

סימנא מילתא Symbolic Foods

The following is the order in which one should eat the symbolic foods, immediately following the *Beracha* over the *Challah* which is dipped in salt and honey

1. תמרים Dates Related to the word תם - to end	 Take a date and recite: כְּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ After eating the date, take another one and say: יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ, שִׁפְּרָתוֹ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מִבְקָשֵׁי רְעֵתָנוּ
2. רוביא—לוביא Small Beans Related to the words, רב -many and לב - heart	 Take some beans and say: יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ, שִׁפְּרָתוֹ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מִבְקָשֵׁי רְעֵתָנוּ
3. כרתי Leek Related to the word כרת - to cut	 יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ, שִׁפְּרָתוֹ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מִבְקָשֵׁי רְעֵתָנוּ
4. סלקא Beets Related to the word סלק to depart	 יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ, שִׁפְּרָתוֹ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מִבְקָשֵׁי רְעֵתָנוּ
5. קרא Pumpkin Related to the word - to rip apart, and also to announce קרא - to announce	 יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ, שִׁפְּרָתוֹ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מִבְקָשֵׁי רְעֵתָנוּ
6. רימון Pomegranate	 יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ, שִׁפְּרָתוֹ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מִבְקָשֵׁי רְעֵתָנוּ
7. תפוח בדבש Apple and Honey	 יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ, שִׁפְּרָתוֹ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מִבְקָשֵׁי רְעֵתָנוּ
8. ראש כבש Ram's Head (or the head of another kosher animal or fish)	 יְהִי רָצוֹן מִלְּפָנֶיךָ ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ וְאֵלֵינוּ, שִׁפְּרָתוֹ אוֹיְבֵינוּ וְשׂוֹנְאֵינוּ וְכָל מִבְקָשֵׁי רְעֵתָנוּ

Ahavat Shalom Congregation Rosh Hashanah Newsletter 5787-2027



וּתְקַעְתֶּם בַּחֲצוֹצְרוֹת עַל עוֹלוֹתֵיכֶם וְעַל
זִבְחֵי שְׁלָמֵיכֶם, וְהָיוּ לָכֶם לְזִכְרוֹן לִפְנֵי
אֱלֹהֵיכֶם, אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.

SIMCHAT TORAH 5787 AT AHAVAT SHALOM

SHABBAT NIGHT—SUNDAY OCTOBER 3-4 2026



COMPLIMENTARY LUCHEON FOR OUR MEMEBRS

Shabbat NIGHT October 3rd

Arvit @ 7:15pm

followed by Kiddush and dancing a@ 7.30pm

Sunday Morning October 4th

Shacharit @ 8:15 am

Kiddush and dancing @ 10:15am

Ahavat Shalom Luncheon @ 12.30pm

Please reserve by email @ ahavatshalom@bellnet.ca Or by phone 647-719-1430



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Sukkot: Celebrating the Clouds of Glory

By Rabbi Eli Mansour

The Torah commands us to reside in Sukkot during this holiday in order to remember "that I had Beneh Yisrael reside in Sukkot when I took them from Egypt."

The Gemara (Sukka 11) cites a debate among the Tanna'im in explaining what exactly the Sukka commemorates. According to one view, the Torah refers here to the actual huts, the temporary dwellings in which Beneh Yisrael lived during their sojourn through the wilderness. According to the other view, however, the Sukka commemorates the miraculous "Ananeh Ha'kabod" – "clouds of glory" – which encircled Beneh Yisrael in the desert to protect them from the elements. This second explanation is followed by both Targum Onkelos and Rashi in their interpretations of this verse, and is accepted also by the Shulhan Aruch (Orah Haim 625). The Shulhan Aruch mentions this understanding because, as later writers explain, when we sit in the Sukka we must have in mind that we do so to commemorate the clouds of glory.

Among the questions that have commemoration is, why is only a special Yom Tob? Other mira-Yisrael in the desert. What is we observe a special seven-day



The Gaon of Vilna (Rav Eliyahu a famous theory to explain the Sukka. He writes that when golden calf, part of their punish-miraculous clouds. Our Sages tell us that it was on Yom Kippur, nearly three months after the golden calf, that Hashem announced to Moshe His forgiveness for this grievous sin. And the next day, Moshe assembled the people and conveyed to them Hashem's command to construct the Mishkan. The Gaon explained that the people donated materials for the Mishkan over the course of the next several days, and the construction began on the 15th of Tishri – the first day of Sukkot. On that day, the Gaon writes, the clouds of glory returned. And this is what we celebrate on Sukkot – the return of the "Ananeh Ha'kabod" after they had been taken away in response to the sin of the golden calf.

The Gaon answered on this basis the famous question of why Sukkot is celebrated in the middle of the Tishri. If this holiday celebrates the miraculous clouds of glory, then it should be celebrated in the spring, shortly after Pesach, when Beneh Yisrael first entered the wilderness and required this supernatural protection. The Gaon explained that Sukkot celebrates the return of the clouds after the sin of the golden calf, which occurred on the 15th of Tishri, and so it is celebrated then.

This theory also answers other questions. For example, it explains why women are exempt from the Misva of Sukka. Normally, although women are exempt from Misvot that apply only at certain times, they are obligated in Misvot which commemorate a miracle in which they were included. Quite obviously, the women of Beneh Yisrael benefitted from the clouds of glory no less than the men. And yet, they are exempt from this obligation. According to the Gaon of Vilna's approach, the reason becomes clear. The women did not participate in the sin of the golden calf. They remained loyal to Hashem and refused to donate any gold for this sinful endeavor. Therefore, they are not included in the Misva of Sukka, which commemorates the final rectification of the sin of the golden calf.

On Yom Kippur, Hashem announced His forgiveness, which meant that He would not punish Beneh Yisrael. On Sukkot, however, we celebrate the fact that Hashem not only forgave us, but fully restored His relationship with us. We did not only escape punishment, but were worthy of His special love, signified by the clouds of glory. This is what makes Sukkot such an especially joyous occasion. It celebrates the fact that although we are imperfect, and sometimes make mistakes, nevertheless, if we sincerely repent and strive to improve, Hashem continues to shower us with His love and His special blessing. Through the process of Teshuba, we are able to earn not only forgiveness – but Hashem's continued love and affection.

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Paying Attention to the Voice of Hashem

"Rabbi's Message"

By Rav Tsadok Pereira

Every year before Rosh Hashanah, we read Parashat Nitsavim. This is not a coincidence. Let's look in the message that Hashem is trying to tell us with this important parasha! It says:

"And it will be when all these things come upon you – the blessing and the curse – that I have placed before you, then you will take it to your heart among all the nations where Hashem, your G-d, has dispersed you." [Devarim 30:1]

The Pesukim talk about a person who fails to react to "all these curses". It speaks of one who – upon hearing the words of the previously presented imprecation – blesses himself in his heart saying: "שלום יהיה לי" *Peace will be with me, for I walk along as my heart sees fit.*" [Devarim 29:18]

Hashem will not be willing to forgive the person who does not react to the curse he has witnessed [Devarim 29:19].

