



YOMIM NORAIM

תשפ"ב 5782
COMPANION

WITH DIVREI TORAH BY

RABBI SHMUEL SILBER

Rabbi Aryeh Richter

Rabbi Gavi Berger Rabbi Gavi Sragow

And Inspiration from SOTC Members

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May your generosity serve as a merit to inscribe you in the book of life together with all of Klal Yisrael

תשפ"ב YOMIM NORAIM Schedule



ROSH HASHANAH

MONDAY SEPT 6 | 29TH ELUL, EREV RH

7:12p Candle Lighting

7:15p Mincha/Maariv

TUESDAY SEPT 7 | 1ST of TISHREI, 1ST DAY RH

8:00a Shacharis (9:52a Krias Shema)

10:45a Shofar

1:00p Additional Shofar - OUTDOORS (approximate time)

5:15p Pre-Mincha Learning Seder

6:00p Daf Yomi

6:50p Mincha

7:20p Tashlich

8:00p Maariv

8:11p Candle Lighting

WEDNESDAY SEPT 8 | 2ND of TISHREI, 2ND DAY RH

8:00a Shacharis (9:53a Krias Shema)

10:45a Shofar

1:00p Additional Shofar - OUTDOORS (approximate time)

6:00p Pre-Mincha Learning Seder

6:50p Mincha

7:20p Daf Yomi

8:10p Maariv followed by Havdalah

תשפ"ב YOMIM NORAIM

Schedule



SHABBOS SHUVA

FRIDAY SEPT 10 | 4TH TISHREI, SHABBOS SHUVA

7:06p Candle Lighting

7:00p Mincha Followed by Kabbolas Shabbos

SHABBOS SEPT 11 | 5TH TISHREI, SHABBOS SHUVA

7:00a Hashkama

8:45a Shacharis (KS 9:54a)

6:15p Daf Yomi

7:00p Mincha

8:06p Maariv/Havdalah

MOTZAI SHABBOS

9:00p Teshuva Drasha
sponsorships welcome:

[www.suburbanorthodox.org/
event/teshuva-drasha-5782](http://www.suburbanorthodox.org/event/teshuva-drasha-5782)

YOM KIPPUR

WEDNESDAY SEPT 15 | 9TH TISHREI, EREV YK

3:00p, 6:50p Mincha

6:58p Candle Lighting

7:10p Fast Begins

7:10p Kol Nidrei

THURSDAY SEPT 16 | 10TH TISHREI, YK

8:00a Shacharis (9:55a Krias Shema)

11:00a Yizkor (Approximate)

4:50p Mincha

6:20p Neila

7:58p Maariv/Followed by Havdalah/Fast Ends

*A message from
Rabbi Shmuel Silber*

Dear Friends,

It is hard to believe that another Rosh Hashana is upon us. It feels like just yesterday we were making our personal and communal plan for 5781. Yet here we are. The dawn of a new year. We are filled with excitement and trepidation. Excitement for the accomplishment, growth and simcha which lie ahead. Trepidation from knowledge that there will be bumps and challenges. We look back at this year and hopefully we can identify ways in which we have grown and changed. The pandemic has defined so many aspects of our lives, from how we davened to where we worked from. From our children's schooling to how we greet one another. We had all hoped that by now this challenging chapter would have been behind us, but Hashem has other plans. We will continue forward and continue building. We have witnessed the resilience of our Kehilla and the beauty of membership. We have seen a renewed commitment to chessed and to one another.

I want to take this opportunity to thank our dedicated lay leadership, our Executive Director, Mrs. Shani Topper, and Office Manager, Mrs. Michal Weisberg for always going above and beyond in their service of the Shul and its membership. I want to thank all of you, the members of this precious Kehilla. It is each of you who makes our Shul the truly special makom it is. It is your dedication which allows us to grow physically and spiritually. This is a different Yom Tov season for Aviva and me as our 4 oldest children are not home with us, but we feel privileged to spend another year of Yomim Tovim with our Kehilla mishpacha.

We have put together this Yom Tov Companion to provide insight and inspiration over these coming days. May we be zocheh to daven, learn and grow together.

Aviva and I wish the entire Kehilla a Kesiva V'Chasima Tova. May it be a year of simcha, fulfillment, growth, aliyah, and contentment.

Kol Tuv,

Shmuel Silber

*A message from
Adam Ben-Zev*

As children, one of the first songs that we learn to sing for Rosh Hashana teaches that we dip the apple in the honey for a sweet new year. Of all the sweet fruits, why apples, and since the fruit is already sweet, why do we then dip it in honey?

The answer lies in the differences in the sweetness of apples and honey. Apples grow on trees and are both edible and sweet. Honey is derived from a source that is both inedible and can also sting. Yet, the actual honey is not only edible, but it is also sweeter than an apple.

We dip the apple into the honey to symbolize the two types of sweetness in our lives. The sweet apple symbolizes our accomplishments- the successful careers, great relationships, and Simchas. However, another sweetness can be derived from the challenges in life when things don't go the way we had envisioned. Times of tragedy, financial insecurity, and strained relationships can all leave us feeling alone. These challenges are like a bitter bee sting. When we ride out these challenges and difficult situations, there is always light to be seen at the end of the tunnel. We tap into a deeper part of ourselves that we would never have had the opportunity to explore if we weren't tested. For example, losing a job can be humiliating, but many times, one will find a job that is both bigger and better than that of the first one. Challenges in relationships are always painful, yet, once we reconcile there is no greater feeling. When we withstand the stings in life and overcome obstacles to our sadness, we often thank Hashem for them and wonder where we would have been without them.

The past year, like many others that came before it, presented its fair share of undeniable sweetness and a plethora of both new and continued challenges. Today, we eat apples and honey for Rosh Hashana. It is my Bracha to everyone in our Kehilla that this year's apples are not only sweet, but the inevitable bee stings should be even sweeter than the apples. Wishing you and your families a year filled with health, happiness and only good things.

K'Siva V' Chasima Tova,
Adam Ben-Zev

HALACHIC GUIDELINES

Compiled by Rabbi Aryeh Richter

Erev Rosh Hashana

1. Some people have a custom to fast on Erev Rosh Hashana until chatzos.
2. One should participate in Hataras Nedorim (nullification of vows) after Shacharis. It is possible that during the year, we made a promise in a way that is halachically binding as a vow. So as not to enter the new year in transgression of any vows, the prayer should be said in a language the person will understand, to nullify any vows made over the course of the year and to stipulate that any promises made in the upcoming year should not be considered binding. One may use family members to annul the vows.
3. Many men go to the mikvah on Erev Rosh Hashana to ensure that he goes into the holiday with purity.
4. While the day of Rosh Hashana can be viewed as a day of awe and judgment, the sages have taught us that we must go into the day with confidence and a feeling of celebration. Therefore, it is important to be well-groomed in honor of the day. This includes a haircut, shaving and showering in honor of Yom Tov.
5. There is a custom to go to the gravesite of relatives and tzadikkim to daven on Erev Rosh Hashana. One who does go to the cemetery should bear in mind that they are not praying to the deceased, rather they are praying to Hashem to accept their tefillos in the merit of the deceased. One should also give tzedakka before praying at the cemetery.

Rosh Hashana

Shehecheyanu: The bracha of shehecheyanu is recited during kiddush and candle lighting.

Simanim: There are various customs regarding the simanim (symbolic foods) that are eaten on Rosh Hashana. One should follow their family customs regarding what is included. If one does not have or know the family minhag, the following should be included.

