



Slichos and Rosh HaShana zmanim on page 6

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**Reaching the Heavenly Throne**

**Standing Together with Klal Yisroel**

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**Weekday Zmanim**

Zmanim for the week of Sep 17 - 23

Shacharis — 20 min. before Neitz

Mincha & Maariv — 12 min. before Plag  
and 12 min. before Shkia

**NEITZ**

S 6:39 | M 6:40 | T 6:41 | W 6:42  
T 6:43 | F 6:44 | SH 6:45

**SHEMA- Magen Avraham**

S 9:03 | M 9:03 | T 9:03 | W 9:04  
T 9:04 | F 9:05 | SH 9:05

**SHEMA- GRA**

S 9:44 | M 9:44 | T 9:45 | W 9:45  
T 9:45 | F 9:46 | SH 9:46

**TEFILA- GRA**

S 10:46 | M 10:46 | T 10:46 | W 10:46  
T 10:46 | F 10:46 | SH 10:47

**CHATZOS**

S 12:50 | M 12:50 | T 12:49 | W 12:49  
T 12:49 | F 12:48 | SH 12:48

**PLAG**

S 5:44 | M 5:43 | T 5:41 | W 5:40  
T 5:39 | F 5:37 | SH 5:36

**SHKIA**

S 7:02 | M 7:00 | T 6:58 | W 6:57  
T 6:55 | F 6:53 | SH 6:52

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Rabbi Lankry *Dear Kehila,*

## Keeping the Minhagim

Wow!!! It looks like we made it. Entering a new year means that our *tefillot* were answered last year, *Baruch Hashem*. It must be our great efforts of *teshuva*, *tefilla* and *tzedaka* that stood up on our behalf during last year's *Aseret Yemay Teshuva*.

There is a story of Aaron the doctor from Vilna that served as the physician for the royal Polish family. One day he set sail on a journey just before Rosh Hashana when a storm broke out and tore the ship apart. Miraculously he made it to shore but he found himself off the coast of Spain. Since this was over 500 years ago, it was a dangerous time in Spain for an observant Jew. The good Doctor knew that there were some hidden Jews called *Morranos*, and he wanted to find them so that he could spend Rosh Hashana with them. He was left without any possessions since all was lost in the shipwreck. How would he find them if they were in hiding? He went to the market and looked at the people there, but that was futile as they all looked the same. So he began to observe which type of fruit they were buying to give him a clue towards one who was planning on keeping the traditions on Rosh Hashana eve.

A very fancy wagon pulled into the market and a very important man emerged looking for pomegranates only. He followed him and watched his every move all the way to his home. As the wagon pulled into the courtyard of the estate he ran in as the gates were still open. He approached this man and told him "I am a Jew from Vilna and I am stranded and nowhere to be for Rosh Hashana, can you please help me?" The man responded, "I don't know what you're talking about!"

The doctor responded, "if that is true then you know I am a Jew and you will report me, so I am willing to die *al Kidush Hashem*". He started to scream *Shema Yisrael* at the top of his lungs, and the man quickly covered his mouth. "Are you crazy? You will get us all into trouble! Quickly come inside and hide." Dr. Aaron was able to have a proper Rosh Hashana with a *shofar* and a *yom tov seuda*. This was due to the fact that Am Yisrael maintains the *minhagim*, to the smallest details, even at the risk of being caught and possibly killed.

Every relationship may contain grand gifts to prove our commitment; we all purchase a big diamond ring for an engagement. But it's the small details that truly demonstrate a bonding relationship. The Shulchan Aruch teaches us that in *Aseret Yemay Teshuva* one should not eat kosher bread baked by a non-Jew though this is just a *chumra* in *Halacha*. It is, however, these small extras that show at this important time how much we are committed to our relationship with Hashem.

We all feel that we should take upon ourselves a big commitment for next year to express our will in affirming the relationship with Hashem. Perhaps choose something small, something you can truly succeed at. It's the small accomplishments that mean a great deal.

So, dear *Kehilla*, I wish you all a *ketiva v'chtima tova, beracha v'hatzlacha* in everything!