The Passuk continues:

וּשְׁבַתְּ עַד-יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ וְשָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלֹ כָּל אֲשֶׁר-אָנֹכִי מְצַוְּךָ הַיּוֹם וּבָנִיךָ

"And you will return to Hashem your G-d and hearken to His voice." [Devarim 30:2]. The first step of teshuvah is to hearken to His voice (v'sha-mata B'kolo). Perhaps this is not to be interpreted as we normally would, to listen to His voice and fulfill His commandments. *"You shall hearken to His voice"* means that when the Hashem speaks to us we need to pay attention.

When Hashem speaks through natural phenomenon or through historical events, we must attune our ears, lift up our antenna, and receive His message. This is the first step in Teshuva

The Gemara says that thunder was only created in order to straight-

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Sweet dish for Rosh hashanah

- Apple & Cranberry Roasted Chicken



Ingredients

- 1 cup frozen or fresh cranberries
- 2 Tbsp. packed light brown sugar
- 1 Tbsp. cornstarch
- 2 tsp. reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 1/2 cup plus 1 tbsp. dry white wine, divided
- 6 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large shallot, very thinly sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 cup low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 Honeycrisp apples (about 1 lb.), cored, cut into 8 wedges
- 1 Tbsp. chopped fresh thyme leaves, plus more for serving
- Chopped fresh parsley leaves, for serving

1. Step 1 Preheat oven to 425°. In a medium bowl, toss cranberries, brown sugar, cornstarch, soy sauce, and 1 tablespoon wine.
2. Step 2 Season chicken with salt and pepper. In a large, high-sided skillet over medium-high heat, heat oil. Cook chicken, turning once, until golden brown on both sides, 5 to 6 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate.
3. Step 3 Reduce heat to medium. Pour off all but 1 tablespoon fat in skillet. Cook shallot, stirring occasionally, until tender, about 2 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring, until garlic and shallot are fragrant and light golden, about 1 minute more.
4. Step 4 Add remaining 1/2 cup wine, increase heat to high, and cook, stirring occasionally, until liquid is mostly evaporated, about 2 minutes. Pour in broth and bring to a boil.
5. Step 5 Add apple and cranberry mixture, scraping any extra sugar mixture in bottom of bowl into skillet, and stir to combine. Nestle chicken skin side up into skillet and sprinkle with thyme.
6. Step 6 Bake until chicken is cooked through and fruit is tender, 20 to 25 minutes. Top with parsley and more thyme

en out the crookedness and perversions in a person's heart. [Berachot 59a] When a person hears a clap of thunder and flinches, the experience may give him pause. When the Chafetz Chaim, zt"l, used to hear thunder he would ask "What does Hashem want?" "Ma Rotseh Abba Bashamayim"?

If the Chofetz Chaim was alive today and he saw and heard what happened the last years in Am Israel, what would he do? If he even saw the Voice of Hashem in a clap of thunder, what would he say to these events?

There is a strange Gemara in Masechet Avodah Zarah [18a]: Rabbi Chanina ben Teradion asked Rabbi Yosi ben Kisma "Am I destined to go to Olam Haba?" Rabbi Yosi ben Kisma responded, "Did you ever do anything special?" [This, mind you, is the same Rabbi Chanina ben Teradion who publicly taught Torah against the edict of the Roman Government forbidding Torah study.] Rabbi Chanina ben Teradion responded: "I once had Purim money (for my personal Purim meal) that got mixed up with money I set aside for Tsedaka. I then gave the entire sum away to poor people." Rabbi Yosi ben Kisma responded, "If that is the case, may my portion in the World to Come be as great as your portion. You are certainly destined to go to Olam HaBah!"

What does this Gemara mean? I once saw a unique interpretation. Rabbi Chanina ben Teradion saw in this incident that Hashem was trying to tell him something. The message was that really this money (that he had set aside for his Purim meal) should be given to Tsedakah. Rabbi Chanina ben Teradion was so sensitive and so open and receptive to Hashem's messages that in that small, almost trivial incident he recognized that "Hashem is trying to tell me something." Rabbi Chanina ben Teradion saw in this incident that Hashem was trying to tell him something. The message was that really this money (that he had set aside for his Purim meal) should be given to Tsedakah. Rabbi Chanina ben Teradion was so sensitive and so open and receptive to Hashem's messages that in that small, almost trivial incident he recognized that "Hashem is trying to tell me something." Rabbi Yosi said, "If that is the case — if in such a small little incident you see and you hear the Hand of Hashem, I can be confident that you are destined for the World

to Come. It is obvious that you go through life in such a way that when G-d merely taps you on the shoulder you hear it and you get the message.

It is about hearing such messages that the Torah states in this week's parsha *"And you shall hear His Voice"* (v'sha-mata b'kolo).

"And with a great shofar blast He shall blow and with a small silent voice He shall be heard". Do we ever stop to consider the paradox of the contrast in this pasuk. If He blows with a great shofar blast, why is it then only a small little voice that we hear? If the shofar blast is so powerful that even the angels tremble from it, then when it reaches us, why is it only perceived as a small silent voice (kol Demama Daka)?

This is the nature of people. Hashem could give out the loudest blast possible. It could be a cataclysmic event, but we only hear the small silent voice. People can react in all sorts of ways, but are they hearing the Voice of Hashem? Are they asking the one simple question: What does **Abba** want?

Sometimes hashem speaks to us individually! Sometimes hashem speaks to us as a nation! But, whenever hashem speaks, we need to hear hashem. And **DO SOMETHING**. We cannot let an event like this go by and not do **SOMETHING**. I told the students in my class, who are for the most part between 20 and 23 years old, that every generation has an event that is seared into the collective memory of that generation. To my father's generation it was September 1, 1939. Every year on that day, my father would say "Today Hitler invaded Poland." For my generation it was November 22, 1963 (the day John Kennedy was assassinated). In the sum total of history it is probably an insignificant event, but it is something that everyone of my generation remembers. For this generation it is and will be October 7 and all the wars that followed since then and are still not over.

No one knows how this is going to play out. No one knows whether this is the first volley of the Final War. No one knows whether this is going to be "good for the Jews" or "bad for the Jews". No one knows whether the initial reaction of "blame those Arabs" will prevail or whether the secondary reaction will be "but it is because of those Jews." No one knows whether this economy that is already

Bi'shgaga!" Our true intention is and always has been to do God's will. We have been dissuaded and led astray by our evil inclinations, and our inner spark has been covered over by layers of darkness, but deep inside, we all want to do what is right. All our sins are indeed a "Shegaga," a mistake, a careless swerve off the road. Our real intention is to do only the right thing.

And this is how Hashem can erase our record. Once we find that inner spark of holiness within our souls, it is determined that all our sins were "unintentional," and can therefore be erased from the "video."

Our Sages described Yom Kippur as one of the happiest days of the year. We are not despondent or dejected on this day. To the contrary, we are invigorated and inspired by the words that should be ringing in our ears throughout Yom Kippur – "Ki Le'chol Ha'am Bi'shgaga!" Yom Kippur is the day which reminds us that deep inside, we are all good, we are all holy, and therefore God wants us to return to Him. He will not reject sincere prayer and repentance, because He sees that spark inside us which is never extinguished.