- Challah dipped in honey
- Apple dipped in honey
- Carrots or fenugreek
- Leek or cabbage
- Beets
- Dates
- Gourd
- Pomegranate
- Fish
- Head of fish

HALACHIC GUIDELINES CONT.

Rosh Hashana Cont.

When eating the simanim the proper prayer should be said prior to taking the bite (Artscroll Machzor on pages 96 -98). There is a difference of opinion as to whether it is the eating of these simanim or the accompanying prayer which is the essence. In any case, one needs to understand the simanim are yet another way of beseeching God's blessing for a sweet year full of opportunity for growth and accomplishment.

Nuts: There is a custom not to eat nuts on Rosh Hashana

Shofar: One should preferably be in shul to hear all 100 blasts of the shofar. If one is not able to be in shul for all 100 blasts, they can fulfill their obligation to hear the shofar by hearing the first 30 which are blown immediately following the blessings. Women who are caring for children need not hear more than the initial 30 blasts.

Tashlich: After mincha on the first day of Rosh Hashana, one should go to a body of water to say the tefilla of Tashlich, a prayer that speaks of removing our sins.

Napping: Many have the custom to avoid napping on Rosh Hashana. One who is tired and cannot daven or focus well on the purpose of the day, should take a nap nonetheless.

New Fruit: One should have a new fruit on the second night of Rosh Hashana. The fruit should be present during candle lighting and kiddush when the bracha of shehecheyanu is recited.

Seudos: The mitzva of v'samachta b'chagecha applies on Rosh Hashana just like any other Yom Tov. Therefore, one should make sure to have two seudos (meals) each day of Rosh Hashana. Yaale V'yavo is said in Birkas HaMazon, although Birkas HaMazon is not repeated if Yaale V'yavo is forgotten.

HALACHIC GUIDELINES CONT.

Aseres Yimaei Tshuva (10 Days of Repentance)

Insertions in the tefillos: The following insertions or changes are made to the Shemona Esrei prayer beginning with Rosh Hashana:

In the bracha of Ata Kadosh we say Hamelech Hakadosh instead of Ha'el Hakadosh. If one forgot the change, or is unsure if he remembered the change, he must repeat the amida.

In the bracha of Hashiva Shofteinu, we end with Hamelech Hakadosh instead of melech ohev tzedaka umishpat. If one used the regular conclusion to the bracha, he does not repeat.

There are four other insertions made throughout the amida, they are: zachreinu l'chaim, mi chamocha, u'chsov and besefer chaim. If these insertions are forgotten, the amida is not repeated.

General conduct and stringencies: It is appropriate to be more attentive to our general conduct during the period between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. This includes general conduct such as our personal relationship with Hashem as well as our interpersonal relationships. There are some who accept added halachic stringencies upon themselves during this time, such as consuming only Chalav Yisroel, as our sages teach us that when we go beyond the letter of the law, so does Hashem when he passes judgment on us.

Erev Yom Kippur

- It is customary to perform the atonement ritual of Kapparos (using a chicken or money).
- One should attempt to settle disputes and ask forgiveness from those who they may have harmed. One should be willing to forgive those who have wronged them.
- There is a custom for a man to go to the mikvah (ritual bath).
- There is a custom to go to the gravesite of relatives and tzadikim to daven (pray). One who does go to the cemetery should bear in mind that the prayers are not directed to the deceased, rather they are praying to Hashem to accept their tefillos (prayers) in the merit of the deceased. One should also give tzedakah (charity) before praying in the cemetery.
- During mincha we recite the Viduy in the silent Amida.
- Many have a custom to bless their children on Erev Yom Kippur (ArtScroll Yom Kippur Machzor, page 32).
- There is a mitzvah to eat on Erev Yom Kippur. Some eat a formal meal in the morning. After mincha the seudas hamafsek is eaten (the last meal before the fast begins). One who finishes the meal long before the fast begins may continue to eat until the time the fast starts. The seudah hamafsek is a celebratory meal reflecting our optimism and anticipatory excitement for the year ahead.
- One should light a yahrtzeit (memorial) candle at the onset of the fast. Many have a custom to light additional yahrtzeit candles for each deceased parent.

HALACHIC GUIDELINES CONT.

Yom Kippur Evening

- One should don his tallis before sunset (one may put it on after sunset if necessary).
- Many men have the custom to wear a kittel (white robe) on Yom Kippur.
- All restrictions (listed below) begin at sunset on Yom Kippur evening (7:15pm this year).

Yom Kippur Day (The Five Restrictions)

Fasting - The prohibition to eat or drink on Yom Kippur is of Biblical nature and is therefore different than other fasts throughout the year. One who has difficulty fasting or needs to take medication on Yom Kippur should consult their Rabbi.

Bathing and Washing - One may not wash for pleasure. Washing hands after waking up or after using the restroom is permitted although the custom is to only wash until the end of the knuckles. Kohanim wash their hands fully hand before Birkas Kohanim.

Anointing - Anointing (smearing or rubbing oils or lotions) for pleasure is forbidden.

Wearing Shoes - One may not wear leather shoes on Yom Kippur.

Marital Relations - Marital relations are prohibited.

Havdalah/End of Fast

While one should wait until after havdalah to eat, one may drink water beforehand if needed. In such a case he/she should say "Baruch HaMavdil bein kodesh l'chol".

Havdalah includes three blessings: hagafen (on wine), borei meorei ha'aish (on fire) and hamavdil (for distinction). There is no bracha on besamim (on scent).

The fire for ha'aish (fire) is to be lit from a candle that was lit before Yom Kippur (the memorial candle).

Some have the custom to begin with Sukkah preparations after breaking the fast.

Rosh Hashana Simanim

APPLE DIPPED IN HONEY



יהי כצון מלפניב ה'
אלקינז ואלקי אבותינו.
שתחדש עלינו שנה
טובה ומתוקה

MAY IT BE YOUR WILL, LORD OUR G-D
AND THE G-D OF OUR FOREFATHERS,
THAT YOU RENEW US FOR A GOOD
AND SWEET NEW YEAR.

CARROTS



יהי כצון מלפניב ה'
אלקינז ואלקי אבותינו
שירבו זכיותינו

MAY IT BE YOUR WILL, LORD OUR G-D
AND THE G-D OF OUR FOREFATHERS,
THAT OUR MERITS INCREASE

LEEKs



יהי כצון מלפניב ה'
אלקינז ואלקי אבותינו.
שיקרתו ושונאינו

MAY IT BE YOUR WILL, LORD OUR G-D
AND THE G-D OF OUR FOREFATHERS,
THAT OUR ENEMIES BE DECIMATED.

POMEGRANATE SEEDS



יהי כצון מלפניב ה'
אלקינז ואלקי אבותינו.
שנרבה
זכיות כרמנו

MAY IT BE YOUR WILL, LORD OUR G-D
AND THE G-D OF OUR FOREFATHERS,
THAT OUR MERITS INCREASE AS THE
SEEDS OF THE POMEGRANATE

BEETS



יהי כצון מלפניב אלקינז
ואלקי אבותינו. שישלוקו
אוזיבנו

MAY IT BE YOUR WILL, LORD OUR G-D
AND THE G-D OF OUR FOREFATHERS,
THAT OUR ADVERSARIES BE REMOVED.

