness in the daily *Amidah* prayer only appears *after* the request for knowledge.

In order to completely free ourselves from a particular negative behavior or trait, it is not enough to desist from its outward manifestations. We need to remove all desire for this conduct; we need to dislodge its roots from the inner recesses of the soul. But how well do we know what resides in the depths of our heart? We may think that we have purified ourselves from a particular vice, and yet the disease is still entrenched within, and we will be unable to withstand a future re-awakening of this desire.

We commit ourselves not to repeat our error, no matter what the situation, even under the most trying circumstances. Again, a full acceptance for the future implies knowledge of all future events and their impact upon us – a knowledge that is clearly denied to us.

So how can we aspire toward true *teshuva*, when the essential components of the *teshuva* process require knowledge that is beyond our limited abilities?

G-d promises us that the mitzvah of *teshuva* is within our grasp – “it is not too difficult or distant from you.... Rather, this matter is very close to you, in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can fulfill it” (Deuteronomy 30:11-14). G-d graciously accepts the little we are able to accomplish as if it were much. We ask that the degree of regret, change, and resolve that we are capable of, even though

it is limited by our capabilities, be combined with G-d's infinite knowledge. For if we were able to fully recognize matters in their true measure, we would feel them with all of their intensity in our efforts to better ourselves.

This then is the meaning of the Yom Kippur prayer:

“You know the mysteries of the universe” – only You know the full impact of our mistakes and how much remorse we should really feel – “and the hidden secrets of every living soul” – for we fail to properly regret our actions.

“You search the innermost chambers of the conscience and the heart” – You see that traces of our failings still lurk deep within us. Only You know to what degree we need to cleanse ourselves of character flaws that we have not fully succeeded in conquering.

“Nothing escapes You; nothing is hidden from Your sight” – You know all future events, including situations that will tempt us and perhaps cause us to stumble again.

Nonetheless, since we can only perform the various components of *teshuva* according to our limited capabilities, we beseech G-d, “May it be Your Will to forgive all of our sins.” Then we can attain the level of “complete repentance before You” – a *teshuva* that is complete when our sincere efforts are complemented by G-d's infinite knowledge.

(Taken from “Silver from the Land of Israel”, Urim 2010)

Rabbi Chanan Morrison is the author of several books on Rav Kook's writings
www.RavKookTorah.org

LIVING and GIVING

THE REMARKABLE STORY OF HOW ISRAEL HAS BECOME A WORLD LEADER IN KIDNEY TRANSPLANTS

At age 27, Bentzi Fuchs was thrilled to find Meitav, his partner in life. But his bride – a young widow with four children under 11 – had a traumatic past: she'd lost her first husband, Ariel, to kidney failure.

Ariel had received a transplant, but that kidney failed. "He died waiting for a kidney," says Bentzi.

Learning about Meitav's loss touched Bentzi deeply. Yet he couldn't imagine donating a kidney of his own... at least not yet.

Bentzi and Meitav settled into their lives in the Shomron, but the idea of donating a kidney had taken root in his heart. Always down-to-earth and practical, he couldn't let go of this passionate desire for connection, for *chessed*. This sense of communal responsibility is actually a Fuchs family legacy. Bentzi's father, Pinchas, was a founder of Elon Moreh in the Shomron; he worked tirelessly to build the community.

Since childhood, Bentzi had hoped to find his own path – to emulate his father, whilst using his own strengths to contribute to society in a meaningful way. "People give back in so many ways," Bentzi explains. "Some open hearts with Torah outreach, others inspire minds through education, still others are pillars of *chessed*. Each person finds a purpose that appeals to him."

Ten years into marriage, he felt he'd discovered that path. "As I got older and really started to consider what my

contribution to society would be – I realized that donating a kidney could be my *chessed*," he says.

Bentzi – a construction worker – was active and in good health, a prerequisite for donation. But what made up his mind was its concrete, defined nature. "Kidney donation doesn't stretch on for long periods of time, it doesn't require living in a faraway place or switching jobs. It suited me perfectly."

A full nine months passed as Bentzi underwent the required tests with the help of Matnat Chaim, the Israeli non-profit that recruits and supports living kidney donors. In the decade since Matnat Chaim was founded, over 700 healthy volunteers have donated their kidneys, most to strangers, and saved a life. Thanks to Matnat Chaim's ground-breaking work, Israel is today the world leader in altruistic (non-related) kidney donation.

When most of Bentzi's tests were completed, he shared his plans with his family. "They were excited and supported me completely," Bentzi says. He was a little surprised by his children's reaction. "When we told them I was doing it, they were thrilled."

There was one more set of people Bentzi had to inform: Ariel's family. "They were moved and full of admiration," Bentzi says. Bentzi recovered from the surgery easily. "Three days after, I was going to shul. My recovery went very smoothly."

Ever humble, Bentzi doesn't feel he did anything extraordinary. "I don't make too much of it," he says. "I just get on with my life."

But Meitav disagrees. With the understanding of someone who has been on both sides, she says, "I'm so proud of Bentzi. He made two families whole again – ours and his recipient's."

Bentzi's story is just one out of the hundreds of stories of altruistic donors who have voluntarily donated a kidney through Matnat Chaim.

THE MATNAT CHAIM STORY

In 2007 Rabbi Yeshayahu Heber, a school principal and a teacher at a prominent Jerusalem yeshiva, suffered sudden kidney failure and was forced to undergo difficult dialysis treatments. A year later, a friend donated a kidney to the rabbi and he regained his health. However, during treatments, Rabbi Heber met a 19-year-old named Pinchas Turgeman, the son of parents who had lost their older son in a terrorist attack in the IDF. Pinchas, the younger brother, urgently needed a kidney transplant, but no suitable donor could be found.

With Rabbi Heber's help, a donor was located who was a match for young Pinchas. Unfortunately, due to bureaucratic complications, the transplant was delayed and Pinchas' body could no longer cope. After a long period of physical and emotional suffering for him and his family, he passed away, leaving his parents bereaved of both their sons.

This tragic story, and many others like it, illustrated the vital need for an organization to which patients could turn in such times of trouble, and that is how Matnat Chaim came into being.

A day after Turgeman's funeral, after some 24 hours of isolation and reflection, Rabbi Heber set up Matnat Chaim to sign up suitable individuals for voluntary kidney

donations. Matnat Chaim is Hebrew for both *gift of life* and *a living gift* – a play on words which aptly describes a living kidney donation.

Over the course of the first year, the rabbi found four donors; during the second year, eight; ten years later, Matnat Chaim has helped facilitate over 700 transplants. Rabbi Heber and his wife devote themselves tirelessly to the task of finding one kidney donor after another. They are concentrating on just one thing: finding the next kidney donor and saving another life.

Rabbi Heber likes to begin meetings by saying, "I suggest you sit with me for less than half an hour. If the meeting goes any longer you may find that you're left with only one kidney because you donated the other one!"

It's hard to argue with him because it's quite clear that Israel's dramatically high rate of altruistic kidney donation is largely due to Rabbi Heber's charismatic personality and the organization he created.

Doctors and medical experts from all over the world have expressed amazement at the huge change in the statistics regarding live kidney donation in Israel over the past few years – the rate has more than tripled since Matnat Chaim was established. Hundreds of kidney recipients owe Rabbi Heber their lives.

"When I first began to speak to people about donating a kidney, I realized that the main roadblock was the total lack of awareness. Kidney donation sounded terrifying, bizarre, divorced from reality. Even today I get many questions from people who have never thought about such a thing in their lives. Today, the public is much more aware and the numbers speak for themselves – over 700 people have donated.

"As time passes, increasing numbers of people have their names added to the waiting list for kidneys. The dialysis department is a dreadful place. It is a terrifying experience that has a devastating effect on people, body and soul, but it is the only way to keep an end-stage kidney patient alive



LIFE-SAVERS: Over 120 kidney donors gathered for a special Shabbat in Jerusalem in 2018 and (right) the founder of Matnat Chaim, Rabbi Yeshayahu Heber (Credit: Chaim Meiersdorf)



without a transplant. Sometimes I feel like crying when I think of the plight of the friends I left behind in the dialysis clinic. My dream is that we will find sufficient numbers of donors and that there will be no more dialysis patients in Israel waiting for a transplant – and I’m certain that we can achieve it!

“We are dealing with human life. There are so many people who could donate but are simply unaware of the possibility or lack awareness concerning the vital importance of the procedure. I’m sure that within a few years, with G-d’s help, there will be far fewer people on the waiting list and that we’ll win this battle. The rate of altruistic donation in Israel is the highest in the world. But the most meaningful outcome is in the home of each recipient with the return to the family of a healthy father, mother or child.”

Rabbi Heber notes that nearly all of today’s leading halachic authorities whole-heartedly support kidney donation by a living donor. The prohibition of organ donation by some rabbis concerns the harvesting of organs from deceased donors, an issue that Matnat Chaim does not deal with at all. Jewish law regarding living donation is fully in line with current medical opinion that living kidney donation is permitted; indeed it is a tremendous mitzvah.

Matnat Chaim has caused a sea change in the way Israelis see organ transplants, with truly revolutionary results. Along with saving lives, kidney donations create new families, break down stereotypes between groups, and contribute to solidarity within Israeli society. By eliminating costly dialysis treatments, Matnat Chaim has saved hundreds of millions of dollars for the Israeli public health system.

Matnat Chaim operates on a very modest budget with a small staff of dedicated workers and volunteers. With your help, Matnat Chaim can turn Israel into the first western country without a waiting list for kidney donation – a true light unto the nations!