Three times a day, in our Amida prayer, we describe Hashem as "Ha'rose Bi'tshuba" – "Who desires [our] repentance." If there was even a single Jew whose repentance God is not willing to accept, we could not recite this Beracha. The fact that we recite it proves that God desires the Teshuba of each and every one of us. There is no sinner on earth who cannot perform Teshuba, because there is no sinner on earth whose inner spark of Kedusha has been extinguished.

The Talmud in Masechet Aboda Zara tells the astounding story of Elazar Ben Dordaya, who was, literally, addicted to lust. He visited every Zona (woman of ill-repute) in the world, and at one point he traveled a great distance and spent an enormous fortune to visit such a woman. As he was with her, she mentioned to him that he could not repent. Her remark rattled Elazar, and he ran from her house, looked up to the heavens, and repented. As he wept, his soul departed, and a voice burst forth from the heavens announcing that he has earned a share in the world to come.

This story teaches that God will go anywhere – even to a house of ill-repute!! – in order to bring back one of His children who has gone astray. Just as a father will jump into a malodorous trash bin to save his child, similarly, God will go anywhere He is needed to inspire a sinner to repent. Even if everyone else has despaired from a certain sinner, God never despairs. He still sees that spark of Kedusha, and knows that this spark can ignite a raging fire of holiness and spiritual devotion.

Of course, this will only happen if we ourselves recognize this spark. We must trust in our ability to return, and in God's willingness to accept us. And when we have this trust, Yom Kippur is truly the most joyous, most exciting, and most exhilarating day on the Jewish calendar.



Yom Kippur- The Happiest Day of the Year

On the night of Yom Kippur, immediately following Kal Nidreh, we recite as part of our prayer service a verse from the Book of Bamidbar (15:26): "The entire Israelite congregation, and the convert residing in its midst, shall be forgiven – for the entire nation [transgressed] unintentionally" ("Ve'nislach Le'chol Adat Beneh Yisrael Ve'la'ger Ha'gar Be'tocham Ki Le'chol Ha'am Bi'shga-ga").

The question arises, how can we possibly claim "Ki Le'chol Ha'am Bi'shga-ga," that all the sins we transgressed over the past year were committed unintentionally? Did we not commit any willful sins the entire year? How can we honestly come before God and demand forgiveness on the grounds that all our sins were accidental?

The answer touches upon what is likely the most fundamental question concerning Teshuba. Why is God prepared to erase all our wrongdoing from our record? We understand that He is compassionate and prepared to forgive. But why does He go so far as to erase our sins from memory? It is as though He takes a video recording of our lives and deletes all segments that involve sinful behavior. Indeed, in this same verse, we make reference to "the convert residing in its midst," drawing a comparison to repentance and conversion. Just as Halacha treats a convert as a "newborn child," and his past history prior to his conversion is completely erased, similarly, by performing Teshuva we are able to erase our shameful past. By now most of us probably take this for granted, but if we think about it for a moment, it is mind-boggling. On what basis does God rewrite our history?

The answer is that there is a spark of goodness, of sanctity, deep within the soul of every person. Regardless how far a person has fallen into the abyss of sin, this spark continues to burn; it is inextinguishable.

The Rambam, in a famous ruling, writes that if a recalcitrant husband refuses to give his wife a Halachic divorce, the court (in the times when it had the authority to do so) would beat him until he agreed to grant the divorce. Even though a Halachic divorce requires the will of a husband, a divorce given under this kind of duress is nevertheless valid, the Rambam writes, because in the husband's subconscious, he wants to do the right thing. The Bet Din does not force its will upon the husband, but rather removes the obstruction from the true desire of his heart to do what is proper. Every person's true intent is to do the right thing, but our hearts are sometimes "blocked" by obstructions that we simply need to remove to allow our true will to surface.

As we begin Yom Kippur, it is natural for us to feel discouraged. Why should we bother repenting? Do we even deserve God's attention, let alone His forgiveness? We therefore proclaim, right from the outset, "Ki Le'chol Ha'am

teetering on the cusp of a recession will now be thrown into the throes of a full depression. No one knows.

But let us not make the collective mistake of just letting this moment pass. When the Ribono shel Olam has spoken to us more clearly than He has in decades, we must listen. I don't care. One thing I do know. If after 120 years, I go to Heaven and stand before the beth Din Shel Maala and they ask me "What did you do in the aftermath of this day?" and I tell them that I did such and such, and they tell me "That was not the correct reaction to why this happened," I'll know how to respond. I will say, "I'm sorry. I did not have a prophet. I did not have a proper spiritual guide. I just listened to the great men of my generation and did what they told me. This is what I thought. What else could I do? I tried."

I do not know for sure how Judgment works up there, but I am fairly confident that Hashem will accept such an answer. "I tried; I did **SOMETHING**" is an acceptable answer. But if I go up there and I say: "I did not do anything," and they will exclaim "How could you not do anything?" What will I say? "Because I was unsure what to do. I did not know for sure. Therefore, I did nothing and my life did not change when I saw such an event." Chas Veshalom, what Hashem might say if we offer such a response.

This is my message: Whatever it is – **DO SOMETHING!** The Ribono shel Olam talked to us like he has not spoken to us in generations. Do not ignore your father when He speaks to you! Do not just walk out of the room.

"Yes father. What do you want? I am going to do something, father, because I know you want something. I do not know exactly what you want, but I know you want something." A person that always asks himself "What does Father want?" is guaranteed a place in the World to Come. Let us hope that we will respond to the sounds that come these days so profound from Hashem, and we will know to listen and through that bring the Gualh that we have been so long waiting for

Wishing you all a **כתיבה וחתימה טובה**

Rabbi Pereira

Ahavat Shalom Congregation

The High Holidays Schedule 5787

Erev Rosh Hashanah

Friday September 11th

מנחה/ערבית	Mincha/Arvit	7:00 PM
הדלקת נרות	Candle lighting	7:17 PM

Rosh Hashanah First Day

Shabbat, September 12th

שחרית	Shacharit	8:00 AM
סעודה שלישית	Seudah Shelishit before:	4:23 PM
מנחה	Mincha	7:00 PM
ערבית	Arvit	7:55 PM
הדלקת נרות	Candle lighting after	8:17 PM

Rosh Hashanah Second Day

Sunday, September 13th

שחרית	Shacharit	8:00 AM
שופר	Shofar	11:45 AM
מנחה	Mincha	6:30 PM
תשליך	Tashlich	7:10 PM
ערבית של מוצאי חג	Arvit /End of Chag	8:15 PM
רבינו תם	Rabenu Tam	8:44 PM

Fast of Tsom Gedalia

Monday, September 14th

התחלת הצום	Begin of fast	5:44 AM
שחרית	Shacharit—Selichot	5:30 AM
מנחה	Mincha/ Keriat Hatorah/ Tefilin	7:10 PM
סוף הצום	End Of fast	8:13 PM

Aseret Yeme Teshuva

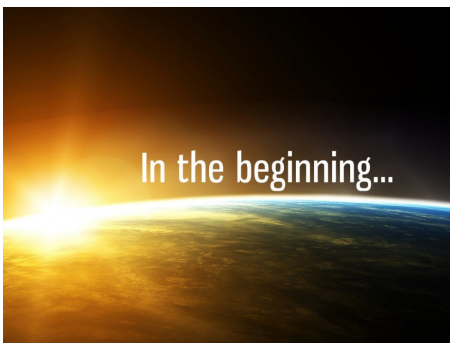
Tuesday September 15th / Friday September 18th

סליחות	Selichot	5:30 AM
שחרית	Shacharit	6:25 AM
מנחה/ערבית	Mincha/Arvit	7.00 PM

from the tree of knowledge, the purpose would have been fulfilled and the world would have entered the era of Mashiach and the resurrection of the dead. After Adam failed, Hashem divided the work of bringing the world to its purpose into segments. Each year we are assigned a different segment to rectify. Every Rosh Hashana, Hashem judges the world vis a vis its purpose and what was accomplished in the years before. The Jewish nation too is judged vis a vis its purpose and what segment will be assigned to them for the coming year. It's as if every Rosh Hashana the world receives a new existence, a soul so to speak, for the year. The past year is over. Now it must be recreated. Otherwise there will be no further existence.