DATES



יהי כצון מלפניב ה'
אלקינז ואלקי
אבותינו
שיתמו שונאינו

MAY IT BE YOUR WILL, LORD OUR G-D
AND THE G-D OF OUR FOREFATHERS,
THAT OUR ENEMIES BE CONSUMED.

FISH



יהי כצון מלפניב ה'
אלקינז ואלקי אבותינו
שנפכה ונרבה
כדגים

MAY IT BE YOUR WILL, LORD OUR G-D
AND THE G-D OF OUR FOREFATHERS,
THAT WE BE FRUITFUL & MULTIPLY
LIKE FISH.

FISH OR SHEEP HEAD



יהי כצון מלפניב ה'
אלקינז ואלקי
אבותינו. שנהיה
לראש ולא לזנב

MAY IT BE YOUR WILL, LORD OUR G-D
AND THE G-D OF OUR FOREFATHERS,
THAT WE BE AS THE HEAD AND NOT
AS ITS TAIL.

WHY SIMANIM?

THE WORD SIMAN (סימן) LITERALLY
MEANS SIGN OR OMEN. THE CUSTOM
TO EAT SYMBOLIC FOODS ON ROSH
HASHANA IS BASED ON THE
TEACHING OF ABAYE IN THE TALMUD,
WHO SAID:

"SINCE YOU SAY THAT OMENS ARE
SIGNIFICANT, YOU SHOULD EAT
GOURDS, FENUGREEK, LEEKS, BEETS
AND DATES AT THE START OF THE
YEAR." (HORAYOT, 12A).

EACH SIMAN REPRESENTS A QUALITY
WE WISH FOR IN THE NEW YEAR,
OFTEN CONVEYED THROUGH
A LINGUISTIC PLAY ON WORDS.



SOME PEOPLE EVEN INVENT
THEIR OWN SIMANIM, SUCH AS
EATING LETTUCE, RAISINS AND
CELERY. TO REPRESENT: "LET US HAVE
A RAISE IN SALARY."



RUBIA (SMALL BEANS)



יהי כצון מלפניב ה'
אלקינז ואלקי
אבותינו. שירבו
זכיותנו ומלכנו

MAY IT BE YOUR WILL, LORD OUR G-D
AND THE G-D OF OUR FOREFATHERS,
THAT OUR MERITS SHALL INCREASE
AND THAT YOU HEARTEN US.

GOURD



יהי כצון מלפניב ה'
אלקינז ואלקי אבותינו.
שיקעקע גזר דיננו.
ויקרא לפניב זכיותינו

MAY IT BE YOUR WILL, LORD OUR G-D
AND THE G-D OF OUR FOREFATHERS,
THAT THE DECREE OF OUR SENTENCE
BE TORN ASUNDER AND MAY OUR
MERITS BE PROCLAIMED BEFORE YOU.

TABLE TALK

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

First Night of Rosh Hashana

The Correct Path: The Meaning of Rosh Hashana

“Behold, I have set before you today life and good, and death and evil.”
(Devorim 30:15)

It is a theme expressed multiple times by Moshe Rabbeinu; life is filled with choices. Each and every moment of every single day we stand at a crossroads and must decide with path to take. Each of these decisions determine the people we become, the persona we create and the life we lead. Moshe reminds us that very often we must choose between good and evil, between life and death. While our decisions may not involve physical or biological life and death, the decisions we make can contribute to our spiritual longevity or chas v’shalom demise.

The Baal Shem Tov offers another insight into these profound words. There are two paths we can travel in the creation and cultivation of our relationship with Hashem. We can travel the path of yirah, fear of punishment, fear of God. Or we can travel the path of simcha, joy and love of Hashem and all He represents. This is the meaning of the verse. Behold I have set before you today – there are two paths a person can take. Life and good – this refers to serving Hashem with simcha and Ahava; Death and Evil – this refers to serving Hashem through fear. They are both correct paths and both have the ability to bring you closer to Hashem. Moshe Rabbeinu outlines both paths for us to choose from. But he then goes on to say, “You shall choose life, so that you and your offspring will live (Devorim 30:19).” Both paths work – but the preferable one is that path paved with love, excitement, and joy. This is the path that brings us the greatest contentment and inspires our children to follow in the ways of Torah and Mitzvos. The Ribbono Shel Olam wants us to choose the path of excitement. He prefers that we connect with Him because we desire it, not simply as a way to avoid punishment and suffering. We must work on creating a Judaism steeped in simcha. We must model performance of mitzvos not simply because we have to – but because we want to.

Rosh Hashana can be an overwhelming time. So much is being decided. Often our approach to the Yomim Noraim is steeped in fear and dread. While it is true that these days are overwhelming, we must feel the simcha in the experience. Hashem is judging us – but He departs the celestial abode to come down to be with us. The King of Kings makes Himself accessible to each of us no matter where we are holding in our personal growth. The King wants to hear us. The King wants to dialogue. Hashem is ready to smile with us as we recount our

TABLE TALK

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

The Correct Path: The Meaning of Rosh Hashana (cont'd)

accomplishments, and He is ready to cry with us as we remember our failures and shortcomings. Rosh Hashana is our opportunity to come back home, and home for the Jew is where my God is. On this Yom Tov, Hashem stands ready to embrace each of us if we desire to be held. He is prepared to dry my tears, and he has the ability to mend my broken heart. He loves me more than I can ever comprehend. Yes, much will be decided. Some will live and some will die. Some will succeed and some will fail. Some will find tranquility and others will encounter difficulty. These are Divine plans which I will never understand. But we must find the simcha and excitement knowing that we get to spend these awesome days with a Father who showers us with unconditional love. I can't wait to come home because I know as soon as I open the door, my Father is waiting for me.

Life is filled with choices. As Moshe taught us, we stand at a crossroads and have to choose the path ahead. Rosh Hashanah is also a crossroads. Do we want a Rosh Hashana paved with fear and anxiety or one paved with simcha, excitement, and gratitude? They are both correct paths. They can both lead back to Hashem. I know which one I will choose, and I hope you will all join me on the journey.

TABLE TALK

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

First Day of Rosh Hashana

When we dip the apple in the honey we say, *Yehi Ratzon...Shetichadesh Aleinu Shana Tova Umesuka*; that the will of HaShem should be to renew upon us a year of goodness and sweetness. The obvious question is - why doesn't it just say good, or why not just say sweet? Why does the tefilah use language that is seemingly repetitive? Rebbe Nachman of Breslov explains so beautifully that these words really represent two different things. *Tov*, a statement of good, is rooted in the fundamental idea that everything that *HaKadosh Boruch Hu* does is good. *Masok*, sweet, means something that I experience as being wonderful and incredible. Sometimes, something could be good, but it could be quite bitter.

Sometimes something is sweet, but it is not necessarily good. So, the bracha we give ourselves and the aspiration we have for the year is that it should be a *shana tova*, a good year. I want to enter into the year with the recognition, understanding, and belief that *Gam Zu L'tova*, everything *HaKadosh Baruch Hu* does is for good. Everything *Hashem* does is somehow and some way for my benefit, and I believe that with everything. But we also ask for an additional bracha that it should also be *masok*, sweet. The sweetness represents that I want a year where I can see the good. I want a year where I can feel the good. I want the year in which I can experience the good. I recognize that it will be good, it will be *Tova*, but I also request that it be *Mesuka*. This also teaches us an incredible idea that even those things that are not sweet, even those things that are not *Masok*; they are always *Tov*.