This Yom Kippur as we are praying for our lives in the coming year, take a moment to remember the many potential recipients, some of whom are married with families, parents with small children to care for, others with a long history of suffering who are all waiting for their turn to receive a kidney donation.

Top Ten Facts about Kidney Donation in Israel

1. Over **700** volunteer kidney donors have met their match through Matnat Chaim
2. **95%** of Matnat Chaim donors are religious, Torah observant Jews
3. In 2018, **58%** of living kidney donors in Israel were referred by Matnat Chaim
4. More than **800** people are still on the transplant list, suffering on dialysis
5. The average wait for a kidney from a deceased donor is **7** years
6. **1 in 7** patients on dialysis dies each year
7. Over **95%** of living donor transplants are successful
8. A kidney from a live donor will on average last **20** years
9. Transplants facilitated by Matnat Chaim have saved over **2 billion** shekels for the Israeli public health system
10. Matnat Chaim’s kidney transplants are performed in **5** different Israeli hospitals

To learn more about Matnat Chaim and help eliminate the waiting list: Visit the website: www.kilya.org.il/en/ Email: judy@kilya.org.il Call: 1-888-970-4608 (USA), 08000-488276 (UK), 054-3213911 (Israel)



This Year, Preserve Your Parents' Lives and Values... *Forever*

"When a parent dies, it's the end. I always wanted to chronicle the family history with my mother... but I wasn't forceful and didn't make it happen." (Robert De Niro)

A person's true wealth is not their net worth. It's the values, experiences and memories that have made him or her the person they are.

And so a book – or other documentation – is an excellent way of passing on the true wealth your parents or grandparents have accumulated over a lifetime.

It's a solid and sure investment in your family's future. **And a way of immortalizing your loved ones.**

Because the truth is, if you wait until "the time is right" and you don't do it, they won't be around to tell you. And they'll be forgotten after a generation or two.

I speak from experience.

For the first 20 years of my life, I lived five minutes away from my paternal grandparents, seeing them almost every day.

Yet now, 30 years after they passed away, the memories have faded and my children know very little of their lives.

On the other hand, my maternal grandparents lived much farther away and we saw them maybe three times a year. But today they are a living presence in my life and the lives of my children.

The difference? A book. I wrote a book about my maternal grandparents.

"Spoken words fly away but the written word remains" (Latin proverb).

That's a very Jewish idea too.

Why do you think G-d had the 10 Commandments engraved in stone? Because He wanted us to keep them for eternity!

And why did the Sages write down the Oral Law? So it wouldn't be distorted and forgotten.

My dear friends, I urge you to write down your own family's "Oral Law" – the values and principles that have guided your ancestors throughout their lives.

I promise you it will become a priceless family heirloom. Something your children and grandchildren will treasure for generations.

Here are five reasons why:

1. They'll each have a copy of the book and know all about the values their ancestors personified (whether they read it now or in 30 years' time).
2. The book will strengthen their connection to their parents/grandparents, and all that they stood for.
3. It will give you and your parents pride, pleasure and peace of mind. You and they will have preserved all that is important. No regrets. No guilt.
4. Passing on their stories, values and traditions to the next generation keeps parents vibrant, active and contributing.
5. It's a healing, cathartic and comforting experience. Not a closure but a celebration.

I paid a condolence call to the family of a man I'd written a book for. They and he hadn't been particularly enthusiastic about doing it and couldn't see the value in it.

But after he was no longer, it clicked. As I walked into the shiva,

the first thing his daughter said to me was, "Oh Danny, we are so grateful we did the book."

Don't wait until it's too late.

But it's not about the book. Psychologists in Atlanta¹ found that children – aged 4, 44 or 104 – are more resilient, happy and rebound faster from stress when they know their family stories. They know they're part of something bigger than themselves that people in their family have kept going for generations.

And they feel a responsibility to perpetuate those values.

Children lap up stories of what their parents were like as children, however mundane and undramatic you may think they sound.

Why? Because children need to know who they are connected to, how they are connected, and what it means to be who they are.

Writing it down strengthens that connection and provides that clarity.

So, if you've ever wondered how your children and grandchildren are going to remember their forebears in a meaningful way...

If you keep putting it off, don't know where to start or are just too busy...

Or simply want a very special birthday or anniversary gift...

Write to dannyverbov@gmail.com and we'll chat about a book to celebrate your parents' lives.

¹ Marshall Duke, Ph.D., and Robyn Fivush, Ph.D.



An Eye for Good

Many Jews have the custom to improve specific areas of their lives at this time of the year. The Chafetz Chaim was known to advise his students to select and master a single characteristic before moving on to another. In Pirkei Avot (2: 13-14), Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai asks his students which character trait a person should strive to develop most. Rabbi Eliezer responds, “*Ayin Tova* – a good eye.” What’s a good eye? Maintaining a positive outlook on life. It means appreciating what G-d has given us and not being jealous of others. The Chesed L’Avraham comments that this is the glue that bonds body and soul and enables us to best serve G-d. The Ramban states that one should rejoice in another person’s success even if they have not personally reached similar achievement.

Navigating through the world of dating, engagements and weddings on one hand and breakups, broken hearts and painful times on the other, I see many people grapple with Rabbi Yochanan’s characterization of *Ayin Tova*. How is it possible to achieve a positive outlook after so many disheartening dates? Why are so many of my friends married and I have not yet found the right one?

Rabbi Shalom Arush, in his book, *The Garden of Emunah*, reminds us of the soothing power of the belief that we are not in control of our own fate. According to the Zohar, G-d created us for the sole purpose of developing a relationship with Him and His limitless love for us. He helps us cope with all situations because it is for our ultimate good. G-d often sends us trials and wake-up calls as reminders that we

are not in charge. Rabbi Arush’s five foundations for *Emunah* are:

1. Believe that G-d is in our midst, watching over us and managing our lives.
2. Believe that we have the power and privilege to speak to G-d whenever we wish.
3. Believe that G-d listens to us and our prayers.
4. Believe that G-d loves us and desires to help us, especially those who turn to Him and speak to Him.
5. Believe that G-d’s power, mercy and compassion are limitless and that only He possesses the resources and the ability to help us, even when we don’t deserve it.

We must work on our *Emunah* to get closer to G-d, but just by recognizing that G-d is in charge makes it easier for us to be happy and have a positive outlook on life, whatever challenges we are facing.

The concept of a positive outlook is the main theme of Shawn Achor’s book, *The Happiness Advantage*. He discusses the conventional wisdom that success breeds happiness. However, over a decade of research in the field of positive psychology has proven that happiness and optimism actually fuel performance and achievement. Happiness is a subjective wellbeing based on how we feel about our lives, defined by a positive mood and outlook, just as Rabbi Eliezer suggests. Established data now shows that happiness leads to success in every aspect of our lives, including health, friendship, community involvement,

career development, marriage, and relationships. When we are positive, we are more thoughtful, creative, and open to new ideas.

To improve our optimism and creativity, it is incumbent on us to habitually work on being happy. We can do this, according to Achor, through the following methods:

1. Meditate and/or pray.
2. Find something to look forward to. Put something on our calendars; an enjoyable activity, something to anticipate.
3. Perform acts of kindness.
4. Infuse positivity into our lives. Hang pictures of loved ones at work, or take a walk on a nice day.
5. Compile a list of three good things that happen to us every day. This simple act forces our brains to scan the last 24 hours for potential positives which will make us more skilled at noticing and focusing on possibilities for personal and professional growth.
6. Exercise. Physical activity boosts our moods and reduces stress. It is not easy to work on positivity, especially when life throws us some unexpected curveballs.

May we all recognize that we have the capability and power to get closer to G-d by proactively working on our positivity in action and thought. May we experience firsthand how much G-d truly loves and cherishes us.

Mrs. Mindy Eisenman, MSW, is the Staff Connector at YUConnects and an adjunct professor at Stern College for Women



Wait for Spontaneity

Many teenagers tend to allow their emotions to burst outwards, without restraint or filtering. For example, young people dance at weddings in a way that expresses their feelings, without caring what those around them are thinking. When they get together with friends, they express their joy without restraint, and the same holds with prayer and religious fervor. They do not keep their emotions inside. In a word, they tend towards spontaneity.

Every character trait has associated similar traits. Spontaneity is a bedfellow of enthusiasm, naturalness and authenticity, all praiseworthy characteristics. Yet it has other, less admirable bedfellows, such as poor judgment and lack of moderation.

The Talmud (Brachot 24a) relates that in the early generations the Jews' prayers were answered almost immediately and they merited numerous miracles, even though they did not know the entire Mishnah. By contrast, later generations, that knew the entire Mishnah, would pray and fast without meriting any response from G-d.

Our Sages explain that the earlier generations' advantage was their self-sacrifice for G-d's holiness. For example, Rav Ada saw a woman in the marketplace who was dressed immodestly. She was not Jewish, but the Rabbi thought she was. He confronted her and tore her clothing. After it became clear that she was not Jewish, he was required to compensate her with 400 *zuz*.¹ Rav Ada asked her what her name was and she said "*Matun*" [a word

which means both moderation and 200]. Rav Ada then said, "Matun! Matun! 400 *zuz*!" A strange story perhaps but Rav Kook (in Ein Aya) explains that the main point is to emphasize the balance between self-sacrifice, enthusiasm and spontaneity on the one hand, and moderation and caution on the other.