The same idea plays out every Shabbat. The Ohr Hachaim explains the verse in the Torah, "Ki sheshet yomim asah Hashem et ha'shamayim v'et ha'aretz. For six days Hashem created heaven and earth." It should have said, "For in six days Hashem created heaven and earth." The Ohr Hachaim says when the world was created it was given life for six days. Its continued existence is dependent on the keeping of Shabbat by at least one person. Shabbat creates the soul for another week. In the same way on a larger scale says Rav Kirzner, Hashem gives existence to the world for another year on Rosh Hashana based on the particular purpose that must be accomplished in that particular year. Every Rosh Hashana has the power of renewal. We have the power on this day to start anew, to recreate ourselves as if we were born today.

This brings to mind the definition of teshuva as explicated by the Rambam in Hilchot Teshuva. A person who does teshuva is as if he changed his essence. He becomes a new being. Rosh Hashana contains this power. We can recreate ourselves and start anew. It's an encouraging thought. Many times we think, if I was born today with the experience I have now, I would live my life very differently. On Rosh Hashana we can actually do that. We can start again. It's a new beginning, filled with promise, as we work to bring the world closer to its purpose



“The Beginning”

On Rosh Hashana, Hashem decides everything that will happen in the coming year. All of creation is judged, even inanimate things. Since it is such a pivotal day, it would be sensible to stand

in supplication and beg Hashem to fulfill all our personal requests. But this is not what the tefilot of Rosh Hashana are about. The few prayers in which we do ask for our specific needs such as Zachreinu L'chaim and Avinu Malkeinu were added after the period of the Talmud was written. What then is this holiday about? We know that the keys to a good judgment are repentance, prayer, and charity. Yet interestingly enough there is almost no mention of teshuva on Rosh Hashana. Only the days afterwards are dedicated to repentance. Shouldn't Yom Kippur precede Rosh Hashana so that we come prepared for the Day of Judgment?

Each of our holidays correspond to various events in Jewish history. Pesach corresponds to the Exodus, Shavuot to the giving of the Torah, Sukkot to the clouds of glory in the desert. The only holiday not connected to any event related to the history of Jewish people is Rosh Hashana. Rosh Hashana commemorates the creation of mankind. Why then is it celebrated as a holiday? What is its potential? The creation of man was the beginning of a new reality. Until then, only Hashem existed. The creation of man included the creation of the world because the world was created for man. Rosh Hashana contains within it the power of a new beginning. Every morning in Shachrit, we affirm that Hashem creates the world moment by moment. The will of Hashem willed it to exist for 5,777 years and it is this will that recreates it at every moment. What then is the difference between what happens every moment and Rosh Hashana? In order to understand this, we have to understand how and what the world was created for and how it functions.

Hashem created the world for a purpose. Had first man not eaten

The High Holidays Schedule 5787

Shabbat Shuva

Shabbat, September 19th

הדלקת נרות	Candle lighting Toronto	7:04 PM
מנחה	Mincha	6:10 PM
שחרית	Shacharit	8:45 AM
דרשת שבת הגדול	Shiur –Drasha Shabbat Teshuva	5:45 PM
מנחה וסעודה שלישית	Mincha & Se'udah Shelishit	6:30 PM
ערבית ומוצאי שבת	Arvit and End of Shabbat	8:03 PM
רבנו תם	Rabenu tam	8.33 PM

Erev Yom Kippur

Sunday September 20th

מנחה ווידוי	Mincha & Viduy	2:00 PM
הדלקת נרות	Candle lighting	7:01 PM
מנחה ב'	2nd Mincha	6:30 PM
קול נדרי	Kol Nidreh	6:45 PM
שיעור	Shiur	9:15 PM

Yom Kippur

Monday, September 21st

שחרית	Shacharit	7:45 AM
מנחה	Mincha	3:45 PM
נעילה	Ne'ila	6:40 PM
סוף הצום	Fast Ends	7:59 PM

Erev Sukoth

Friday, September 25th

מנחה	Mincha	6:50 PM
הדלקת נרות	Candle lighting	6:51 PM
ערבית של החג	Arvit from Chag hasukot	7:20 PM
קידוש לא לפני	Kiddush not before	7:52 PM

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Sukkoth, first day

Shabbat , September 26th

שחרית	Shacharit	8:45 AM
סעודה שלישית לא אחרי	Seudah Shelsihit before	4:08 PM
שיעור	Shiur	5:45 PM
מנחה	Mincha	6:45 PM
הדלקת נרות	Candle lighting Not Before Say first: "Hamavdil Ben Ko-desh Lekodesh"	7:50 PM
ערבית	Arvit	7:25 PM
קידוש של חג לא לפני!	Kiddush Not Before	7:50 PM

Sukkoth Second Day

Sunday, September 27th

שחרית	Shacharit	8:45 AM
מנחה	Mincha	6:50 PM
ערבית וחג	Arvit / End of Chag	7:48 PM
רבנו תם	Rabenu tam	8:18 PM

Chol Hamoed Sukkot

Monday September 28th -Thursday October 1st

שחרית	Hallel /Torah and Lulav (with Nets Hachama)	6.25 AM
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Hosha'ana Rabah

(7 Hakafot with Lulav /Shoffar and Selichot)

Friday , October 2nd

שחרית	Shacharit with Nets Hachama	6:25 AM
נץ החמה	Nets Hachama	7:17 AM

Erev Shemini Atseret

Friday October 2nd

מנחה/ערבית	Mincha/Arvit	6:30 PM
הדלקת נרות	Candle lighting	6:39 PM

קידוש לליל ראש השנה

אם חל בשבת מוסיפים:

יום הששי. ונקלו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם: וכל אלהים ביום השביעי מלאכתו אשר עשה. וישבת ביום השביעי מכל מלאכתו אשר עשה: ויברך אל"ם את יום השביעי ויקדש אותו. כי בו שבת מכל מלאכתו אשר ברא אין יום לעשות:

כשחל בחול מתחילין כאן:

וביום שמתתכם ובמועדיכם ובראשי חדשכם ותקעתם בחצצרות על עלותיכם ועל זבחי שלמיכם, והיו לכם לזכרון לפני אלהיכם אני יי' אלהיכם:

סברי מרנן. (ועונים: לחיים!)