Sponsored by Melvin & Evelyn Getz

TABLE TALK

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

Second Night of Rosh Hashana

The Torah tells us very little when it comes to the *Yom Tov* of Rosh Hashanah. We are told about the sacrificial obligations and rites, and yet there is no mention that it is a universal day of judgment. In fact, the Torah does not even identify this sacred day as “Rosh Hashanah” (the beginning or “head” of the year) rather, refers to it as “*Yom Teruah*,” the day on which the *Teruah* is sounded. The Rabbis explain that the Torah is teaching us about the special mitzvah of the day – the *Shofar*. But what is the meaning of this mitzvah? What is the message contained in the powerful blasts of the *Shofar*? Why did God choose to anchor the identity of this sacred and hallowed day in this particular obligation?

Rav Saadiah Gaon (882-942) explains that one of the reasons we sound the *Shofar* is to commemorate a miracle that occurred thousands of years ago in the city of Yericho (Jericho). When the Jewish people entered the Land of Israel under the leadership of Yehoshua (Joshua) they were faced with the immediate challenge of conquering the border city of Yericho. Yericho was surrounded by heavily fortified, tall walls and the only way to enter the Promised Land was through its gates. God commanded Yehoshua to circle the city; blow the *Shofar* and the city walls would crumble. Yehoshua did as commanded and miraculously the walls of Yericho fell (according to some commentaries the walls sank into the ground). On Rosh Hashanah we remember the miracle of the crumbling walls of Yericho.

While this is a beautiful idea, we are left to ponder; what is the connection between Rosh Hashanah and the crumbling walls of Yericho?

Rebbi Nachman of Breslov (1772-1810) explains that we each have some obstacle we feel is insurmountable; a challenge we cannot overcome. We each have our “life wall” that we simply cannot scale. More often than not, this is but an illusion. As God demonstrated in Yericho even the strongest of walls can be brought down, even the most grueling of challenges can be met. Rebbi Nachman explains that this is the meaning of Rav Saadiah Gaon’s statement – we blow the *Shofar* on Rosh Hashanah to remember the victory over Yericho, to remember that we have the ability to meet every life challenge head on, to bring down every wall that stands in our way. We may not immediately realize success, but we have the tools to begin the process.

This is why the Torah refers to this holy day as *Yom Teruah*. This is the very essence of our new year. Rosh Hashanah is our opportunity to commit to bringing down the walls that have kept us from accomplishing, growing and becoming more. If the *Shofar* can bring down the walls of Yericho, it can give me the courage to demolish my walls as well.

Continued-

Second Night of Rosh Hashana

Randy Pauch was Professor of Computer Science at Carnegie Mellon University. In August 2006, he was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and pursued aggressive treatment. However, by August 2007 he was told it had metastasized and his condition was terminal. On September 18, 2007, Dr. Pauch delivered a moving talk that was titled, "The Last Lecture." He said, "The brick walls are there for a reason. The brick walls are not there to keep us out. The brick walls are there to give us a chance to show how badly we want something. The brick walls are there to stop the people who don't want it badly enough."

As we take leave of 5780, we are reminded of the times in life when we looked at the wall, felt overwhelmed by its height and turned around. Let us allow the sounds the Shofar to fill our hearts and inspire us to aggressively overcome our obstacles, scale our walls, and enjoy success in our life endeavors.

May we merit a year filled with holiness, happiness, peace and beautiful life accomplishment.

Sponsored by Matt & Susie Schoenfeld

Second Day of Rosh Hashana

In one of his final addresses to the Jewish people, Moshe says, "For this commandment which I command you this day, is not concealed from you, nor is it far away. It is not in heaven, that you should say, "Who will go up to heaven for us and fetch it for us, to tell [it] to us, so that we can fulfill it?" Nor is it beyond the sea, that you should say, "Who will cross to the other side of the sea for us and fetch it for us, to tell [it] to us, so that we can fulfill it?" Rather, [this] thing is very close to you; it is in your mouth and in your heart, so that you can fulfill it "(Devorim 30:11-14)

The Ramban (Nachmanides, Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman, 1194-1270) explains that Moshe Rabbeinu is referring to the *mitzvah* (commandment) of *Teshuva* (repentance, return). Moshe is telling the people that the ability to return and reconnect with God is not beyond us. We do not require an intermediary, expert or someone more spiritually skilled to help us re-forged and reinvigorate the bond with our Father Above. *Ki Karov Elecha HaDavar Miod, B'ficha, U'bilivavcha*, this thing is very close to you, it is in your mouth and in your heart."

TABLE TALK

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

Second Day of Rosh Hashana Cont.

Rav Avraham Tzukerman zt'l (Rosh Yeshiva Kfar HaRoeh) explains, "*Ki mikora shel nishmas ha'adam hu mi'limala V'ha'adam sho'eyf tamid lashuv l'mikoro*, the source of man's soul is above (in the celestial sphere) and he yearns perpetually to return to his source." The desire to return is innate. The desire to have a close connection and passionate relationship with God is woven in to the very fabric of our spiritual DNA. We come from above and we yearn to reconnect.

Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook zt'l gives a beautiful parable. When a chick is ready to hatch, it begins to slowly peck at the shell. When it makes the first hole it then begins to peck harder, ultimately thrusting its head through the small opening. But how does the chick know that there is a whole world waiting on the outside? How does the chick know that what is on the other side of the shell is better than its current circumstances? *Elah zohi techushato ha'tiviit, ha'locheset lo sod zeh*, rather, this is its internal intuition and nature which whispers this secret..." Just as the chick instinctively knows what to do to get to a better place, the soul knows what to do to reconnect with God.

We often find ourselves encased by the shell of existence. For some of us the shell is a result of decisions we made or did not make. For others the shell is a result of circumstances beyond one's control. This life shell makes us feel removed and so distant from the Heavens above. Rosh Hashanah is the time to peck away at that which confines and limits us. Rosh Hashanah is a time to think beyond our shell and realize that there is a beautiful world with so much opportunity that awaits us. Rosh Hashanah is a time to realize that we can have a meaningful and passionate relationship with God. It is within reach. It is innate. It is possible. It is very close to you. Let us each find the strength to open our heart and allow our soul to go where it knows it needs to go.

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TABLE TALK

Rabbi Rabbi Aryeh Richter

LET US BE REMEMBERED FOR LIFE

Why does Yaakov find it necessary to share his grievance about life with Pharaoh? Why not just provide the answer as asked? Let him simply say, "I am 130 years old, sir." The Seforno explains that Yaakov who was the man of truth could not just answer the question by giving Pharaoh a number. He needed to answer the question exactly the way it was asked. While it is true that all Pharaoh cared about was how old this ancient looking man was, his words referred to life (chayech- chaim) and Yaakov understood that life is so much more than an amount of time that one exists in the world. To satisfy Pharaoh's curiosity, Yaakov replied, "The years of my sojourn on earth are one hundred and thirty". But for a man of truth, Yaakov couldn't stop without addressing his experience of LIFE. And to that he said: "Few and hard have been the years of my life, nor do they come up to the life spans of my fathers during their sojourns." In truth, the latter half of the reply was directed more at us, the Bnei Yisroel (Children of Israel), than to Pharaoh. The eternal lesson Yaakov taught is that time spent on this earth and life are not one and the same. Yaakov lived a troubled life - 14 years under the abuse of Lavan (while hiding from his brother who sought his death) and 22 years mourning the unknown fate of his son Yosef, during which time he was not able to experience prophecy. Yaakov did not consider that life to be lived at its best. It was, in his terms, merely "existing" but not living.