The later generations stood out in their wisdom and moderation, their self-restraint and their cautious judgment, traits essential for acquiring Torah. Indeed, they became great Torah scholars. By contrast, the earlier generations did not reach such a high level of Torah knowledge, but they had holy fervor, self-sacrifice for holiness. As a result, their prayers raced skyward and were answered. True, enthusiasm and spontaneity are liable to cause mishaps, as occurred in the story of Rav Ada. He was not moderate but spontaneous, and it cost him 400 *zuz* and presumably some public embarrassment too. In pointing out the compensation, our Sages wished to teach us that the loss was trivial compared to the gain of making a religious statement. All in all, the damage amounted to some *zuzim*. Better we should have spontaneity in holiness despite the mishaps,² than a way of life characterized by too much moderation and little spirit, enthusiasm and self-sacrifice for the holy.

So is spontaneity a blessed trait? Not necessarily. Our Sages did not praise all spontaneity but only that rooted in holiness and self-sacrifice for holiness, such as that of Rav Ada, who was an enormous Torah scholar with

great fear of G-d. Spontaneity per se has little value. In someone spiritually empty, spontaneity is a recipe for corruption and spiritual destruction. Spontaneity is the natural behavior of children. Children, not yet having learned self-control, respond spontaneously. When they respond successfully, their spontaneity adds special charm. However, when their responses are inappropriate, their spontaneity can work against them. An adult learns to conquer emotions and feelings, to regulate and direct them. Not every emotion has to immediately burst outwards. Over-spontaneity in adults generally attests to a lack of maturity or self-awareness. Moreover, even spontaneity in holiness has limits. For example, fanaticism is a kind of spontaneity in holiness, and indeed the Torah does not encourage it except in rare cases.

The Torah does not reject naturalness. Its goal is not to suppress it or to turn us into programmed robots. Naturalness is an important trait. It is an innate force that propels us forward in life. The Torah admires spontaneity, but it demands that we take control of it, regulate and direct it. We cannot allow our emotions to control our intellect.

¹ The currency at the time.

² Of course, our religious enthusiasm should not come at the expense of – or through embarrassing – others, Jews or non-Jews.

Rabbi Elisha Aviner teaches in yeshivot hesder and founded an organization to help parents with adolescent education aviner@neto.net.il



WELCOMING THE SINNERS

It's one of the most dramatic experiences in the Jewish calendar.

Jews all over the world flock to the synagogue for *Kol Nidrei*. Before we begin the actual service, we pause and make a declaration: אָנוּ מְתַיְרִים, להתפלל עם העבֵרִיִּים, "We permit to pray together with the sinners."

Is this the best we can do to start the somber Day of Atonement? Who are we calling sinners?

To answer this, let us explore the unusual *mitzvah* of *Eglah Arufa*. The Torah teaches that if a corpse is found between two cities, the elders of the nearest city must declare that "our hands didn't shed this blood." Do we actually suspect the elders of the city of having killed this person? Why do they have to proclaim their innocence?

The Talmud (Sotah 48) explains that we don't suspect them of having murdered anyone. Rather, their declaration means that they fulfilled their responsibility to escort the person out of their city.

So what? How does their escorting him a few meters from the city have anything to do with "not shedding his blood"?

The Maharal explains that while it's true that escorting the person from the city does not provide him with physical protection for his entire trip, it does give him spiritual protection. Because he is

considered part of their city. When we are judged by G-d as individuals, we have no chance of a passing grade, since every person sins and has significant failings. However, the moment we are judged as a collective, and G-d sees us as part of the Jewish nation, we gain the merits of our entire people and have a chance to earn G-d's compassion and mercy.

As we approach Yom Kippur, none of us can ask for G-d's mercy and forgiveness as individuals. We must do so as part of the Jewish community, to earn the merits of our people as a whole. This is why our confessions and all our prayers are expressed in the plural. We are focusing on the entire nation and not only on ourselves, enabling G-d to see us as part of our broader nation with all its wondrous collective merits.

Nevertheless, we cannot come before G-d as part of the entire nation if we view other Jews as being "outside the camp." The Jewish nation is incomplete if any part of it is missing.

Just like a symphony orchestra needs every instrument to complete the harmony, and just like the incense in the Temple included the foul-smelling *chelbona* spice and was invalid without it, the Jewish people are incomplete if those we view as sinners are excluded. Thus at the very start of Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the year, we invite

every single Jew, including those we see as sinners.

This is a critical message as we approach the *Yamim Noraim* with the hope of achieving spiritual cleansing both as individuals and as a nation. We live in an increasingly polarized world, especially when it comes to politics and elections. In Israel, the Right view the Left as anti-Israel and anti-Zionist. The Left view the Right as fascists and anti-democratic. The extreme secular camp labels the religious as "dark" and "taking us back to the Middle Ages" while the extreme religious question the Jewishness of those who are more secular. We see the same thing in the United States and in other countries as well. We have lost the ability to recognize that we can all disagree about ideology and theology while remaining part of the same family.

Let us remember that we have no chance of achieving atonement and spiritual cleansing if we separate ourselves from the merit of the entirety of the nation by viewing any Jew as being a sinner or "outside the fold." We must feel love and unity with all fellow Jews regardless of our disagreements on ideological, theological and political issues, and only then can we hope for a year filled with G-d's grace and blessings.

Rabbi Dov Lipman is the author of seven books about Judaism and Israel. He also writes for various news outlets



Tears

An old man, a total stranger, approached me in shul. Baby boomers like myself know at once how to recognize these individuals. Before they say a word or even display their forearm, we know that they are survivors.

There is this sense about him that though his body may be here, his mind is a million miles away. Pointing to an imaginary calendar, he announces, “It is just 13 days until *erev* Yom Kippur.”

After a pregnant pause, he adds, “*Erev* Yom Kippur, you know, is a special day.”

“Years ago,” he begins, “My friends and I faced a serious dilemma on *erev* Yom Kippur. We were prisoners in the world’s most demonic jail, yet we had made a commitment to live. The Germans were most inventive and incredibly sadistic regarding our quality of life, marshaling a host of challenges we were not expected to survive.”

He stops for a moment to collect his thoughts and looks deeply into my eyes. “*Ausrücken* and *Einrücken* was the constant refrain of our lives: go out and come in; work, sleep, barely eat, fall ill – get beaten along the way – get better or die. Had we been logical,” he adds in a tone devoid of self-pity, “We might have resigned ourselves to the situation. Our fate was beyond our control and thoroughly in the domain of our masters’ whim and will. But men are rarely logical when their own fate is at stake. And, as I said, we had made a commitment to survive.

The key was believing that the worst would not happen to us. Those who didn’t follow this formula were the first to succumb. More important than the state of our physical health was the state of our minds. If we didn’t have the will to live, the struggle for existence was utterly hopeless. The *muselmanner* – the walking zombies who were more dead than alive – had already lost their desire to live, but just had not yet given up the ghost.

I am telling you now what I could not say then. In Auschwitz, we weren’t allowed to speak when we pleased, and no one listened when we were allowed. But then again,” he comments without irony, “Even if they would have, they would not have understood.

This brings me to *erev* Yom Kippur when we had our greatest dilemma. My friends and I – rigid skeletons sitting on the floor, eyes glazed from starvation – thought long and hard about what we would do. We had thus far maintained not only our lives but also our humanity and faith in the Almighty.

It was amazing, but somehow, we had managed to blow a shofar in the camp on Rosh Hashanah. Not 100 blasts, but a few whispered notes. We also managed to eat *matzot* on Pesach.

But on *erev* Yom Kippur, we had an insurmountable dilemma. We had to give *tzedakah* on that day – the day before it would be determined ‘Who will live, and who will die’ – but we did not own a thing. They had taken away our clothes, our

shoes, our names, even our hair. The intention was that once we were deprived of everything, we would become hollow, forgetful of dignity and restraint, and once you lose all, you can lose yourself as well.

And this is precisely what we were fighting against, which is why giving *tzedakah* was so important to us. We were obsessed with fulfilling this *mitzvah* and contradicting the savagery which surrounded us. But even after overcoming incredible hurdles in the past, we were still at a total loss as to how to deal with this current challenge, and we began to weep.

Suddenly, a fellow Jew placed his tin cup to his cheek and collected his tears and passed the cup to me. I sipped the charitable gift and then reciprocated by placing the cup to my cheeks and passed it to my neighbor. This fellow followed my lead, but by this point, we were no longer collecting tears of sadness.”

When he finishes his tale there are long moments of silence. I want to thank him for sharing his experiences with me, but a lump is lodged in my throat. This wizened octogenarian must know what I am thinking, for he dabs at his glistening eyes and comments, “It’s OK. This is the season when we must share. I just started a little early this year.”

Rabbi Hanoch Teller, internationally-acclaimed storyteller extraordinaire, is an award-winning author and producer



TERUAH AND TEKIAH

תְּרוּעָה וְתִקְיָה

The Biblical name for Rosh Hashanah is *Yom Teruah* יום תְּרוּעָה (Bamidbar 29:1) or *Zichron Teruah* זְכוֹרֹן תְּרוּעָה (Vayikra 23:24). Let us look at the word תְּרוּעָה.

In the section of the Torah detailing the laws of the trumpets (Bamidbar 10:1-10), a distinction is made between the *tekiah* תִּקְיָה – “the long blast” and the *teruah*, “the short blast.” *Tekiah* is used for gathering the camp together and happy occasions, whereas *teruah* indicates the camp should move and is used at times of war. However, the verse (10:5) uses a combination of the roots to describe the blowing of the *teruah*: וּתְקַעְתֶּם תְּרוּעָה (*ut'katem teruah*). Milgrom, in his JPS commentary, explains as follows:

short blasts: Hebrew *teruah*, verbal form *heria*, in contrast to “blow long blasts,” *taka*. It should be noted that the term “blow long blasts” is expressed simply by the verb *taka* (vv. 3-4), but “blow short blasts” requires the compound expression *taka' teruah* (vv. 5-6). The reason for these distinct forms is twofold.