## Thinking Big

by Rabbi Daniel Coren

We're closing in on the 48 hours of Rosh Hashana when, we are taught, each hour determines our fate for the coming 48 plus weeks of the year. We may not be familiar with the exact system of how the year is sealed based on these 48 hours but we can learn one thing for certain from the *Gemara Maseches Rosh Hashana*: the main focus of our davening during this short time period determines the outcome of life and death, the amount of money we will make this year, our health, our friends, enjoyment of our kids and all other major aspects of our lives. Everything is weighed and pronounced during this awesome day. The one unresolved judgement—yet to be decided—is the status of our *mitzvos* verses our sins. We still have 10 days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur to tip the scale favorably. One would think that if this is the time when all major determinations are made, it would be prudent that we spend the day beseeching Hashem for all the blessings mentioned above. That doesn't seem to be the case, however.

In fact, there is a whole dispute if one is even allowed to make private requests on these days, especially when Rosh Hashana comes out on Shabbos as is the case this year. So what's going on here? If someone pleads with Hashem to completely remove the suffering from the Jewish people and the world, are they missing the boat? Are they totally disconnected from the awesomeness of Rosh Hashana?

Rav Shlomo Zalman Auerbach was asked about making private requests on Rosh Hashana, and he responded that they are permitted, but that they should not in any way take over the main theme of the day, which is the acceptance of Hashem as our King.

The above connects to one of the strange customs we have on Rosh Hashana and which seems to have become the central focus of the night of Rosh Hashana (and sometimes for all meals!) and that is the custom of *simanim*, most popularly, the apple dipped in honey.

The *Mishna Berura* explains that while dipping or eating the various different fruits, one should make requests. It is not the apple in honey that makes our year sweet; it's the conscious awakening that this is the day when all major aspects of our lives are determined. It comes to remind us that in the garden of Eden, Adam made a grave mistake with the eating of fruit, especially the apple, which Chazal interpret as referring to the *esrog*. According to some, the *esrog* was the tree of knowledge. Whether it was an *esrog*, an apple or a different fruit, we are supposed to call attention to the reason Hashem created us in the first place-- to receive the ultimate pleasure by being connected to Him in a deep and spiritual way through the Torah and *mitzvos* that he gave us.

On Rosh Hashana, we are prompted to think "big," to focus on the main goal and ponder how we have lived the past year. If we haven't reached our mission, now is the time to totally accept Hashem as our king, not a superficial king but a king that is our father who loves us and has created a master plan specifically for us. As we entreat Hashem, we are realigning our entire spiritual journey and ensuring that whatever we need this year will be granted to us by Him, so that we will be able to reach our true spiritual destination.

The main request that we should have in mind on Rosh Hashana is that we beg Hashem to bring us back home, to His palace. Once we return to His palace, we feel confident that He will grant us everything else that we need to once again be the 'prince' of Israel and appreciate all the blessings He will bestow upon us.

Wednesday Night 8pm – Smichas chaver Rabbi Coren Office  
Shabbos Morning - Vasikin Minyan & 8:00am Minyan

# How Can He Be So Insensitive?



Rabbi YY Jacobson

The Haftarah for the first day of Rosh Hashanah tells the story of Channah, the mother of the prophet Samuel. Channah, the childless wife of Elkanah, came to Shiloh (where the Sanctuary stood before King Solomon built the Holy Temple in Jerusalem) to pray for a child.

*Eli, the High Priest at Shiloh, watched as she prayed profusely before G-d. She spoke with her heart, the prophet relates. Only her lips moved; her voice was not heard. Eli thought her to be a drunkard. He says to her: "How long shall you be drunken! Put away your wine and sober up!"*

*Channah replies: "No, my master, I am a woman whose spirit is in pain. I have drunk neither wine nor any other alcohol. Rather, I have poured out my soul before G-d; do not think of me as inappropriate..."*

The story seems senseless.