This can help us understand the mysterious gemara referenced earlier. Being inscribed in the book of life (chaim) is not one and the same as being inscribed in the book of longevity. One can be granted many more years of existence, but not have opportunities to LIVE those years. On the flipside, one may not merit longevity, but he is granted extraordinary opportunities to live life to its fullest.

As we enter the days of awe and we add the passage of Zachreinu L'chaim to our daily prayers, let us focus on what we are asking for. Certainly, we want longevity, may we all merit to live long, healthy lives. Let us not forget though, that when we ask for life, we need so much more than extended time on this earth. We are asking for opportunities to live life to its fullest, grabbing every opportunity for growth in our relationship with Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

TABLE TALK

Rabbi Gavi Berger

"ראש השנה." Two powerful words. Two powerful days. For each and every Jew these are days of meaning, and yet for each individual they have a different meaning. For some they serve as an impetus to send cards with good wishes to family and friends. Others put much emphasis on the traditional foods, known as סימנים, eaten throughout the יום טוב, such as apples with honey and pomegranates. The children treasure the experience of coming to shul to hear the שופר. Many people spend almost the whole day in shul, as the so called "morning" davener stretches late into the afternoon.

What is it that draws us all to these days? What causes the feeling of awe and freshness that we have coming into this time of year?

The terms that the חומש uses to refer to ראש השנה are "יום תרועה" and "זכרון", highlighting the מצוה of the day, the blowing of the שופר. In davener and bentching we call it "יום הזכרון", the day of remembrance. We are most familiar, though, with the name given to it by חז"ל, that being ראש השנה. Literally, this phrase titles the days as the "head" of the year. The head of a person is his crown. The reason for this is that it contains the brain. The brain contains over 12 billion neurons and, through the spinal cord, regulates all bodily processes and coordinates movement. Everything is sensed through the brain and all actions and reactions stem from it. The same is true regarding the two grand days of ראש השנה, the head of the year. Whatever is going to happen throughout the year is being decided at this time; the way our Chanukah plans and summer vacation will play out are set in stone on these days.

With that in mind, what can we do on these days and what should be thinking about to ensure that this year will in fact be a happy and sweet one? The גמרא in מסכת ראש השנה deals with this question explicitly (16b). In describing the special care that ה' gives ישראל, ארץ תורה phrases it as if to say that He is watching it (דברים יא:יב) (מרשית השנה ועד אחרית שנה), from the beginning of the year till the end. The גמרא notes that there seems to be a letter missing in the word מרשית; it should have said מראשית with an Alef. רב יצחק explains that here we have a hint as to what the key is to having a successful year, from beginning to end. The word רש means poor, destitute, a person who has nothing going for him. The key to having a good year is to see ourselves as a רש at the start, during ראש השנה. Then, there will be wealth at the end of the year. Why should we pretend that we are needy when we really aren't? ברוך ה' we don't find ourselves as being so desperate and actually feel quite comfortable on the whole, so why should we express such a lack?

TABLE TALK

Rabbi Gavi Berger - Continued

Rav Chaim Friedlander was a beloved rebbe in the Ponovezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak. As ראש השנה in the year 1985 was approaching he wasn't able to be with the Yeshiva for those special days, as he had to be in New York for a serious unexpected medical procedure. He penned an emotional letter addressed to the תלמידים which sparked incredible inspiration. He told his dear students that he learned a great lesson from this challenge he was experiencing. We look at our stable lives and treat ראש השנה as just another day on the calendar that will pass by. However, we must recognize the truth, that we are constantly living based on pure חסד that ה' bestows upon us and nothing can be taken for granted. The reality is that we all are poor and needy if we were to be sustained purely based on our own merits.

The perspective we must have on ראש השנה is to realize what is at stake on these days. The very fact that we are aware of how much we are dependent on הקב"ה serves as a זכות. We must throw ourselves into the open arms of ה' and daven that with His great חסד He will grant us a happy and sweet new year.

TABLE TALK

Rabbi Gavi Sragow

“But What Will HE Think of Me??”

This year I want to daven on Yom Kippur alone in a room by myself. No this is not a COVID concern, and it's not because the pricing for the seats in shul is too high. It's because to do what I need to do in shul on Yom Kippur, I need to be alone. How can I truly tear open my heart and really analyze where I went wrong this past year in front of friends, colleagues and family members? I'll be too self-conscious to really bang my chest with any meaning, allow my eyes to shed a tear, or my face to show any intense emotions.

That makes a lot of sense. Well what's the answer to such an argument? Why do we bang our chests and admit sins in such a public forum? Isn't that quite embarrassing to say the least?

Many have the custom of reciting the “Yesod Hateshuva” written by Rabeinu Yonah on Erev Rosh Hashanah. One of the things Rabeinu Yonah stresses that stops people from following after Hashem's Mitzvos is the concern about what others may say or think. The Pasuk in Mishlei says (5:19) “באהבתה תשגה תמיד” literally “for love of it you will act irrational always”. The Gemara in Nedarim (54b) understands the “it” as referring to Torah and explains this pasuk with a story. Rabbi Elazar Ben Pedas was once so engrossed in his learning at the bottom of the market place that he didn't even care to realize that he was missing a shirt, and that a snake had wrapped itself around his leg. This is the level of באהבתה תשגה, as Rashi defines, to even be willing to make yourself look like a fool through your observance of the Torah. To actually get to Rabbi Elazar Ben Pedas' level may be beyond us, but there is definitely what to learn from his actions. How often do we make decisions based on what others may think of us or our families. How long should my Shmonei Esrei be? Should I speak up to tell someone what they're telling me may be Lashon Hara? Should I let my kid watch that TV show?

The Middah of embarrassment is described in the Gemara in Nedarim (20a) as actually being one of the 3 main identifying traits of a Jew, along with being compassionate and a person who does Chessed. The embarrassment described is one that brings a person to having yiras chet, fear of sin. We are a nation that has an inherent sense of embarrassment. What type of embarrassment? Not an embarrassment in front of man, an embarrassment in front of Hashem. How often it is that we misuse this identifying character trait imbued within us, and use it in the wrong way?

We all hope that after Yom Kippur has come and gone our sins will have been forgiven. How can we help make sure that happens? The Gemara in Brachos (12b) says that a person who violates a sin and has embarrassment over what he has done will be forgiven for all his sins. It's this exact middah that is called

TABLE TALK

Rabbi Gavi Sragow -Continued

upon. To tap into that inherently Jewish character trait of feeling embarrassed. The Rambam at the beginning of the second Perek of Hilchos Teshuva describes that to properly repent for a sin, one has to go through the same type of situation where he erred the first time, and refrain from repeating the same mistake. Maybe this could help us answer that original argument. No, we cannot allow a person to try and bang his chest alone in a room by himself, that would defeat the point. The Teshuva for having been too embarrassed in front of other people, must happen while we are standing next to those same people. We stand and say all year I cared too much about what *you* and *you* thought. I now will publicly show that I have been mistaken and should have showed more embarrassment in front of Hashem.

Let's not, God forbid, think that we shouldn't care at all what people think. If the people around us create a positive pressure to do the right thing, then of course that should be followed after. The Gemara in Shabbos, (119b) tells us that one of the less well known reasons for the destruction of the Beis Hamikdash was a lack of embarrassment. Rashi describes that even after having been caught for doing a crime, the culprit in that generation felt no sense of shame. The Maharsha adds that the others who saw this occur, also felt no shame for not having tried to stop the crime. Clearly the Gemara is showing us that there is proper sense of shame to be felt even in front of man. One that leads a person to do the right thing.