1. The term *teruah* and its corresponding verb *heria* refer elsewhere to a vocal shout by warriors (e.g. Joshua 6:5,10, 16, 20) and worshippers (e.g. Psalms. 47:2; 95:2), whereas the sole verb signifying the blowing of a horn is *taka* (e.g. Joshua 6:13). Hence when the text wishes to express the idea of blowing the *teruah* signal on the trumpet it must either use the verb *taka*, signifying blowing on an instrument, and the object *teruah* to indicate the appropriate signal, or, if it uses

the verb *heria*, it must specify that the sound was produced by a trumpet (v. 9).

2. *Teruah* can refer to a battle cry (cf. Amos 1:14, Jeremiah 14:19); and hence, its use in breaking camp implies signaling the Israelites to move from an encamped peaceful position to a mobile battle formation. Thus the trumpets taken into the Midianite war are actually called “the trumpets of *teruah*” (31:6, cf 2 Chronicles 13:12).

Therefore, *teruah* (or the verb *heria* הִרְיַע) can be used to refer both to the noise of a trumpet/shofar, or the noise of people. Dr. Nissan Netzer writes that the original meaning of the verb *heria* (from the root רִוַע) meant to blow on a shofar or trumpet, and later that was expanded to mean the shouts of a crowd of people. Netzer then goes on to point out that in Rabbinic Hebrew, the verb *hitria* הִתְרִיעַ was created by adding the letter *tav* from the word *teruah*. Whereas originally both forms of the verb had the same meaning, in modern Hebrew they diverge: *heria* has a positive connotation – “to applaud,” whereas *hitria* has a negative one – “to protest, to warn” (and neither meaning today refers to blowing a shofar; for that we only have the verb *taka*).

It is easy to mix up *hatra'a* הַתְּרָעָה – a warning, with the similar-sounding הַתְּרָאָה – which also means warning. But the former also means “alert, alarm” (think of the shofar and the original distinction of *teruah*), while the latter also has the sense of “give advance notice” (for

example, as witnesses are required to do in capital cases). Or as the website Safa Ivrit has it, הַתְּרָאָה means “warning someone not to do something” and הַתְּרִיעָה means “warning about something that is about to happen.”

As we noted, the verb *taka* תִּקַּע simply means “blowing on an instrument” (regardless of the length of the blasts). Klein writes that the verb fully means “to thrust, clap, give a blow, blast.” Ben Yehuda writes that perhaps the origin of the root comes from the sound of the *tekiah*.

Kaddari writes that the Biblical meanings of the root include: a) to strike – with hands to clap, or to shake hands (to guarantee), b) to drive in – with a sword (e.g. Judges 3:21), with a peg (Judges 16:14, Isaiah 22:23), or a tent (Genesis 31:25), c) to thrust – in regards to wind (Exodus 10:19), and of course d) to blow on an instrument. He quotes the linguist Eliezer Rubinstein as saying that the basic meaning of the Biblical root תִּקַּע is “to cause an object to change its location.” This is interesting, because in modern Hebrew it refers to something much more permanent, as seen by the related words *takua* תִּקְוֶה – “stuck” and *teka* תִּקַּע – “an electrical plug.”

Interestingly, many scholars say that the biblical town of Tekoa (not far from my home in Efrat) originally meant “place of setting up a tent.”

David Curwin is a writer living in Efrat, and the author of the Balashon blog balashon.com • balashon1@gmail.com



HAMIZRACHI

wishes its readers a Shana Tova uMetuka,
a Good and Sweet New Year!

.....
280,000 READERS
.....

.....
12 EDITIONS EACH YEAR
.....

.....
**11 COUNTRIES
ACROSS 7 CONTINENTS**
.....

UNITING THE JEWISH WORLD!

**HaMizrachi is now published in Australia, Brazil,
Canada, Holland, Israel, Mexico, South Africa,
Switzerland, Uruguay, the UK, and the USA**

To receive HaMizrachi to your inbox, visit www.mizrachi.org/hamizrachi

**RZA–Mizrachi or local chapter members can get HaMizrachi delivered
to their doors for the price of postage. Sign up at www.rza.org/homedelivery**

To advertise, please email production@mizrachi.org or call +972-050-480-0664



The Heroes of Outpost 107

by Shlomo Horwitz

Outpost 107, code-named 'Portugal,' was the closest IDF outpost to Syria in October of 1973. It was next to Quneitra in the Golan Heights and was manned by a platoon of Golani soldiers from Battalion 13. The outpost consisted of a series of bunkers with observation points and gun positions. The platoon's main job was to observe Syrian activities on the Syrian side of the Golan. There was a small tank company nearby to aid the men in repelling any ground attack from Syria.

The war started with a powerful Syrian artillery barrage. Most of the outpost's positions were destroyed, including their supply of drinking water. Four tanks led by Shmuel Yachin from Battalion 74 of the 188th Brigade opened fire and destroyed eight Syrian tanks attempting to cross the border. Syrian infantrymen racing toward the outpost were killed by the Golani platoon.

That night, the men spotted a convoy of Syrian vehicles carrying anti-aircraft and anti-tank guns. Avraham Elimelech, their commander, radioed a warning to the IDF tanks. Nissim Avidan manned the heavy machine gun and Amos fired an illumination round to light up the area. Nissim opened fire

and the lead truck exploded. The IDF tanks joined the fray and wiped out the Syrian convoy.

The next morning, October 7th, the platoon successfully repelled another Syrian attack. But the tanks were very low on ammunition. The outpost was cut off and surrounded; no ammunition or supplies could get in.

Meanwhile, at dawn on October 8th, six Syrian tanks launched an attack. The soldiers managed to destroy five but the sixth sneaked up so close to the eastern side of the outpost that the IDF tanks could no longer safely fire on it.

Yossi Zadok, a Golani corporal who had arrived on Yom Kippur itself, had received some training in using a bazooka rocket launcher but hadn't been known as a good shot. There was no time to think or plan. Yossi had to act fast. He quickly jumped up and fired. A direct hit!

At 11:00 am, 15 Syrian T-62 tanks rushed at the outpost. Shmuel Yachin and his tank platoon jumped into the fray, destroying 13 of them. Two managed to hide and tried to escape at nightfall. The IDF destroyed one; the other got away.

Then came bad news: Shmuel's tank platoon needed to support

other forces in a ferocious tank battle elsewhere in the Golan. The remaining Golani soldiers were left unprotected. Their ammunition and food rations were dangerously low and there was no help in sight.

And the very next day they watched one Syrian tank rise on the hill.

And then another one.

And another.

Three hours later there were 110 tanks facing Outpost 107.

The Golani platoon didn't stand a chance. "*Zeh avud* – all is lost!" some yelled in despair. "Don't give up!" said Amos.

Elimelech radioed Northern Command. "I need air support!"

"Negative," came the reply. "No planes are available."

"Then armored support!"

"Negative. All tanks are fighting southwest of your positions."

"Artillery support!" he shouted, desperate.

"None available."

One soldier took a shell casing and etched the 19 names of the soldiers

into the bunker wall. "What are you doing?" Amos asked.

"I'm making sure someone will remember us!"

Suddenly, behind the massive tank convoy, they spotted jeeps carrying Syrian officers. Elimelech ordered Amos to fire his last two mortar rounds at the jeeps. They scattered and realized the Israeli outpost had not yet been destroyed.

The tanks moved forward. That's when Nissim, the heavy machine gunner, did something insane.

He fired his .50 caliber machine gun at the lead tank. The bullets bounced off the tank. They couldn't pierce armor. No one knew what Nissim was thinking.

The lead Syrian tank swiveled its main gun at Nissim's position and fired, scoring a direct hit. It exploded in a swirl of flame and smoke. Nobody could have survived a blast like that.

Amos ran over to the position, shouting "Nissim! Nissim!"

To Amos' great shock, Nissim responded, "I'm okay! I'm okay!" He appeared slightly dazed but came through without a scratch.

The Golani men were now facing obliteration. They were down to almost no ammunition. All seemed lost.

Yossi still had his bazooka, with only a few rounds left.

Yossi and Amos were underground in a maze of bunkers. There was no way to fire the bazooka without exposing Yossi as a target. How could they release a proper, well-aimed shot?

They had an idea. Amos would put a helmet on top of a rifle and gradually raise the helmet above ground. If it drew fire, he'd quickly lower it. He'd then move to another spot and try it again. If there was no fire, he'd look out to determine the range of the target tank, and tell Yossi. Yossi would then jump up, exposing

himself to the enemy, and take his best shot.

It was reckless.

Suicidal.

Against orders.

They did it anyway.

Amos held up the helmet. It immediately drew fire. They moved 20 feet away and tried again. Nothing. He quickly grabbed the binoculars and inched up to identify a target. He saw a tank, barked the range and position to Yossi, who jumped up and took a shot.

A direct hit! One tank down. 109 to go.

"Amos!" Yossi cried. "Move! Let's go further down and try it again!"

Amos moved. They did it again. And again.

Yossi destroyed four tanks that day. The other tanks showered murderous fire on Outpost 107, furious that the meager Israeli force was destroying their Russian-made battle tanks.

The barrage continued the next day too. Over the din of incoming shells, Yossi yelled, "Amos, let's take out more tanks!"

"We're out of armor-piercing rounds!"

"What else do we have?"

"White phosphorus."

White phosphorus (WP) was powerless against the enemy tanks.

It was normally used to illuminate a target area, create thick smoke, or burn fuel and ammunition, but it would not inflict any damage. Why bother with it?

"Amos, let's try firing them anyway. Maybe it'll scare them!"