The pain of a woman who craves a child and cannot fulfill her dream is profound beyond words. Yet in this story, a woman comes to the sanctuary to plead with G-d for a child, and the High Priest of Israel—the Kohen Gadol, considered the spiritual master of the age—considers her a drunkard, demanding from her to go sober up, and then come back and pray? Could the spiritual leader of Israel at the time not distinguish between a drunkard and a sincere worshipper? How callous, clueless, and insensitive can one be? Just because she is whispering her prayers in silence, and she seems deeply disturbed, does it mean she is inebriated?

## The Drunk Cries and Laughs

One of the most illustrious Rabbis of the 19th century, Rabbi Moshe Sofer, known as the Chasam Sofer, offers this insight.

Eli was not heartless. Rather, he was struck by an enigma. He saw a woman who on one hand seemed broken-hearted, devastated, and grief-stricken. But when he looked again, he saw a person simultaneously projecting serenity, confidence, joy, and inner calmness. How can both emotions coexist in the same person at the same time? They can't unless he or

she is... drunk! That's why she can cry and laugh at the same time.

Channah understands his thinking. And Hannah answered and said: *No, my master, I am a woman of sorrowful spirit, and neither new wine nor old wine have I drunk; rather I poured out my soul before G-d.*

Channah is explaining to Eli who she is. She is broken. She is scarred. She carries a deep pain in her soul. She wants a child, and she can't have one. How then can she be full of vitality and be filled with an inner serenity and majesty? For this, she continues: *"I poured out my soul before G-d."* I have a G-d to speak to, so my brokenness and sadness are tempered by a sense of calmness and grandeur. Channah is both bruised and whole; she is full of anguish but also full of rapture. She feels dejected but also embraced. She is scarred but she is also a whole. Not because she is drunk, but because she has a G-d whom she can speak to openly, intimately, to whom she can—in her words— "pour out her soul."

She says to Eli: I have been talking to G-d. Will he answer my prayers? I hope so. But the very fact that I am able to come and talk to G-d, gives me a measure of peace. The fact that I feel I am not alone, someone is holding my hand, as I tread the rough terrain of this planet, someone is listening to me, someone cares to know how I am feeling—that itself provides me with a sense of calmness.

That's what we learn from Channah. I can pour out my heart and my soul to G-d. I can just talk to G-d without a script, knowing that the universe is not deaf to my plight and my anguish. I do not know what He will do about my conversation, but I can reach out and talk to Him, heart to heart.

Womens Shiur **Tuesday** 9:30am (18 Main)  
Chassidus Shiur **Monday & Thursday** 7:45am (18 Main)  
**Shabbos:** Friday Night – before Barchu (20 Upstairs)  
Morning 9:00 (20 Upstairs)  
After Davening 12:00pm (20 Upstairs)

## UFARATZTA



## GRATITUDE A VESSEL FOR MORE BLESSINGS

According to Chassidus, the words and feelings of gratitude that we express to G-d for the blessings we already have in our lives become the vessels and vehicles for new blessings and abundance to flow into our lives.

In response to someone who complained that they lacked any positive aspects in their life due to their struggles with health and Parnassah, the Rebbe pointed out that from the letter itself one can see, that what really counts, Hashem gave him. The following is the end of the Rebbe's letter:

... I'm not implying that one is supposed to struggle for a living or not enjoy perfect health, G-d forbid. My point is that perhaps the reason for your weak health and your difficulties in earning

a living is your failure to appreciate G-d's blessings to you in a far more basic matter than perfect health and abundant sustenance—the blessing of sons and daughters who follow the ways of Hashem. When one does not recognize the explicit good bestowed on them from Above, particularly when one's lack of recognition is so extreme that it results in statements such as you express in your letter, is it any wonder that more blessings are not forthcoming from Above in other matters?

My hope is that these few lines will suffice to open your eyes to see your situation in its true light. And when you begin to serve G-d with a true and inner joy, surely G-d will increase His blessings for health and sustenance...

--- Chabad.org – Dwell on the positive. Igros Kodesh V12, P170.

Erev Rosh Hashana: The Yom Holedes of the Tzemach Tzedek – 3rd Chabad Rebbe.