Let's rectify what that generation lacked. Let's start with ourselves and re-focus our sense of shame this Yom Kippur. Let's allow for others to see us publicly admit our sins, enabling ourselves to be a lesson to learn from. Let's create a community where the first question that is asked is not how will this look in the eyes of my friend, but how will this look in the eyes of my creator.

ANNULMENT AND ATONEMENT

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

Erev Yom Kippur

If there is one prayer that resonates in the heart of every Jew it is *Kol Nidrei*. The very tune is haunting yet enchanting, saddening yet uplifting. Yet, when one looks at the words – they seem to be anything but inspirational.

Kol Nidrei is a form of *Hatoras Nedorim*, revocation of vows. We begin the holiest day of the year by releasing ourselves from the vows of the past and proactively annulling the vows of the future. On a legal level this is very important as violating one's vow is considered to be a severe transgression. We do whatever we can to repent and absolve ourselves of sin as we enter into this sacred day. Yet, we find ourselves confounded by a basic question – of all the beautiful prayers we have in our liturgy why begin the holiest day of the year with revocation of vows? There are many prayers with moving words, prayers that capture the true essence of Yom Kippur; prayers that speak to the theme of purity and repentance. Wouldn't it be more appropriate to use some of these prayers as the liturgical introduction to this holy day? Why do we begin with *Kol Nidrei*? What is the message?

Perhaps, to answer this question we must strive to understand the purpose and power of a *neder* (vow). The paradigmatic *neder* is the Nazirite vow. A person takes a vow not to partake of wine and not to cut his hair. This individual is forgoing certain physical pleasures and is choosing to place less emphasis on his "self." Why would a person do such a thing? The Rabbis explain - because deep down he knows he can be something more, deep down he knows he possesses greatness within but needs the proper framework to extract it. He needs to shift the focus from pleasure seeking to purpose seeking. Sometimes in life we need a push; we need some level of tension to actualize our potential. This is the *neder* – it is the framework that allows the individual to access his internal reservoir of potential. To take this one step further, perhaps, the *neder* can be viewed as a personal aspiration or dream. I know where I am now, and I know where I need to get to – the *neder* is the vehicle to help me bridge the gap. But there is a danger in dreaming – many dreams fail to materialize, many dreams come crashing down, many dreams end in disappointment. When I experience too many failed dreams – I lose my resolve and courage to dream any more. It is too hard; I leave myself open to hurt and feelings of failure – better to live without dreams than to dream and fail.

ANNULMENT AND ATONEMENT

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

Erev Yom Kippur Cont.

This year when we enter the hallowed sanctity of Yom Kippur, we reflect back on last year and realize that many of the things we wanted to do – we didn't; many of the dreams we had, remain unrealized or worse - ended in failure. And so, the first thing we do on this sacred day is revocation of vows, *Hatoras Nedorim*. We let go of our failed dreams. We let go of the immaterialized dreams of last year and we acknowledge that there may be more unsuccessful dreams for the coming year. We let go because we will not allow ourselves to be burdened by the yolk of failed dreams. Carrying around these failures can be stifling. We let go in order to dream some more.

This is our mandate over Yom Kippur – to dream a new dream. Who do I want to be? What do I want my life to look like? What do I need to accomplish? We unburden ourselves in order to fill our hearts and souls with new, magnificent and holy dreams for the coming year. There is no better, more appropriate way to start this special day than with the recitation of *Kol Nidrei*.

I hope and pray that we will each find the courage to dream a new dream. Let us hope that God sees the beauty in our dreams and gives us the strength to make them come true.

Gmar Chasima Tova

THE GATES ARE OPEN

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

Yom Kippur

We experience a flurry of emotions. On one hand, there is incredible excitement for the new year and new beginnings; yet, we simultaneously experience feelings of anxiety and uncertainty, not knowing what the coming year will bring. We feel confident in our ability to accomplish incredible things; yet, we feel pain over the failures and missed opportunities of the past. How should we enter into this great and awesome day of Yom Kippur? What thoughts should occupy our racing minds and illuminated souls?

I would like to share with you a truly moving idea culled from the annals of *halachik* literature. There is an interesting sefer, titled *Chukos HaGer*, which discusses many intricate and fascinating ideas and questions related to the complicated topic of conversion (I want to thank Rabbi JJ Schacter for sharing this responsa with me). Rabbi Moshe HaLevi Shteinberg (1909-1993), one of the premier experts on conversion, dealt with the following situation (original responsa is attached below). A man walked into the *Beis Din* (religious court) and expressed his desire to convert. Upon inquiring about his background, this young man revealed that he was German and had been a Nazi soldier during the war and was involved in the round up and execution of Jews. The young man felt terrible remorse for his crimes, had repented for his sins and now wanted to convert and become a Jew. Rav Shteinberg was asked this most profound question, "Can we accept this man as part of our people after all he has done?" Rav Shteinberg begins by looking at the question from multiple angles: From a personal and national perspective, the answer must be a resounding "no." A person with so much Jewish blood on his hands has no place in the camp of Israel. He must be kept far away. How can we ever call him our brother after what he has done?

But Rav Shteinberg continues: "However, from a strict legal perspective (*halacha yiveysha*), I can't see any reason to block his conversion (he then quotes a number of examples of wicked people who repented and either converted or had descendants who converted). The gates of *Teshuva* are never closed and God never turns away the sincere penitent. Whoever, wants to enter these gates is given license to do so. Therefore, if the religious court feels that he is truly penitent and his motivations are pure, there is no reason to prevent him from joining the collective embrace of the Jewish people."

THE GATES ARE OPEN

Rabbi Shmuel Silber

Yom Kippur Cont.

We learn about the power of *Teshuva*, we believe in the power of *Teshuva*, but we never truly comprehend the overwhelmingly cathartic nature of this great gift. Even the Nazi can return. This is of course the extreme – but we must understand the message. If the most barbaric, cruel and evil individual can access the power of *Teshuva*; there is no telling what we can accomplish.

We often think change is impossible. We assume that who we are now is exactly who we will be. But that need not be the case. If there are things within us which are broken, we can fix them. If there are parts of my life in a state of disrepair, there is an opportunity to address the deficiencies. If there are character traits which are holding me back, I hold the keys to a personalistic overhaul. Over the course of the year we do things to alienate ourselves from God and from our true selves. The gates of *Teshuva*, the gates of change, the gates of return to God and to ourselves are always open.

This is the power of Yom Kippur. Over the course of this sacred day we will pray for many things. We will pray for health, children, livelihood and life itself. We will pray for our personal and collective needs. But let us not forget the true purpose of this day – to return. The gates are open, and they will remain open no matter what we have or have not done, may we find the courage to enter and the strength to return.

REFLECTION & INSPIRATION

Justin Myrowitz

It's Not Just About You

Chodesh Elul is a time of introspection. We look at our lives and find areas to improve on in the upcoming year and contemplate our shortcomings. We do soul searching; we do cheshbon hanefesh; simply put, we get serious about the direction of our lives. We focus on teshuva, find ways to do teshuva, and increase our mitzvot. We give tzedaka to increase our merits. We daven to Hashem and ask for a good year. We stand before Hashem like bnei maron, like sheep, so Hashem can judge us. Hashem loves us like a parent loves a child and only wants what is best for us. Hashem wants us to be successful in all areas of life but we need to take action and master our challenges. We know that on Rosh Hashana, Hashem judges us not only as individuals but also as a nation. Will this be a good year for me? Will it be a good year for klal yisrael?