Yossi was ready.

"Find me a target!"

Amos raised the helmet on a rifle. Nobody shot at it. He quickly inched up and yelled out the range and position to Yossi.

Yossi jumped out and fired the bazooka. Another direct hit, but they both knew it was a joke. A huge white spray blanketed the tank with thick smoke. No penetration. No danger to the tank crew.

But something amazing happened. Amos and Yossi watched as the enemy abandoned their unscathed tank! They were evidently terrified by the blast and smoke, and the knowledge the Israelis had destroyed four tanks the day before. They rushed out of the tank and fled towards Syria. The other tanks moved on to other battles, abandoning the outpost.

The 19 soldiers in Outpost 107 had fought for 100 hours straight and survived, seeing open miracles that changed their lives forever.

This story originally appeared on aish.com

Shlomo Horwitz is the founding director of an educational theater project which has provided creative Torah programming across the US, Canada, England and Israel



Amos (center) and fellow members of Outpost 107



A BRIEF HISTORY OF A FOWL CUSTOM

When I was a yeshiva boy studying in Jerusalem, my friends invited me to go with them to “*shlug kapparot*” on *erev* Yom Kippur. Though I grew up Orthodox, I was not familiar with the term (which translates loosely as “beat the atonements”), but I was quickly off to the Mahane Yehuda market, where we muttered a quick prayer as a *shochet* waved a chicken over our heads. He slaughtered the animal and threw it into an overflowing bin destined for the poor. Later that day, fearing that I ruined the ritual by cheaply “sharing” a chicken with others, I did it again, this time in the parking lot outside the Har Menuchot cemetery. As I recited Kol Nidre that evening, murmurs of angst crept into my head: Was that really a holy act? As it turns out, many commentators, both medieval and modern, have called it a grave mistake.

Like many rituals, *kapparot* emerged in the early medieval period as a folk custom that scholars later struggled to understand. They questioned the origins of the practice, which might appear as an attempt to magically manipulate one’s fate.

Historically, *kapparot* had several variations. In some locales, a bean sprout was planted in a palm wreath two to three weeks before Rosh Hashanah. On the *erev* Rosh Hashanah, the plant was waved seven times over the head of each child and then thrown into a river. Elsewhere, the custom was performed before Yom Kippur and not only for children, with various types of animals for different people. The rich preferred horned animals, an allusion to the ram that replaced Isaac on the sacrificial altar.

Ultimately, the chicken became the animal of choice, in part because of its cost. Equally significant, one Aramaic term for rooster is *gever*, which also means “man” in Hebrew. The chicken was thus seen as an appropriate substitute for the condemned penitent, with male and female species used for each gender.

The central moment of *kapparot* should be the confessional, in which the penitent lays his hands on the chicken, proclaims his guilt, and declares that the bird is to be killed in his stead. While some protested that the ritual too closely resembled Temple rites, others believed that there was no fear of people confusing *kapparot* with an official sacrifice.

While *kapparot* enjoyed widespread popularity among scholars and laity alike, especially in Ashkenazic lands, some Sephardic scholars harshly criticized this custom as a foreign ritual akin to many idolatrous practices. Rabbi Shlomo ibn Aderet successfully protested the version of the ritual in his native Barcelona, which included killing one chicken for each child in the house and then hanging the chicken heads on the doorpost along with garlic.

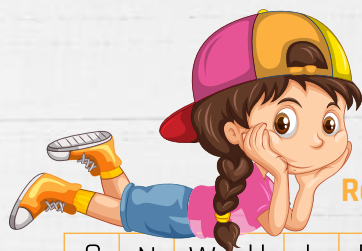
Following ibn Aderet’s lead, Rabbi Yosef Karo banned *kapparot*. Rabbi Moshe Isserles contended that its antiquity proved its legitimacy. Rabbi Isaac Luria and other famous mystics ascribed redemptive value to the practice, with some later Sephardic *poskim* legitimizing it if one donated the chicken to charity. While a few authorities still demurred, many endorsed the custom provided that its practitioner engages in introspection and repentance.

Why had I never performed this ritual, and why haven’t I done it since? In the fifteenth century, Rabbi Yaakov Moelin suggested that one could “redeem” the chicken with money to be given as charity since monetary donations would be less embarrassing to the poor. Others added that the killing of so many chickens at once caused errors in ritual slaughter, rendering the food non-kosher. Some *poskim* suggested using fish or money as an alternative; the latter is what is suggested in most of today’s Yom Kippur prayer books.

Perhaps my angst reflected sympathy for animals—and a reemerging halachik trend. “On the eve of this holy day,” said the late Rabbi Hayim David HaLevi, “why should we display unnecessary cruelty to these animals and mercilessly kill them before requesting from G-d mercy upon us?” The mass killing of animals, he added, contradicts a different medieval custom, almost entirely forgotten today, of refraining from all slaughter before the New Year as an act of increased mercy on G-d’s creatures. In this spirit, and given increased concerns of mishandling of the chickens, prominent figures like Rabbis Shlomo Aviner and David Stav have urged Jews to err on the side of treating animals kindly and use money instead. Traditionalism should, of course, have its place, but on the eve of Yom Kippur, we shouldn’t risk turning a request for mercy into an act of cruelty.

This essay is adapted from Rabbi Dr. Brody’s “A Guide to the Complex: Contemporary Halachic Debates” (Maggid, 2014)

Rabbi Dr. Shlomo Brody is Director of the Tikvah Overseas Students Institute



Rosh Hashanah - Yom Kippur Word Search

S	N	W	H	L	E	N	S	I	B	Z	W	T	F	R	T
H	E	P	G	T	G	W	E	C	L	R	Y	M	P	O	O
O	E	L	I	G	D	C	O	W	O	W	J	J	M	S	E
F	D	H	P	T	Y	G	V	Z	Y	F	J	Y	I	H	U
A	W	T	I	P	S	Z	H	Z	Q	E	O	H	N	H	N
R	Z	U	Z	Z	A	C	D	E	R	M	A	R	A	A	E
H	B	Y	O	N	A	H	T	L	K	T	X	R	M	S	B
V	A	Y	H	M	O	E	K	I	Y	L	V	T	M	H	H
V	G	V	M	B	K	J	P	H	K	D	N	Y	I	A	F
Y	N	D	U	I	E	P	H	A	U	R	E	T	S	N	A
E	N	K	A	H	U	M	I	R	A	V	E	H	S	A	D
N	L	H	I	R	S	F	A	S	T	I	N	G	C	H	U
O	B	A	N	Z	Y	E	R	N	E	E	Z	B	L	D	Y
H	B	B	Y	C	V	C	T	E	N	L	Y	Y	W	B	A
L	P	P	T	S	W	P	R	P	M	J	Q	C	I	E	D

- | | | | | |
|----------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| -APPLES | -MACHZOR | -SHEVARIM | T-EKIAH | -WHITE |
| -FASTING | -NEW YEAR | -SHOFAR | T-ERUAH | -YOM KIPPUR |
| -HONEY | -ROSH HASHANAH | -SIMMANIM | T-ESHUVAH | -YONAH |



Four New Years

It might be the best known of them all, but Rosh Hashanah is not the only Jewish new year. According to the Mishnah, there are three others. Do you know what they are?

(The first of Nissan, the springtime month when Pesach occurs, is the beginning of the year, according to Shemot. Jewish tradition also marks Tu B'Shvat as the new year for trees and Rosh Chodesh Elul as the new year for Ma'sar Behemah the tithing of animals (sanctifying a tenth of kosher grazing animals (cattle, sheep, and goats) to G-d, to be sacrificed as a Korban).)



The Fireman¹

Many years ago, before there were any fire engines, most houses were built of wood. A fire was a terrible thing. A whole town could go up in flames. And so when fire broke out, everyone rushed to help put it out. A watchman kept a lookout all the time. As soon as he saw smoke or fire, he would sound the alarm. The townspeople would then form a human chain from the nearest well, and pass pails of water to each other to put out the fire.

Once a little boy came to town for the first time. Suddenly he heard the sound of a bugle. He asked one of the locals what it meant.

"Whenever we have a fire, we sound the bugle, and the fire is quickly put out."

"Awesome" thought the boy. "I'm going to tell the people of my village about this!"

He bought himself a bugle and returned to his village. He called all the villagers together and told them, "No need to be afraid of fire any more. Just watch me, and see how quickly I put out a fire!"

He then ran to the nearest hut and set fire to its straw roof. Of course the fire spread very quickly. The villagers were in shock.

"Don't worry!" cried the boy. "Watch this."

And he began blowing the bugle with all his might. The fire continued to

spread from one house to another, setting the entire village alight.

"You fool," the villagers cried. "Did you think that merely blowing a bugle would put the fire out? It's only an alarm to alert the people and send them to the well to bring water!"

Like the bugle, the shofar is an alarm for us. It is telling us that as we enter the New Year, we should try to be better people, speak nicely to others, be kind to other children and do what G-d expects of us.

How can you be a better person this year?

¹ Adapted from a story by Nissan Mindel.



Why Rosh Hashanah Isn't Late This Year

The first day of 5780 isn't till September 30, 2019. So is Rosh Hashanah 'late'?

The classic western summer and school year cycles are based upon the calendar named for Pope Gregory XIII. But we're talking about the Jewish New Year. What does the Catholic Church have to do with it? Let us first understand the key to the Jewish calendar.

In Exodus 12:2-18 and Numbers 28:16, G-d commands us commanded to celebrate Pesach during Nissan, which in Deuteronomy 16:1 is called the month of spring (אֲבִיב):

שָׁמֹר אֶת חֹדֶשׁ הָאֲבִיב וְעִשִׂיתָ פֶּסַח לְה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ כִּי בְּחֹדֶשׁ הָאֲבִיב הוֹצִיאָךְ ה' מִמִּצְרָיִם לְיָלֵךְ.