ברוך אתה יי' אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי הנפץ:
ברוך אתה יי' אלהינו מלך העולם, אשר בחר בנו מכל העם,
ורוממנו מכל לשון, וקדשנו במצותיו, ונתן לנו יי' אלהינו
באהבה, (בשבת: אתיום השבת הזה ו) אתיום הזכרון הזה,
אתיום טוב מקרא קדש הזה, יום תרועה (בשבת: זכרון תרועה)
באהבה, מקרא קדש, וזר ליציאת מצרים. ודברך מלבנו אמת
וקים לעד. ברוך אתה יי' מלך על כל הארץ, מקדש (בשבת:
השבת ו) ישראל ויום הזכרון:

גם בליל שני מברכים "שהחיינו" ואם אפשר טוב להביא פרי חדש על השולחן, ולכוין עליו:

ברוך אתה יי' אלהינו מלך העולם, שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו
לזמן הזה:

אם חל יום טוב של ראש השנה במוצאי שבת מוסיפים שתי ברכות אלו לפני ברכת "שהחיינו":

ברוך אתה יי' אלהינו מלך העולם, בורא מאורי האש:

ברוך אתה יי' אלהינו מלך העולם, המבדיל בין קדש לחול, ובין אור לחשך, ובין ישראל
לעמים, ובין יום השביעי לששת ימי המעשה. בין קדשת שבת לקדשת יום טוב הבדלת,
ואתיום השביעי מששת ימי המעשה הקדשת (י"ג קדשת), והבדלת והקדשת (י"ג קדשת) את העם
ישראל בקדשתך. ברוך אתה יי' המבדיל בין קדש לקדש:

In all the Tefilot of Rosh Hashanah we conclude the third Beracha of the Amida with "Hamelech Hakadosh" instead of the regular Beracha "Ha'el Hakadosh" if someone forgot and said "Ha'el Hakadosh" instead, if he remembered within two seconds, he can then immediately correct and conclude with "Hamelech hakadosh" but if he remembered after this time, he should then go back to the beginning.

We also add Zochrenu Lechaim, Micha Mocha and Besefer Chaim. by all of these, if he made a mistake, and he remembered before the following Beracha, he can still correct and recite this extra Tefillah, and if he already started the next Beracha, he just continues and does not go back.

There is a nice custom to bring special foods to the table to memorize and symbolize special blessings, we ask Hashem for on Rosh Hashana. The custom of the Sephardim is to bring: Beans, cabbage, red beets, pumpkin, and sweet apple. We should only recite once the Beracha "Bore Peri Haets" and once the Beracha "Bore Peri Ha'adama".

We should keep a new fruit for the second night of Rosh Hashanah, this allows us to say "Shechyanu" on the second night. otherwise, we are only allowed to say "Shechyanu" on the first night. We can also keep a new garment on the second night and say "Shechyanu" on that.

Some have the custom not to eat black grapes on Rosh Hashana. This has kabbalistic reasons

There is a custom, that we should eat fat meat and a lot of sweet foods, to show that we are certain that we will come out in a favourable manner from our day of judgment.

There is a very important Minhag to avoid sleeping on Rosh Hashanah. The reason is that we don't want to sleep away our Mazal. it is also good to get up early on Rosh Hashanah. if he is really tired, he is allowed to sleep after Chatsot. After he finished his meal, he should go back and learn Torah or read Tehilim, but he shouldn't waste any time with talking nonsense. The day is too holy to waste time on this.

After Mincha, we should say Tashlich, next to a river or stream with water. When Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, we should only read Tashlich on Shabbat if there is a good Eruv. otherwise we should say it on the second day of Rosh Hashanah. if he didn't do the Tashlich on Rosh Hashanah, he can still do it the until Yom Kippur.

The High Holidays Schedule 5787

Shemini Atseret

Shabbat October 3rd

שחרית	Shacharit	8:45 AM
מנחה	Mincha	6:20 PM
סעודה שלישית לא אחרי	Seudah Shelsihit before	4.01 PM
הדלקת נרות	Candle lighting Not Before Say first: "Hamavdil Ben Kodesh Lekodesh"	7:37 PM
ערבית	Arvit	7:15 PM
קידוש והקפות	Kiddush and Hakafof (dancing for Simchat Torah)	7:30 PM

Simchat Torah

Sunday, October 4th

שחרית	Shacharit	8:15 AM
קידוש והקפות	Kiddush and Day Hakafof (dancing)	10:15 AM
	Sit-down Kiddush	12 30 PM
מנחה של חג	Mincha (or after dancing)	6:30 PM
ערבית ומוצאי חג	Arvit and End of Chag	7:36 PM
רבנו תם	Rabenu Tam	8:05 PM

Shacharit regular weekday (no Tachanun)

Monday October 5th - Friday October 9th

שחרית	Shacharit daily	6.30 AM
מנחה / ערבית	Mincha / Arvit daily	6.20 PM

Shabbat Bereshit-Shabbat Mevarechin

Shabbat, October 10th

מנחה	Mincha	6:15 PM
הדלקת נרות	Candle lighting	6:26 PM
שחרית	Shcharit	8.30 AM
שיעור	Shiur	5:15 PM
מנחה וסעודה שלישית	Mincha followed by Seudah shelishit	6:00 PM
ערבית ומוצאי שבת	Arvit and End of Shabbat	7:25 PM
רבנו תם	Rabenu Tam	7:55 PM

“Smoking on Yom Kippur “

Rabbi Zilbershtein shares an amazing story he was part of:

“In one of my flights out of Israel I sat next to a Mr. Weinstein who was obviously Jewish. I was curious about him. He had a non-kosher meal with his name Mr. Weinstein on it and I was wondering why he would want to eat a non-kosher meal. So when he finished eating I turned to him.”

“Excuse me sir I’m not trying to be brazen or hurt you or anything like that but can I ask you a question?”

“Sure!” The man answered.



I asked: “Are you aware that you can order a kosher meal on flights like these?”

He looked at me and said tersely: “I don’t eat Kosher!”

So I asked back “what do you mean? That you eat kosher at home but not out of the house or that

you don’t consider eating kosher something important?” “No I don’t eat kosher for that is my free choice!” He said with vehemence. “I don’t do any mitzvot; do you want to know why?” he asked.

“I felt he was about to unburden something in his heart, so I said yes. He started in a broken voice: “It was my son... the last thing that broke me. I held on the whole time in the concentration camp until one day when I couldn’t anymore. In the camp I had one sole ambition; that my son Katriel Menachem should survive. His mother and all his brothers and sisters were all taken away but my son and I were going to live. I was certain of this”.

“One day we were in a roll call in a place that had secret doors to an area used for mass hangings. My son squeezed my hand so hard from fear he cut off blood circulation to it. We started to flee from the line of fire and his hand slipped out of mine and he disap-

Halachot for Rosh Hashanah

By Rabbi Pereira

Erev Rosh Hashanah (the day before Rosh Hashanah)

There is a very strong Minhag (custom) to fast on Erev Rosh Hashana. This fast is only half day and can be terminated by Chatsot (midday). The Zohar says that by this fast, unlike other fasts, we are not allowed to eat before Alot Hashachar (dawn) if we slept the night before. The Zohar writes that someone that wants to eat before Alot Hashachar should better not fast all-together. The only way, that we are allowed to eat before Alot Hashachar, is if we didn't sleep the night before.