Not just this year, but especially this year, we need to think about other people. We need to daven, not just for ourselves, but for other people on the yamim noraim. The world as we know it has changed with coronavirus- people getting sick and dying, reminding us that Hashem runs the world. Tisha B'av was just a few weeks ago where we mourned the loss of not just our Beis Hamikdash but of Jewish unity. Too often we feel jaded or distant from one another. Historically, during sefira, leaders of our nation died because they lacked deference toward one another. We need to learn from this and grow from this during these days so that we can be mindful of each other and all of Hashem's creations.

We recite the jarring prayer Unetaneh Tokef on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and ask, 'who is going to live' and 'who is going to die?' We know that everything is biyadei shamayim, but what impact can I have to save someone's life? Can I improve someone's mental health? Can I improve their well-being? Can I do anything to prevent death by hunger or fire or water? How can I proactively make the world a healthier and more spiritual place where people can thrive in avodas Hashem?

This Elul and Tishrei, we need to ask ourselves what can I do to help someone else? It may be getting a covid vaccine. It may be volunteering for a chesed organization. Perhaps one could give extra tzedaka or even just some friendly smiles, hellos, and good shabboses to people. We live in a world that is so focused on the individual, and I don't think that is what Hashem intended during maasei bereishis. However, over the past year and a half we have seen some beautiful chesed stemming from this unique situation that we have been navigating; opportunities were seized from buying groceries for people quarantining to volunteers helping many community members who have lost jobs. That part is beautiful and really shows our ahavas chinam, baseless love, toward one another. Hashem says v'ahavta le'raecha k'mocha. We should challenge ourselves during this special time in the calendar- who do I know who needs something that I can daven or provide something more tangible for? Do I have any friends who need a job, a shidduch, children, shalom bayis, paranasa, a refuah? Whatever it may be- daven for them, help them. I want to wish everyone in klal yisrael a shana tova and very meaningful and impactful yamim noraim for you as an individual but also for the nation as a whole.

REFLECTION & INSPIRATION

Bryna Nirenberg

On the surface, Rosh Hashanah seems like a mix of contradicting elements. It's a day of Divine evaluation—are we and the entire universe fulfilling G-d's purpose in creating us? On the other hand, this day is a chag and we are supposed to be msameach. What are we to be happy about on this day of judgement? The Nesivos Shalom elucidates that while R'H' is a day of judgement, it's also a day of renewal. R'H is a remembrance to the first day when G-d made His world; the Arizal says that this day all of creation reverts to its origins, in a sense. On this day, we, too, return to our source. Why were we created? What was G-d's intention when forming the first human beings, planting the roots of klal Yisrael, shaping each of our individual souls? The Yesod Ha'avoda brings a mashal of a king who built a kingdom for his kingship to be revealed and to bestow goodness upon his people. Our creation was intended to reveal G-d's kingship and receive His goodness. On R'H we are filled with a renewed sense of purpose. Rosh Hashana is a day of reestablishing our relationship, commitment, and connection to G-d. At our essence we are each an eved Hashem, and it's on this chag of R'H that we rejoice this treasured role.

Lesson Bein adam L'makom: By bringing an elevated G-d consciousness into our daily routines, we raise awareness of His presence and kingship in the world.

In R'H davening we ask G-d to regard us with mercy, characterized in a loving relationship of father to son. Interestingly, the Nesivos Shalom points out that the quality of being related to as a child of G-d is a privilege that can only be earned by the collective. The Torah refers to this special status as Banim atem im Hashem Elokecha, in the collective, not ben atah, in the singular. It is only when we are united does G-d regard us as His children. We need to remember that we are all essential workers (pun intended), vital to the function of His masterplan. Rabbi Dr. Akiva Tatz gave a great mashal to illustrate this concept. A tiny screw can easily be overlooked and regarded as insignificant, or even trash. But when driving through Death Valley and suddenly the car engine ceases to function, the essential necessity of the tiny missing screw crucial to the functioning of the engine becomes critically clear. The vast multitude of small engine parts on their own seem little in value. A deeper understanding of how they each uniquely enable the smooth functioning of a complex engine system puts their value into greater perspective. So too, we need to realize that every individual has a unique role to play in this world that only he/she can perform and is necessary for us as a nation to be whole. Practically we can apply this by refining our interactions with others. By viewing people who may seem different than us as fundamentally valuable players in the functioning of the greater system of the world, we can truly elevate our interpersonal relations.

Lesson Bein adam L'chaveiro: This new year we want to attain the status of G-d's children. We can purify our perceptions of each other and strive for a unity that is befitting G-d's children.

REFLECTION & INSPIRATION

Bryna Nirenberg

We are entering a period of teshuva and need to be equipped with the right tools. As an extension of the engine mashal, (I've been thinking of cars a lot lately. Need to get an oil change) we can take another lesson for our intrapersonal relations in regard to teshuva. We can apply the concept of our individual critical value to our self-perceptions. G-d created each of us with immeasurable value. It is this self-value we must have in order to begin the process of rectifying wrongs. To quote Rebbe Nachman, "Im atah maamin shyecholim l'kalkel, taamin shyecholim l'taken". If you believe you're able to err, believe you're able to repair. To do teshuva we first have to believe in ourselves.

Lesson Bein adam L'atzmo: Let's take our G-d-given intrinsic value and instill in our psyches with certainty that we have the ability to mend our mistakes.

REFLECTION & INSPIRATION

Bracha Strimber

The Pattern you Create



When I was growing up, we were dirt poor, the kind of poor where two slices of white bread smeared with mustard was a gourmet school lunch. Before recycling became a “thing,”

we never threw out old used clothing. As kids it was our job to cut up the once worn fabric into uniform pieces. My mother a”h would stitch them together into a stronger fabric that would bring comfort and warmth into the lives of poor children. We still have her quilt in the family where I can clearly recognize pieces of her old dresses. In my over 52 years as a teacher, I can say unequivocally that children learn more from what they see us do than what we say. When my grandkids were little, my Avi a”h and I lived in Philly. Because we had carpets, we would take off our shoes when we came home and line them up by the front door. One day our grandchildren visited from Baltimore for their annual “Bubbe and Zayde Camp.” With tacit understanding, they, too, lined up their shoes though they never received such instructions. Your children and grandchildren are watching and learning from you. They emulate what they see and what they hear. Kudos to my six-year-old granddaughter, Chaya Cohn, who hearing about my elderly friends in Philly, decided that she HAD to bake them brownies to cheer them up. The 87-year-old husband in in end stages of Alzheimer’s and his 85-year-old soulmate is a cancer survivor.

Though we never had much food in my childhood and certainly never brownies, one day my mother handed me an 8-quart pot of aromatic meatballs (I can still smell them!). She told me to take them to the large family down the block “because, she said, they need these meatballs more than we do” Kindness doesn’t have to be some grand gesture with recognition attached. I was taught “do good and disappear” and from my father a”h “you don’t walk to do a mitzvah-you run.” He never left the house without his old toolbox in his station wagon that should have been on life support. I can’t tell you how many times my sisters and I would push that old car an entire block until the starter would catch and the old wagon would rattle away. Still, if someone would need a doorknob repaired or their oil burning heater fixed, my Dad would gift them with a much needed act of chesed. How many times would he come home covered in soot and only the inside crook of his arm would hint pink? He would lie down on the living room floor too exhausted but knowing that despite his weariness he had stopped to donate his blood to save a life because the hospital had called him.