A purely lunar calendar rotates without any seasonal consideration. For example, on the Muslim calendar, Ramadan falls in February one year, November another, and sometimes May. Because they are originally a nomadic people without a religious connection to a land and its harvests.

Not so Judaism. Pesach, as mentioned, must be in the spring, specifically during the קָצִיר – the grain harvest in Israel. The backdrop of Shavuot's Megillat Rut story are the barley and wheat fields of Beit Lechem (literally "House of Bread"), the period of the Omer in the Land. The Sin of the Spies of 9 Av finds our scouts bringing grapes, pomegranates and figs back to the desert, which are Israel's summer fruits; Tu B'Av (15th) is the grape harvest בְּצִיר. (An agricultural people have a specific word for each

harvest. Figs is יָאֹר, pomegranates (קִטְיָה) Sukkot, the holiday of booths with palm-frond roofs and a lulav as one of the designated species, is at the time of the date harvest, the גְּדִיד. To round out our seven species, Chanukah (25 Kislev) is all about the olive oil – and the מְסִיק, the olive harvest, finishes at just that time. What a great stroke of luck for the Chashmonaim that just when they needed the oil, the fruit had been picked and freshly pressed!

The point is, when you celebrate a Jewish holiday anywhere the world you're celebrating a harvest in the Land of Israel. (We joke, but it really is all about the food.)

In days of yore, months were declared when two witnesses saw the New Moon and the Sages and/or Sanhedrin endorsed their testimony, building bonfires on the peak of the Mount of Olives and on into the Diaspora.

So how do we keep the lunar calendar from shifting out of its needed agricultural season? By factoring in the solar calendar and synchronizing them.

The Sages would walk the Land at the end of winter, the month of Adar, to check whether the grains were ripe. Had it stopped raining? Were the sheep fat and ready to be sheared? i.e. was winter over? If yes, bring on Nissan and Pesach. If no, then drop in Adar Bet to push off Pesach another month until spring arrived. It was done on a year-by-year basis until the calendar was set in the 4th century. There are many reasons for this seminal decision but a poignant one is the Roman

persecution of the Sages, who as well as teaching Torah and meting out justice also, as mentioned, were critical in setting the calendar. Setting time meant power and control over the holidays and lives of a Torah-based nation, which was exactly what the Romans were trying to destroy. So now, every 19 years, our calendar repeats, with leap years at 3, 6, 8, 11, 14, 17 and 19 and an occasional day added to Kislev or Cheshvan.

This past spring we had an Adar Bet, but even with the extra winter weeks, we had a hailstorm on the first day of Chol Hamoed Pesach. While everyone ran for cover from the sting of the ice pellets, my heart went out to the grain growers whose fields were getting flattened, destroying months of work in 20 minutes.

Only in the Land of Israel can you feel the literal nature of the *chagim*. On Sukkot, I take people to make *silan* (date honey) under palm trees in the Jordan Valley; on Chanukah, to taste fresh olive oil right out of the press. We live our *chagim* the way our forefathers did in the time of the Tanach. Connected to the Land. Nourished and grateful to G-d for our sustenance and rain in its time.

It's bad enough that in our Christian-dominated world our cottage cheese spoilage date is based on Jesus. Let us know our Hebrew calendar. It's the connector between Am Yisrael, Eretz Yisrael and Torat Yisrael.

Eve Harow is a licensed Israeli tour guide and member of the Mizrahi Speakers Bureau



DON'T JUDGE A BOOK BY ITS COVER

Editor's note: Our resident, totally unofficial Israeli guide brings you insights into a lighter side of the Israeli experience you won't likely find in the usual news sources. Yaniv will also respond to readers' questions and observations (non-halachic of course). He can be reached at yaniv@mizrachi.org. Enjoy!

QUESTION:

I'll soon be making my first trip to Israel. I heard that the people there can be, well, a bit gruff. Is that so?

YANIV ANSWERS:

Israelis are a lot like the Sabra fruit (that's why they're called Sabras!) – they tend to be tough and thorny on the outside but sweet in the middle. To demonstrate, here are a few “slices of life” of *Ahavat Chinam* that happen every day:

Way back in pre-technological times, when getting on a bus meant having to get your bus ticket punched, or paying the fare in cash, you could often see strangers passing bus cards from the back of the bus, hand to hand, up to the driver for punching. Cash too, without a single *agora* in change going missing. If you travel on the light rail in Jerusalem, you'll see that today too.

Walking along Emek Refaim one day, my wife and I passed a clothing store that advertised a sale. As our son needed new pants, we went in to see their selection, although our son was not with us. The storekeeper showed us a few pairs and suggested we take them home with us, return what did not fit and pay for those we wanted to keep. No money, no credit card, no names! Just *Ahavat Chinam*.

It was *erev* Shabbat and a young couple from Yerushalayim were on their way to Bnei Brak to attend her

sister's *Shabbat Kallah*. Their route led them through Modi'in where they could catch a bus to Bnei Brak. But three buses passed them by, too full to stop. Without a way to get to Bnei Brak, they realized they would have to return to Yerushalayim for Shabbat and call the *kallah* with apologies. They hitched a ride back to Yerushalayim. Along the way, the driver – a total stranger – noticed the woman was crying and asked what was wrong. After he heard the story, he stopped the car and called a friend to pick him up. He then gave the couple his car to drive to Bnei Brak, left his phone number and said they could return the car after Shabbat. No deposit, no background check. Just *Ahavat Chinam*.

But here is my all-time favorite story, about an Orthodox Jew who stopped on the road to make a call at a public phone (remember those?) and found a small name and address book (remember those?) that had been left in the booth. Many Jewish institutions were listed, but he couldn't find the owner's name. After some searching, he found a notation for “Mom,” so he dialed the number and asked if the woman could perhaps call her child to tell her the book had been found. He gave her his number as well.

“You called me, a perfect stranger, to tell me that?” the woman said incredulously.

“Yes,” he answered, “a Jew must go out of his way to help others, especially to return lost articles.”

The woman promised to help and took his number. Soon her daughter called to retrieve the phone book, thanking the man profusely. He refused any reward.

Several weeks later, the woman again called the man to thank him. “There's a part of this story I must share with you,” she said.

“I grew up in a secular home, but I became observant later in life. My parents did not approve, especially when I told them I could not eat the non-kosher food at home, or drive on Shabbat.

Sadly, we drifted apart, and for almost a year I had not seen or spoken to my mother, until the day you found my address book, and my mother called to tell me about it. She was overwhelmed by what you had done, and so impressed with a religion that could compel someone to be so considerate of others. She had a new-found appreciation for my embracing of Judaism, and now we talk every day. And I'm going to see her next week. All because you made a phone call!”

Sometimes, the smallest act of *chesed*, driven by *Ahavat Chinam*, can have the biggest effect on our lives and the lives of others.

Feel free to send me your own personal favorite Ivrit bloopers, or any other perplexing questions you have: yaniv@mizrachi.org



WHAT TO READ THIS FALL

Get a sneak peek of what's coming up for the New Year 5780 from Koren Publishers and its imprints



**The Noé Edition
Koren Talmud Bavli**
(Koren Publishers)

Siyum HaShas is one tractate away and the release of volume 42, *Tractate Nidda of The Noé Edition Koren Talmud Bavli*, gives reason to celebrate. This marks the final volume of the entire set, making it the newest edition of Talmud in the world. The *Koren Talmud Bavli* was produced using state-of-the-art technology and features a wealth of fascinating material including images of newly excavated archeological sites that relate to the sugyot, color maps that orient the learner, a contemporary layout with digitized 'Daf Vilna' with vowels and punctuation in the Talmud text and Rashi, and the clear translation, notes and commentary by Torah luminary Rav Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz. For those who wish to hone their Talmud skills and appreciate a broad worldview, *The Noé Edition Koren Talmud Bavli* is for you.



**Be, Become, Bless:
Jewish Spirituality
between East and
West** (Maggid Books)
by Rabbi Yakov Nagen

One of Tablet Magazine's "Israeli Rabbis You Should Know" is actually a native of New York, with a penchant for Torah learning, mysticism, personal transformation, and Eastern philosophy. Translated from the Hebrew original, *Be, Become, Bless: Jewish Spirituality Between East and West* draws on wisdom from the Bible, Talmud,

kabbala, as well as philosophy, poetry, literature, music, and film, to guide readers to discover their own path to fulfillment.

Using the weekly parasha as a springboard, this new work gives the reader an opportunity to achieve a daily renewal and experience the joy found in Judaism.



**Shalom Rav: Insights
on the Weekly Parasha**
(Maggid Books)
by Rabbi Shalom Rosner

Over the course of many years, Rabbi Shalom Rosner has given hundreds, if not thousands of shiurim on a variety of Torah topics. Known for his ability to clarify complex Talmudic sugyot, he has developed a popular reputation both online and in person that continues to engage students of all ages around the world.

Shalom Rav is a compilation of Rabbi Rosner's ideas on the weekly parasha. Clear and concise, these essays incorporate a wide spectrum of both classic and modern sources that convey refreshing insights for the entire family.



**Yearning to Return:
Reflections on Yom
Kippur** (Maggid Books)
by Rabbanit Yemima
Mizrachi, translated
by Ilana Kurshan

Rabbanit Yemima Mizrachi is one of Israel's most influential women today. Her weekly shiurim in Hebrew and English attract hundreds of women, to whom she presents

very deep messages with a sense of humor.