We don't say Viduy on Erev Rosh Hashanah in the Tefillah, but we do say it in Selichot.

There is a great Minhag, to go to the Kivreh Tsadikim to daven on this day, however, we should not daven to the Tsaddik, but rather daven to Hashem in the Zechut of the Tsaddik.

There is a great Minhag to go to the Mikvah on this day, to purify ourselves before the day of judgement, this custom is also applicable to woman according to some commentaries, however it would be better for them to go before Yom Kippur.

There is also a Halacha, that we should try and have a haircut on this day. the reason for this, is that hair has a status of judgement according to the Zohar, and we would like to remove all judgements from our bodies before this holy day.

We have the custom to annul any vows we made during the year. This has to be done in front of three men.

When Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat, we say Kabbalat Shabbat, but we don't say Bameh Madlikin.

Rosh Hashana

We are not allowed to say Viduy (confess) on Rosh Hashanah, and we are also not allowed to cry during the Tefillot. but we are allowed to say Viduy in our hearts. All the prayers should be said with happiness and extreme Kavanah (concentration). If a person gets so emotional during his prayers that he starts to cry, he should not worry about it and there is no sin whatsoever.

Our custom is not to raise our voice during the quite Amidah, however we should say it loud enough that we can hear our own voice.

Some have the Minhag to bend down the entire prayer during Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, if this is the case, one should be careful to stand up straight, before the Beracha where he usually should bend down.

Rabbi and Rabbanit Pereira,

Cheski, Devorah Tamar, Simcha, Gedalia

Elisheva, Michael Pinchas

Tuvia, Hudi, Sloime, Elisheva, Betsalel Nechama,

Eliezer, Yisrael Meir, and Saadia שיחיו

would like to wish the entire

community of

Ahavat Shalom

A

כתיבה וחתימה טובה

*May Hashem answer all your תפילות and may your
year be filled with health happiness and נחת from
your children*

Ahavat Shalom would like to thank

Joe Bendluch שיחי

For his tireless efforts and help
he devotes to the shul, by giving
everyone their coffee with a smile and
his love

May Hashem give him a year filled with
happiness! And good health for his
mother!

peared. Later someone told me he saw a soldier take him and shoot him."

Mr. Weinstein wiped away his tears as his voice rose in anger: "G-d took away all of my children. Now whatever G-d says, I do the opposite! I want nothing to do with His mitzvot!"

Rabbi Zilbershtein continues: "I was so shocked by his story I had nothing to say and for six hours I sat totally silent next to Mr. Weinstein till we got to Houston and we each went our own way."

"I never dreamed I'd see Mr. Weinstein again but four years later on Yom Kippur I was a guest in the Meah Shearim neighborhood. I walked out of the synagogue to refresh myself and breathe some fresh air into my lungs when I saw a strange sight. A man sitting on a Meah Shearim bench of all places was smoking a cigarette on Yom Kippur of all days!"

"But then I did a double take... it was Mr. Weinstein! I went over to him and said: "Here we are meeting again. Isn't it funny how life brings people together and you wonder why they were put together? What message is hiding behind this? I'm sure you know today is Yom Kippur and in a few minutes they will be saying Yizkor to remember the loved ones no longer with us.

"Come with me and during Yizkor mention your son's name to remember him and pray for his soul. This might be your only opportunity to mention his name. Don't you want his name to be heard in the Heavenly Courts?"

"His eyes filled with tears, I hugged him and we locked arms and went into the synagogue near the cantor. We asked him to make a special memorial prayer for Mr. Weinstein's son. Mr. Weinstein leaned on the cantor's stand and whispered his son's name to the cantor: "Katriel Menachem ben Yecheskel Shraga" he said. "The cantor turned white and he broke out in a sweat, his eyes were bulging as if they'd pop out! He turned to us and in a choked voice cried, "Abba" (father) and fell down in a faint."

Rabbi Zilbershtein concludes: "This is a wondrous story of how G-d guides the world above the natural and "one who comes to purify (himself) gets Divine assistance'. Mr. Weinstein made but a small gesture to come to synagogue on Yom Kippur (after having a cigarette!) and merited something unbelievable. G-d always watches over us and He is waiting for the smallest gesture on our part for Him. Look at the good you get in return!"

Rabbi Fischel Schachter

The Bar of Chocolate

I once went to be *menachem ave* a truly great family whose home was filled with chesed. Their mother had just passed away, leaving behind a legacy of quiet greatness, a life lived simply and honestly despite considerable means.



She was not only generous; she was *ehrllich*. She learned to speak Yiddish so she could understand the *meshulachim* who came to her door and feel their pain. She and her husband raised a family steeped in Torah, living simply even when they could have chosen comfort. Shabbos after Shabbos they would prepare and pack food for orphans with their own hands. Wealth never dulled their sense of responsibility or humility.

Many stories capture her character. When her husband first started his business, they had almost nothing. He once discovered a discrepancy of twelve cents, the value of two stamps. "They're mine," he said. But she gently corrected him. "Half belong to your partner." In those days, stamps cost six cents each. To her, even pennies mattered when it came to honesty.

Her vigilance extended to daily life. After shopping she would go over every receipt, terrified of owing anyone a cent. One Friday she came home with groceries delivered in boxes but could not find the receipt. As she unpacked, she discovered a bar of chocolate she did not remember ordering.

Her husband tried to reassure her. "Don't worry, if it fell in by mistake, the grocer won't lose sleep over it." But she insisted. "What if I didn't pay for it? I don't want my *ta'am ganavah* (taste of theft)." Despite the heat, she prepared to

carry on Shabbat, we could also blow the shofar, since blowing the shofar itself is not forbidden. We do not blow the shofar only for fear that one will carry the shofar out of one's private domain. Notes. Modah Lbinah, the melacha of hotzah is specific to Shabbat, wherein we are commanded to not leave our domain on this day. On Shabbat we are meant to quietly contemplate who we are and return to our core essence, while "yetziah/going out" always implies meeting a challenge, whether it is going out to war, or Dinah going out in the streets of Shechem, suggests the Sifsei Chaim. Go inward instead, and reconnect with the purity of Adam before the sin and before his expulsion from Eden. Rabbi Pincus takes us back to the beginning, to the time when all creation was still a thought in Hashem's mind. Hashem created man in this pristine, pure thought of din/judgment/according to Hashem's original plan. Rosh Hashanah is referred to as zichron l'yom rishon/a remembrance of the first day. This day is about all of creation, not about ourselves. Our service on this day is to bring us back to the concept, the thought and idea that Hashem had in creating the world and Man. How do we reflect God's plan for creation? Our mindset on Rosh Hashanah is to strive to bring ourselves back to that pure state within Hashem's mind before creation. Are we worthy of being created? Like the shofar, Shabbat prods us to look within ourselves rather than outward, to find the deepest part of ourselves concealed in creation. And on that day of Shabbat Rosh Hashanah, Hashem Himself blows the shofar, says the medrash, for, since all the world belong to Him, there is no fear that He will go out from His private domain to the public domain. Certainly, Hashem's shofar blowing will confuse the Satan even more than the shofar blowing of a human being. We know that we are not permitted to speak from the time of the blessing on the shofar until the completion of the mitzvah when all the blasts have been sounded at the end of Mussaf. Because of the aforementioned medrash, many include the custom of not speaking on Shabbat Rosh Hashanah during the entire time that we would hear the shofar in shul, even though no baal tekiyah is blowing the shofar. After all, Hashem Himself is blowing the shofar. Are we bending our inner ear to hear the sound, to judge ourselves? Are we living up to the perfect image Hashem has of us? Are we at least working toward perfecting that image? May the coming year mark the creation of our new and improved selves as we hear our inner shofar on the first day of Shabbat Rosh Hashanah and the blasts of the physical shofar on the second day.