REFLECTION & INSPIRATION

Bracha Strimber

We all know how blessed we are to have Rabbi Silber as our Rav. We are consistently inspired by his wisdom and his talent as a world-class speaker. But that's not his greatest strength...did you know? As a widow, my life is more than challenging. Our community is focused on families and pairs. When there is a program, the cost is usually by pair. When food is distributed, it's usually for families with children. But what about the older single person on a fixed income? Have you seriously looked on your street or in your condo building for a mitzvah opportunity? Is there a friend that you have not yet met whom you can befriend? Can you do something and tell no one? Rabbi Silber showed up at my door before Covid and before Yom Tov for the sole purpose of bringing me flowers because it was something my Avi would always do. Do you have any idea how busy our esteemed Rav is?? This act of quiet kindness from him and Aviva brought me to tears. Our Rav's greatest strength isn't what we hear in public- it is his compassion and the ability to see and do for the "other."

The fabric of your life may be in bits and pieces, well-worn from daily struggle. But every day you can make a conscious decision to piece together those scraps. Teach your children and grandchildren to take a bottle of cold water to the men collecting your trash in the heat, and then years later watch the next generation emulate your kindness. Be aware of the stranger among us. Say "Good Shabbos" to everyone on the street. Smile when you do a kindness. "Establish Thou upon us the work of our hands." (Tehillim 90) Strength doesn't come from the pieces. Strength comes from the pattern you create.

YOM KIPPUR YIZKOR

AS WE RECITE YIZKOR FOR OUR LOVED ONES,
LET US REMEMBER THE FOLLOWING:



We have the ability to continue the precious and holy work they can no longer do. Ask yourself what holy endeavor would my loved one have engaged in if they were still here? Take that project or initiative and make it your own. We are the agents and emissaries of our loved ones who are no longer here.



Channel the longing you feel for your loved one and use it to create a sense of longing for God. Ask yourself, "what must I do in order to come close to my Creator?" I no longer want to be distant, I yearn for connection. It is this powerful longing which brings us closer to Him with each and every step of our life journey.



Take the time to express gratitude to those who have come before you. We benefit from the sacrifice and commitment of previous generations. Thank the previous generations of your family and thank the previous generations of Am Yisroel for so many of the blessings we possess are in their merit.



Even if you are privileged and have the members of your immediate family and therefore don't normally recite Yizkor, this year, take a few moments and *daven* for the *neshamos* of those who have fallen victim to COVID19. *Daven* for the great *Rabbonim* and the simple Jews. *Daven* that their *neshamos* should have an *aliyah* and their families a *nechama*. *Daven* that Hashem should provide strength to the families who are mourning alone.

May the neshamos of our loved ones experience an aliyah and elevation, and may we be privileged to be together with all our previous generations in a rebuilt Yerushalayim, speedily in our days.

PRAYER FOR LIVING PARENTS

TO BE RECITED DURING YIZKOR

אָבִי שְׁבַשְׁמִים

בְּשַׁעַת הַיִּזְכוֹר וְשִׁמּוֹת אֱלֹהִים שֶׁהִלְכּוּ לְעוֹלָמָם
וְנִשְׂאוּ אֲנִי אֶת עֵינַי אֵלֶיךָ, אֱלֹהֵי, בְּהוֹדִיָּה מְלֵב
שְׁלָם, עַל שֶׁבְחַסְדְּךָ הַגָּדוֹל הוֹרֵי הַיְקָרִים חַיִּים
פֹּה עָמִי. בְּרַכֶּם בְּבְרִיאוֹת טוֹבָה, וְתֵן לָהֶם כַּח רַב
לְחַיּוֹת אֲתָנוּ עוֹד שְׁנַיִם רַבּוֹת וְטוֹבוֹת, חֲזַקְסָם
וְאַמְצָם לְחַיִּים שֶׁל רְנָחָה בְּרַכֶּם בְּרִפּוּאֵת הַנְּפֹשׁ
וּבְרִפּוּאֵת הַגּוּף בְּרַכֶּם שְׁיִזְכּוּ לִיהֲנוֹת וְלִהְיֵת בְּכֶרֶךְ
מִצְאֲצֵאֵיהֶם שֶׁתֵּהָא פְּרֻנְסָה מִצִּוְיָה וְשִׁתְּהִיָּה
הַבְּרָכָה בְּבֵיתָם. חֲזַק אוֹתִי, שְׂאוּכֵל לְעוֹנֶם בְּכֵל
כַּח וּבְכֵל מְאוֹדִי, וְהִלְוֵנֵנִי וְאַזְכֶּה לְקִים מִצְוֹת
כְּבוֹד הוֹרִים בְּכֵל דְּקְדוּקָה וְהִדּוּרָה. יְהִי רְצוֹן
שְׂאֲבִין אֶת הָאַחֲרִיּוֹת הַגָּדוֹלָה כְּלַפִּיהֶם הַמְּטִלָּת
עָלַי. בְּרַכֵּנִי שְׂאֲרָאָה חוֹבְתֵי כְּלַפִּיהֶם פְּזוֹת וְלֹא
כְּנִמְלֵל, מֵאַהֲבָה וְלֹא מִכְרָח, בְּשִׁמְחָה וּבְנִחָה וְלֹא
בְּקֶצֶר רוּחַ. וְיִהִי רְצוֹן שְׂאֲזוּכָה לְחַיּוֹת מְקוֹר
שְׂמִחָה לְהוֹרֵי וּמְשִׁפְחָתִי. בְּרַךְ אֶת אֲחֵי וְאֲחֵיּוֹתַי
וְכֵל גְּנֵי מְשִׁפְחָתִי, שְׂמִחָם וּבְרַכֶּם בְּבְרִיאוֹת
טוֹבָה וּבְחַיִּים שֶׁל אוֹרָה וְאַהֲבָה. וְתִהְיֶה בִּי
יְרֵאתְךָ וְאַהֲבַתְךָ לְעַבְדְּךָ בְּלִבְּךָ שְׁלָם וְנִזְכָּה כְּלָנוּ
יְחַד, לְחַיִּים טוֹבִים וְאַרְגִּים. אָמֵן

My Father In Heaven

During the time of Yizkor that we remember the souls of those who have departed this world, I raise my eyes up to you, my God, in heartfelt gratitude that in Your great kindness, my dear parents are alive with me. Bless them with good health, give them much strength to live with us for many more years. Give them strength and courage to live a prosperous life. Bless them with bodily and spiritual health. Bless them that they should merit to enjoy and be blessed with descendants. Bless them that their livelihood should come easily to them and that blessing should be found in their home. Strengthen me that I should be able to help them with all my strength and resolve, so that I should merit fulfilling the *mitzvah* of honoring my parents in all of its details and meticulousness. May it be Your will that I understand and appreciate my tremendous responsibility toward them as a privilege and not a burden, as an act of love and not necessity, with happiness and pleasantness and not distress. And may it be Your will that I merit to be a source of happiness to my parents and family. Bless my brothers and sisters and my entire family, and grant them happiness and blessings of good health and lives of spiritual light and love. May I be filled with Your awe and love to worship You wholeheartedly, and may we all merit together, long and fulfilling lives. Amen.

May the neshamos of our loved ones experience an aliyah and elevation, and may we be privileged to be together with all our previous generations in a rebuilt Yerushalayim, speedily in our days.

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