In *Yearning to Return: Reflections on Yom Kippur*, Rabbanit Yemima presents questions and answers about the many aspects of repentance, forgiveness, and repairing broken relationships. This beautiful, compact volume is an inspiring read and the perfect gift. It is written with thought-provoking word plays in Hebrew and references from Jewish sources, all serving to help us repair what has been torn and forgive before Neilah – when the doors of Yom Kippur – and of our hearts – are locked and sealed.

Netivot Shalom (Maggid Books)
by Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein

Netivot Shalom, the five-volume work on Chumash by Rav Shalom Noach Berzovski, the Slonimer Rebbe, has emerged as one of the most powerful and impactful works of the generation. Rabbi Yitzchok Adlerstein makes the Slonimer Rebbe's thought accessible to the modern English-speaking public through this collection of essays on the weekly parasha.

**CELEBRATE THE NEW YEAR WITH A
NEW SET OF GEMARA:**



KOREN

Buy the complete set of *The Noé Edition Koren Talmud Bavli* and get a free copy of Rav Steinsaltz's *The Reference Guide to the Talmud* (revised edition) and a free tote bag! See www.korenpub.com/talmud and use promo code MIZRACHI-IL. Offer includes free shipping in Israel and free PDFs for every tractate! (Expires Erev Sukkot, Sunday, October 13, 2019).



The Time Traveler's Life

A few years ago, renowned physicist Stephen Hawking threw a party where only time travelers were invited. They each received an invitation which Hawking only sent after the party was over.

No-one came.

The idea of moving back and forth in time has ignited the human imagination for many generations, and the new popular culture is also full of “space-time” references and exercises brimming with interest and imagination

IF I COULD TURN BACK TIME

It is human nature to ask ‘what would have been if?’ If the wheel could be turned back, what would we have changed, how would we have avoided critical mistakes and done better. If only we could fix things. How many wrongs would have been avoided, how much grief we would have prevented, how many changes the world could have seen.

But now, on Rosh Hashanah, we have a chance – so to speak – to go back in time.

This is a principle revolutionary in its renewal and radical in its power.

I can understand how the present affects the future, even if it is a

correction of wrongdoing from the past, but how can we argue that the mistakes become merits, and the downtrodden and the criminals change their essence completely and become honest and just advocates for the individual?

In other words, I can understand forgiveness but not repentance. Forgiveness is human, forgiveness is linear, forgiveness sits well in that harsh sequence of time: a sin was committed in the past, forgiven in the present, and the future progresses from that point. But repentance? I don't understand it! Perhaps that is why Rav Kook said that people have great difficulty in trusting the mechanism and the ease of repentance.

Indeed, repentance allows us to go back. Repentance is the ultimate time machine, a great gift given to us from Heaven so that we can turn back and return to ourselves. It is not human, it is not from this world, תשובה קדמה לעולם, “repentance came before [the Creation of] the world” (Tanchuma, Naso), because the world is bound by time and space while repentance has much deeper roots.

A YEAR HAS GONE, A YEAR IS COMING

Perhaps now we can answer a simple question that even a child asks when he first encounters the

yearly cycle. If it is already Rosh Hashanah, when we wish for a sweet New Year and its blessings; when we look to the future and exciting new beginnings, why do we find ourselves standing in prayer 10 days later on Yom Kippur, pleading for the previous year and asking for forgiveness? The order should be reversed! Finish with the past and then face the future!

However, here's a G-dly clue about the whole system: for 10 days that transcend time, we discover that we can turn the wheel around – we can correct things and everything is not lost. This is how an overlap is created. To allow us to be able to fix our wrongs, the past year ‘becomes part of’ the current year even though it is already part of history.

Indeed, Kabbalah assigns every day of the seven days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as a day capable of correcting the wrongs we performed on that same day of the week over the last year, i.e. the Sunday of the 10 days of *Teshuva* has the power to correct all the Sundays of the past year, and so on.

So we may not have gone to Hawking's party – we were probably not invited at all, but at the real party, in time and beyond time, we are the guests of honor.

Rabbi Uzi Levine is the Rabbi of Gothenburg, Sweden



The Most Important Day of All

My Rebbe, Rabbi Chaim Sabbato, once told us that Elul is a very important time of year, with its pinnacle as Rosh Hashanah, but more important are the 10 days of Teshuva, and their pinnacle of Yom Kippur. However, concluded Rav Sabbato, the most important day, even more than Yom Kippur itself, is the day after Yom Kippur. I would like to dwell on what he meant by this, through a comparison between Tisha B'Av and Yom Kippur.

We may think these two days are similar, though in truth they are worlds apart. As a child, I always coupled them, because we fast the whole day on both. Today it is obvious to me how different they are. On Tisha B'Av we fast as a sign of mourning and sadness, as part of a process of remembrance of our destroyed Temple. This process begins as early as the 17th of Tammuz and continues through the three weeks, nine days, and then the week of the fast with its special laws. All these lead up to a day which we would like to see eventually expunged from the Jewish calendar, at least as a day of mourning.

In contrast, Yom Kippur is considered a Chag, a holiday. We get dressed up in our nicest clothes and we treat the day as we would a Shabbat, or *שבת שקבתון* as the Torah defines it. While it is true that the day carries a certain gravitas, we are

ultimately happy for its existence and look forward to it. Yom Kippur is essentially a day of happiness, of mercy, of belief in the fact that G-d will forgive us.

This also explains the fact that while the *Seuda Mafseket* before Tisha B'Av is supposed to be sparse and unimpressive so that we really feel the fast, the *seuda* before Yom Kippur is supposed to be grand and satisfying. The Gemara goes as far to say that it is a *mitzvah* to eat on the 9th of Tishrei, for one who eats on the 9th is considered as if he has fasted both on the 9th and the 10th. What the Halacha is telling us is that eating is only prohibited because of our preoccupation with it, but it is not contrary to what the day is trying to achieve. Yom Kippur is a day of spiritual reflection, so we don't eat, but on the other hand, we don't want you thinking about food the whole day so make sure you have a good meal before the fast. Eat well so you can think well.

Now let's go a step further. What are we supposed to be thinking about? Perhaps about the time to forgive and forget the past and move on? Partly, yes. However, if we take our comparison between Tisha B'Av and Yom Kippur seriously, we can implement it here as well. If Tisha B'Av is about the past, then Yom Kippur is about the future. The day after Yom Kippur is more important

than Yom Kippur itself because Yom Kippur is a preparation for that day.

Yom Kippur is often described as the end of a process begun in Elul, as some sort of grand finale. In truth, it is the beginning of the rest of the year. Yom Kippur is here to clean the slate, but the cleaning of the slate is only as valuable as what one will do with his or her newly cleaned slate. And so, all the work we do during this time of year has to amount to some sort of practical follow-up activity. Indeed, our most authentic challenge is the day after Yom Kippur. How can we now put into practice all we have worked on over Elul, Rosh Hashanah, the 10 days and Yom Kippur itself?

This year, on Yom Kippur, let's make sure it's not just about what we did and how sorry we are, but also about what we're going to do starting tomorrow. It can be something small, step by step. But Yom Kippur is the day we need to focus on how we want our lives to look in the coming year. By doing so, we will have truly lived Yom Kippur properly and stand a good chance of making the most important day of all – the day after Yom Kippur – all the more meaningful.

Rabbi Yoni Rosensweig is a community Rabbi of the Netzach Menashe community in Beit Shemesh and the author of several books



Yom Kippur *Again?!*

The people of Kaliv, a small town in northeastern Hungary that bears the Hungarian name Nagykálló, once wanted to appoint a certain chazzan to lead the services on the High Holy Days (*Eser Tzahtzahot* 4:27). Before finalizing with the chazzan, they approached the town rabbi to ask for his thoughts on the prospective appointment. The rabbi, the Chasidic master Rabbi Yitzhak Eizek Taub of Kaliv, responded by relating the following tale:

I once arrived in a certain town and was extremely hungry. It was soon time for the afternoon prayer, so I went to the synagogue. I was famished, but I made the decision to wait until after the evening prayer before eating.

In the middle of the evening prayer, when they reached “*Ahavat Olam*”, they began to sing cantorial pieces such that the prayers continued for an entire two hours! I found out that there was to be a communal feast after the service where they would read from the communal records about this strange practice. So I hastened to the feast, and this is what I heard them recount –

There was once a decision by the Gentiles to drive out the Jews in that city. There was a certain influential wealthy non-Jewish woman who found out about the plan. Surprisingly, she went to the head of the Jewish community. As tears rolled down her cheeks, she told him about the scheme. The head of the community went to the rabbi of the town, who declared a public fast day. Alas, there was no sign of salvation. As the fateful day approached,

the gentile enemies prepared to massacre the Jews.

The *shamash* (beadle) of the Jewish community stood up and announced: ‘I will tell you why this evil has befallen us. On the Days of Awe, we had a chazzan who was a despicable person. This is the reason that such persecution has been decreed against us.’

‘We have no choice,’ continued the *shamash*. ‘We must redo Elul and Tishrei: We should act as we do during the month of Elul, celebrate Rosh Hashanah again, have Ten Days of Repentance, and commemorate Yom Kippur. Each person should repent from his evil ways, and G-d will see and have mercy.’

It was decided that the righteous *shamash* should lead the prayers.

As it happened, the date of the Yom Kippur replay coincided with the very day the Gentiles had designated for attacking the Jews. All the men, women, and children came to the synagogue for “Yom Kippur.” They were fasting, wearing non-leather shoes, and acting as though it were really Yom Kippur.