kept the primal light glowing until the Shabbat was over. Therefore, those who observe the Shabbat will rejoice in Hashem's sovereignty/Yismichu bemalchutcha shomrei Shabbat and will delight in it. Thus, Shabbat remains the advocate for Bnei Yisroel and brings peace to the world. In this capacity, it takes the place of the shofar. Its power is so intense that it is not worth jeopardizing its sanctity even for a remote possibility of infraction. Shabbat plus the first day of Rosh Hashanah combines the coronation of Hashem with the protection of Shabbat. One of the ways the shofar protects us is through the creation of angels that emanate from the shofar as the breath of the baal tekiyah goes through it and rises heavenward. However, notes Rav Schlesinger in Eileh Hem Moadei, Shabbat also has special angels whom we greet every Friday night before reciting Kiddush. These angels rise up to in our defense just as the angels of the shofar do. But what of the Jew who does not observe Shabbat appropriately; should he not invoke the sound of the shofar in his defense? Unfortunately, many people transgress Shabbat simply out of ignorance of its many nuances. It is a good idea to commit to learning the laws of Shabbos for just a few minutes every day to keep us knowledgeable. Proper Shabbat observance demands constant study. If we are coronating Hashem as our King on Rosh Hashanah, writes Rabbi Hofstedter, we are sublimating any personal benefit to the greater purpose of Hashem's glory. The fact that we forgo blowing the shofar on Shabbat lest one man desecrate the Shabbat by carrying the shofar is proof of our dedication to Hashem's glory, to His word and the word of the Torah scholars He commanded us to obey. We are truly accepting Hashem as our King. In a sense, notes the Mesech Chochmah, this is our personal sacrifice to obey Hashem's will, reminiscent of the sacrifice of Isaac. Each of us was created as an individual with a unique soul and personal mission. When we pass under Hashem's staff on Rosh Hashanah, although we are members of the flock, each of us is being judged individually, writes Rabbi Rotberg in Moadei Labinah. Have we maintained our special identity, or, through sin, marred our image? Have I allowed my special qualities to impact the group? As the Rambam notes, sin is not isolated, but impacts my soul as well as the perfection of the entire flock. The sound of the shofar pierces to my core, asking the question Hashem asked of Adam, "Ayekah/Where are you [in relation to your essence]?" We could raise the question why we are allowed to carry on yom tov but not on Shabbat. If we would be permitted to

walk back and return the chocolate.

Her husband suggested calling the store instead. She phoned the grocer, who was busy with pre-Shabbos customers. "It's fine," he said. "Keep it." But she pressed. "Please check whether I paid for it." He sighed and promised to look it up.

Reviewing the records, he couldn't find the entire order. Surprised, he checked the security cameras. But reviewing the cameras, he discovered something else. Something he never expected to find.

He saw the cashier accept a \$100 bill, slip it under the drawer instead of into the register, cancel the sale, and pocket the money. There was no record of the transaction at all.

The grocer and his son went to the grocer's home. "We can call the police," they told the cashier, "or you can make restitution." The grocer confessed on the spot. "Don't call the police. I will return every dollar I took — all \$25,000."

It turned out she had been part of a ring of cashiers who had been skimming money for years. The business was on the brink of collapse, the owner unable to understand where the losses were coming from. This woman's insistence on checking one bar of chocolate uncovered the theft and saved the store from financial disaster.

Think about that. One woman said, "If Hashem gives me something, I don't want it to be at someone else's expense." Her focus was not on how much she had or how much others had, but on making sure every penny in her home was clean. She lived not for this world's approval, but for Hashem's.

And through that vigilance, she not only preserved her own integrity, but rescued another's livelihood. This is what it means to live with Hashem present in every detail. Some people see angels, but others see the Ribono Shel Olam in every transaction, every choice and every bar of chocolate.

The Yichud Jewelry - my U-Turn story”

Allow me to share what my personal U-turn moment was.

After October 7, there was a flyer circulating on WhatsApp. Some of you may remember it. It was directed toward women and asked a simple question: do you have a piece of jewelry that you no longer wear?

The idea was to donate jewelry to women in Israel who had lost everything in the attacks. Terrorists had entered their homes, destroyed their belongings, and stolen what they could. This initiative was an opportunity to give something personal back and to respond to destruction and with generosity unity.

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our homes as drop-off locations. Women began bringing jewelry, and eventually we found someone traveling to Israel who could deliver it.

One woman donated a diamond necklace. But this was not an ordinary necklace.

It was the necklace her husband had given her in the *Yichud Room* at their wedding. After the chuppah, the bride and groom enter a private room together for the first time as husband and wife, and sometimes the groom gives his bride a special gift.

This woman gave away that gift. And with the necklace, she included a letter. She wrote that *yichud* means to be alone or in solitude. And then she told the woman who would receive her necklace: “I want you to know that you are not alone. The Jewish people are crying with you. Together and united, we can stand stronger.”

She gave one of the most sentimental possessions she owned to a complete stranger in Israel.

I know this woman, personally. Very well.

That woman was me.

That diamond necklace was my *Yichud Room* gift. My husband and I made the decision together. It was not about the monetary value of the necklace or really even about the jewelry. It was about unity.

We wanted to be able to come before Hashem and say, “Hashem, we woke up.” But that is not the remarkable part of the story.