Toward the end of the day, the *shamash* stood up before the congregation and with tears in his eyes, he announced: “Even though we have prayed almost the entire Yom Kippur service, I perceive that the evil decree against us has not been annulled.”

As the congregation came to the end of the Neilah, they all stood together and with utmost concentration, fervor, and faith proclaimed: “G-d is the Lord.”

At the very same moment, the gentile mob appeared at the synagogue door, brandishing their weapons. As they were about to burst in, they heard, “G-d is the Lord.” In a sudden inexplicable moment of insanity, they attacked each other

The *shamash* announced: “Thank G-d, the decree has been canceled!”

Some turned to quickly pray and hurry home to break the fast. The *shamash* stopped them: ‘No, my dear children, it should not be so.’

The *shamash* approached the lecturer to lead the evening prayers. When the congregation reached “*Ahavat Olam*,” they all felt mystically united with the Almighty. For two hours they meditated on the prayer expressing G-d’s everlasting love. Only after that did they complete the service and go home, with a feeling of ecstatic joy and gladness in their hearts.

Henceforth, it was decided that the day would be commemorated annually by singing “*Ahavat Olam*” for two hours so that every person would remember G-d’s everlasting love and how He had mercifully saved the community.

Having completed the tale, the Kaliver Rebbe added: “So, now you know whom you should appoint to pray on your behalf on the Days of Awe.”

Rabbi Levi Cooper teaches at the Pardes Institute of Jewish Studies and is the spiritual leader of Kehillat HaTzur VeHaTzohar in Zur Hadassa




Our Annual Wake-Up Call

The alarm clock must be the most annoying gadget ever invented. Luckily though, the inventors were also smart enough to create the snooze button! That irritating beep, growing louder and louder, forcing us away from the soft clouds of sleep can be simply stopped by swinging left or right and enjoying the resulting silence.

We've all been there. Half-awake. Knowing that a new day is about to begin but trying to delay it just a little longer. Knowing you've hit snooze but that your clock will scream any minute. Wanting to cherish those last moments of tranquility, of not being completely in tune with reality. Slowly you become aware of other sounds – birds chirping, cars rushing by, children playing... but it's all still a little vague. Then that shrill howl again. Again the swinging left. Again the silence. We just need a little more time...

We are beginning the High Holidays: Rosh Hashanah, followed by the 10 days of repentance and culminating in Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. On Rosh Hashanah, we fulfill the commandment of blowing the shofar, but interestingly enough, not for the first time. We have been blowing the shofar every day of the preceding month, the month of Elul.

Elul in Jewish tradition is understood as an acronym for a verse in the Song of Songs, "I am my beloved's and my beloved is mine - אָנִי לְדוּדִי וְדוּדִי לִי, with the first letters spelling אֶלּוּל in Hebrew. This

hints that Elul is a time of love and connection, an opportunity for a renewed relationship with G-d. The shofar blast is meant to trigger self-reflection, so that we can forge a stronger connection with G-d.

Rambam famously emphasizes this:¹

"Despite the fact that the blowing of the ram's horn on Rosh Hashanah is an explicit decree in the Scripture, it is also a crying out, as if to say: 'Awake, O you sleepers, awake from your sleep! O you slumberers, awake from your slumber! Search your deeds and turn in repentance. Remember your Creator, O you who forget the truth in the vanities of time and go astray all the year after vanity and folly that neither profit nor save. Look to your souls, and better your ways and actions. Let every one of you abandon his evil way and his wicked thought..."

Would it not make more sense to keep blowing the shofar throughout the 10 days of repentance and Yom Kippur? Surely the trigger for self-reflection is needed most when we are trying hardest to renew the spiritual bonds and balance our lives. The balance between the urgent and the important. The urgency of making a living or the importance of living. The urgency of closing the deal or the importance of spending more time with our children. The urgency of corporate investment and the importance of spiritual investment.

You can only become balanced if you are spiritually awake. If you are

still spiritually sleeping during the days of repentance, you are much too late. This is the time to work. To stand before G-d and ask ourselves the ultimate question: what have I done this past year that has been worthwhile? Did I waste time or did I share it, with my faith, with G-d, with those in need? Knowing that none of us will live forever, this is the time to ask G-d for another year. To grow, to share and to give.

The shofar is our G-d-given alarm clock. Warning us not to slumber through life. Throughout Elul we press snooze and slowly awaken to spiritual reality. Its purpose is to completely wake us up in time for Rosh Hashanah. On Rosh Hashanah we hear the final awakening that has us standing, awake and fully aware that there is work to do! That shrill cry of the shofar is meant to tune out the static of our dreams and escort us into the reality of life, to hear the sounds of heaven. It is now the work begins. It is now we begin to live!

May the Almighty bless us, our families, the State of Israel and all peoples of the world with a state of spiritual awakedness all year round, and may He write us all in the Book of Life.

¹ Hilchot Teshuva 3.

Colonel Rabbi Menachem Sebbag is Chief Rabbi to the Dutch Armed Forces and community rabbi of the largest orthodox community in the Netherlands



The Transitions of Tishrei

As we approach Yom Kippur after the Aseret Yemei Teshuva and Rosh Hashanah, we may wonder what the different ideas are between each these days. The three groups of days are clearly linked and presumably constitute a process as they transition immediately from one to the next.

However, they are clearly different as well. On Yom Kippur, we do *Vidui* (confession of sins) and are involved in serious *Inui* (affliction, i.e. fasting, no washing, anointing, wearing of leather shoes or marital intimacy), none of which is prohibited on any of the other days. Rosh Hashanah is unique as well, as illustrated by the shofar blowing and its distinct brachot of *Malchuyot* (kingship) *Zichronot* (remembrances) and *Shofarot* (Shofars). Why do these halachic nuances exist? What is the unique nature of each and what is the idea behind this process?

For an excellent insight, perhaps we can turn to a fascinating conclusion Rabbi David Fohrman draws from the Rambam (Teshuva 2:3) who compares disingenuous *vidui*, where one has not truly abandoned the sin, to using a *mikvah* with a *sheretz* (impure animal) in one's hand. Surprisingly, the Rambam compares *vidui*, not the abandoning of one's sin, to the *mikvah*. Accordingly, *vidui* is the pinnacle of religious purity while abandoning the sin is a mere prerequisite, comparable to dismissing the impure *sheretz*. Perhaps this conclusion is further supported by the Rambam (Teshuva 1:1): "when one does *teshuva*, one is obligated to do *vidui*," implying that *teshuva* is not an obligation, but only a prerequisite to the obligation to do *vidui*.

This sounds counterintuitive, for *teshuva*, inner character evaluation and personality improvement, should be seen as the zenith of this process. Does abandoning one's sins and character improvement not seem to be the greater religious goal? Should *vidui* not be a vehicle in assisting *teshuva* and not the opposite? Why does *vidui* play such a central role?

In truth, there are those who saw *vidui* as an external act designed to assist the real *mitzvah*, *teshuva* (Rav Soloveitchik, *Al HaTeshuva* p. 37-41). However, the simple read of the Rambam, as we saw, indicates otherwise.

Perhaps *vidui* is in fact the spiritual climax. However, there is a real concern of insincere *vidui*, which is mere lip service and unhelpful. To avoid robotically reciting an inauthentic *vidui*, *teshuva* is done beforehand. *Teshuva* is a preparation designed to enhance people's *vidui* by enabling them to mean it wholeheartedly.

Yom Kippur carries a seriousness to it as we purify ourselves from sin. We disengage from worldly pleasure (*Inui*), and even act angelic (saying "*Baruch Shem Kavod...*" aloud for example) as we attempt a spiritual purification and a cleansing of iniquities. No day is more befitting of intense *vidui* as it captures our deep hunger for religious cleansing and to stand pure before G-d and articulate our desire to be sin-free. *Vidui* on Yom Kippur is the religious high point; after all it is seemingly the culmination placed on the last day of the entire process. Yom Kippur is preceded by the *Aseret Yemei Teshuva*, 10 days designed for focusing on religious improvement, abandoning one's

sins and internalizing one's newfound spiritual direction, so when *vidui* is recited on Yom Kippur, it will be done properly.

Working backward, if Yom Kippur is a day of *vidui*, affliction and cleansing of sin, and the *Aseret Yemei Teshuva* are preparation for it, how does Rosh Hashanah fit in? Why does it precede the *Aseret Yemei Teshuva*?

Rosh Hashanah, the day when G-d created the world and therefore the day He became its King, is celebrated by reiterating our commitment and understanding that G-d is in indeed the King. On Rosh Hashanah, we crown G-d King. By doing so, we realize how great of a mistake our sins were. This is captured by Rav Sa'adia Gaon who explains that one of the reasons we blow the shofar is because trumpets and horns are sounded at a king's inauguration. Similarly, the Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 16a) quotes G-d explaining the unique brachot on Rosh Hashanah: "*Malchuyot*, in order to accept My sovereignty upon yourselves, *Zichronot*, so that your remembrance should rise before Me favorably and with what? A Shofar."

In light of this, it can be understood why Rosh Hashanah triggers the *Aseret Yemei Teshuva*. *Teshuva* is the natural and correct response to the awareness that we have sinned and recognition that G-d is King. Upon internalizing this and our disobedience to Him, we respond with 10 days dedicated to *teshuva*.

¹ Avudraham Rosh Hashana, p. 300.

Rabbi Jesse Horn is a Senior Ram (Rosh Metivta) at Yeshivat HaKotel



MR Ashkelon

The British Agent - Licensed to Sell
Ashkelon's Own Anglo Property Expert

**Make this the
year when your
dreams of a seaside apartment
come true**



Call me 054 7312 118

motti@mrashkelon.com | www.mrashkelon.com