The woman who received my necklace was named Allison. She

spiritual worlds he is creating or destroying with each symbolic flick of his hand, he would be so consumed by fear that he would not be able to act at all, writes Rabbi Scheinerman citing the Arizal. The shofar, then is meant to arouse us from lethargy and rote actions. Being in a state of mindfulness and care before we speak or act accomplishes the same goal. This awareness is our first step in coronating Hashem as our King. So, Shabbat, which requires such thoughtfulness and study to observe it properly, contains within it the element of carefulness the sound of the shofar is meant to achieve. Rav Schlesinger offers another reason we do not need to blow the shofar on Shabbat. Rav Schlesinger notes that blowing the shofar also arouses Hashem’s quality of compassion and mercy. Shabbat itself has that same ability, for there is no judgment on Shabbat. That Shabbat substitutes for shofar is alluded to by the initials of Shabbat, Shabbat Bimkom Tekiyot/Shabbat [takes the] place of the shofar blasts. The sounds of the shofar, coming from the inner depths of a baal tekiyah, contain a sanctity that words alone cannot contain, writes Rabbi Hofstedter in Dorash Moshe. Since Shabbat itself contains that sanctity, it elevates the prayers of Bnei Yisroel just as the sound of the shofar would do. Therefore, on Shabbat we include the phrase *zichron teruah/remembrance of the shofar blast*, a phrase not included on other days of the week. In his sefer *Chikrei Lev*, Rav Heiman cites a medrash that proves the sanctity and power of Shabbat. Adam was created on the sixth day of creation. He sinned at twilight, and was exiled from Eden. Hashem had warned that on the day Adam would eat from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, he would die and go to Geihinom. Shabbat came and pleaded on Adam’s and on his own behalf. Shabbat asked Hashem why He should introduce death into the world on no other day but a Shabbat, a day Hashem Himself had declared to be holy. With this argument, Adam was saved. When Adam witnessed the power of Shabbat, he composed the Psalm Mizmor Shir leYom haShabbat. But Adam’s sin was deeper than a personal one. Had Adam not sinned, he would have unequivocally established Hashem’s sovereignty over all creation. For not affirming this truth, Adam was worthy of even more severe punishment than exile. Instead of Hashem’s sovereignty being revealed in all its glory, it would now be concealed. Nevertheless, the intervention of Shabbat

“Shabbat Kodesh” Verses “Shofar”

When the first day of Rosh Hashanah coincides with Shabbat, we do not sound the shofar on that day. The Gemorrah explains that our Sages were concerned that perhaps a Jew would take the shofar to learn how to blow it, and momentarily forget that he is carrying the shofar in a public domain and thereby transgress the sanctity of Shabbat. To preclude that possibility, however remote, our Sages ordained that we do not blow the shofar on Shabbat Rosh Hashanah. Why are we so concerned with such a remote possibility? Does not the effect of blowing the Shofar outweigh such a far fetched fear? The Gemorrah also teaches us that a year wherein we don't blow the shofar at the start of the year, and the Satan is not confused, is a year we need to be wary of a negative outcome. Although, the Rishonim note, this is not applicable to when Shabbat falls out on Rosh Hashana, rather, when a person just neglects to blow, we still need to examine, what is the replacement for the Shofar, so we can confuse the Satan, and be blessed with a good year. While one of the reasons for blowing the shofar is to evoke the memory of the binding of Yitzchak, and Avraham and Yitzchak's willingness to sacrifice himself to do Hashem's will, to coronate Hashem as King over ourselves, perhaps that coronation can be achieved by other means as well. While the blast of the shofar always heralded the coronation of the King/king, and Rosh Hashanah is the day on which we declare Hashem's sovereignty, Rabbi Moshe Schwab z"l suggests that the same goal can be achieved through zehirut, the careful, meticulous attention to the wishes/mitzvot of our Master. If we invest our speech and our actions with deliberate thought on how to accomplish the wish of our Creator, we have indeed crowned Him as King over ourselves. Chazal understood that if Bnei Yisroel recognized the consequences in olam habo of transgressing the sanctity of Shabbat, even accidentally they would automatically forgo blowing the shofar on Shabbat. How much more so if one would deliberately transgress. But Hashem, in His mercy, sends us messages through small frustrations in this world to alert us that we need to reflect and improve. If a person would realize how many



eventually contacted me to thank me and told me about her son, who was serving in Gaza, and how frightened she was for him. We exchanged some messages and developed a small connection. Then life moved on. I did not hear from her for approximately a year, nor did I expect to.

Then, the night before I was scheduled to fly to Israel for a friend's son's bar mitzvah, I suddenly received a message from Allison.

She wrote: "Hi Sarah. I'm not sure you'll remember me, but I'm the recipient of your beautiful necklace. I want to say thank you again." She explained that when she first received it, she had struggled to understand how a piece of jewelry could possibly change her experience of the war. It was beautiful, and people complimented her on it, but ultimately, she thought, it was just a necklace.

A year later, she felt completely differently. She told me that the necklace had become the one tangible object she possessed that connected something positive to that terrible period of her life. Every Shabbos, she would look at it and think, "I survived. And a generous *neshama* made sure that I had something beautiful to connect to that time."

She also told me that her son had completed his army service and was doing well. I received that message the night before flying to Israel. The next day, I arrived for the bar mitzvah.

My friend had hired two security guards to accompany our group throughout the week. I exchanged pleasantries with them, but that was essentially the extent of our interaction.

Then Shabbos arrived.

I was looking for my son, who was spending the year in Israel, because I wanted to take advantage of every opportunity to spend time with him. Finally, I found him. He was sitting and talking to one of the security guards. So I pulled up a chair and joined their conversation.

And who was that security guard?

Shraga Rubenstein. The soldier whose helicopter had crashed and whose friend had been trapped inside. The soldier who had watched a bullet come directly toward his face, only to have it ricochet off a narrow piece of an iron gate. The soldier who had fought at Kibbutz Be'eri.

I could not believe the story I was hearing and I thought, "I have to write about this." So I pitched the story to an editor. He rejected it. "We have a lot of stories about soldiers," he told me. "We don't need this one."

Normally, I would have accepted that answer. But this time, for reasons I could not explain, I pushed back. "Trust me. I have a feeling

about this story.” Eventually, I wrote it and they published it and I returned home.

Then Allison sent me a message. Someone had forwarded her the article I had written about Shraga.

“Sarah, I’m shaking,” she wrote. “Do you know who Shraga is?” she asked me.

Shraga was her son.

Think about that. After October 7, I gave away my Yichud Room necklace to a woman I had never met. That woman was Allison. A year later, on the night before I happened to fly to Israel, Allison unexpectedly contacted me. The next day I arrived in Israel. My friend happened to hire a particular security guard and my son happened to sit down and speak with him. And I happened to join their conversation.

And that security guard happened to be Shraga. I happened to insist on writing his story after it was initially rejected. The article happened to reach Allison. And only then did I discover that the soldier whose story I had fought to tell was the son of the woman wearing my necklace.

You can call each piece a coincidence. But at some point, when enough pieces come together, you begin to see something else. You begin to see a Hand.

And now we can return to the question with which we began:

How do you crown a G-d you cannot see, touch, or physically feel?

Maybe the answer is that you learn to recognize Him. You cannot see Hashem Himself, but you can see His fingerprints. You can look backward at your life and recognize moments that seemed random when they happened—a rejection, an injury, a delay, a wrong turn—and suddenly realize that perhaps they were not random at all.

That is the U-turn. Sometimes the U-turn changes where you are going. Sometimes the U-turn allows you to understand where you have been.

And sometimes the U-turn is *teshuvah*: returning to the same place, facing the same choice, but deciding that this time, you will be different.

So as Rosh Hashanah approaches, let us ask the question: what is your U-turn moment going to be? What is the one thing you can change that will allow you to stand before Hashem and say, “Hashem, I woke up.” Because perhaps that is how we crown a King we cannot physically see. We begin to look for Him and we begin to recognize His presence in our lives.

And then we respond by changing our lives.

FITNESS FOR YOUR MIND, BODY & SPIRIT



“Hi, my name is
Shimon Blumental”



Personal Training. Nutrition Consultant.
Group Training. Hebrew Tutoring etc...

website

Youtube/Linkedin