## Rules and regulations of esrog – *hadar*

by Rabbi Nachum Scheiner



There are many different factors that can disqualify an *esrog*. We will focus for now on one of the main disqualifications: *Hadar* (beautiful).

Some examples of a lack of *hadar* are: a dried out *esrog*, spotted, and if it has a black dot. It is worth mentioning the famous notion of the Chasam Sofer who asserts that the lack of beauty does not depend on the layman's perception of beauty. Rather, the Torah left it to the *Chachamin* to decide and is dependent on what the Chazal decide is beautiful. Hence, the Chasam Sofer famously writes that if an *esrog* starts to turn brown due to the many people who are handling the *esrog* for the *mitzvah*, it is not a disqualification of *hadar*. On the contrary, the Chasam Sofer asserts, that is a true display of the beauty of the *mitzvah*.

### Source for the disqualification of *hadar*

There is an interesting discussion as to what is the source for the disqualification of a lack of beauty. Rashi, in the beginning of the 3rd perek of *Sukkah*, opines that the source for the requirement to have a beautiful *esrog* is from "v'anveihu," which is the general requirement to beautify *mitzvos*. Tosfos, however, takes issue with Rashi's explanation, and points out that although that is an important requirement, it does not disqualify a *mitzvah*. Hence, if one takes a *talis* which has seen better days, although it is lacking in beauty, one will fulfill the *mitzvah*. Tosfos, therefore points to the Gemara which states that the requirement of *hadar* written in regards to *esrog* is extended to the *lulav*, as well.

Interestingly, there is another Rashi (36b), where he suggests that the requirement of *hadar* is to ensure that it is nice and beautiful for the recital of the brocha. This is intriguing: where else do we find such a requirement to have a beautiful *mitzvah*, just to be able to say a brocha on a beautiful object?

### Is the requirement of *hadar* every day, or only on the first day?

Tosfos and the Rosh assert that the requirement of *hadar* is applicable every day of *Sukkos*. They prove this from the very first Gemara in the 3rd perek of *Sukkah*. The Gemara, there, is discussing a *lulav* which is dried out and states that the reason for it being disqualified all seven days is because it is lacking beauty.

The Rambam, however, maintains that a lack of *hadar* is only a disqualification on the first day; the rest of *Sukkos* it is kosher. The commentators ask on the Rambam from the aforementioned proof that states clearly that *yaveish* (dried out) is *pasul* all the days. The answer they give is that the Rambam has a source for his opinion from a different Gemara that tells the story of Rav Chanina, who would bite into his *esrog* and use it on the other days of *Sukkos*, even though it is a lack in *hadar*. This proves that the Gemara retracted what was stated earlier, and deems such an *esrog* kosher on the other days.

### Halachically Speaking

What is the halachah? The Rama (649:5) follows the opinion of Tosfos and the Rosh, and asserts that a lack of *hadar* is

a disqualification the entire *Sukkos*. On the other hand, in an earlier Siman (646:2), there is a discussion about *hadassim* with red berries, which is also a disqualification of *hadar*, and yet the Shulchan Aruch states that it is only a concern on the first day, which would seem to prove that the disqualification of *hadar* only applies on the first day.

The *Biur Halacha* at the end of that *Siman* explains that this is only the opinion of the *Orchos Chaim*, but the *Beis Yosef* himself, in his additions to the *Beis Yosef*, known as *Bedek Haba'is*, affirms that it is a disqualification for all 7 days. Hence, the *Mishna Berura* points out that it will indeed be disqualification for all 7 days.

### In conclusion

There is a difference of opinion as to if the requirement of *hadar* is applicable every day of *Sukkos* or if it only applies on the first day. Halachically speaking, it does apply every day of *Sukkos*.

### Rabbi Nachum Scheiner

מוהל מומחה

CELL: 845-499-6354



## Rabbi Scheiner

KOLLEL BOKER | 7:00-8:00am

- Chavrusa learning - Gemara

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- Friday - Shuirim Beinyonei Dyoma and relevant topics

NIGHT KOLLEL | 8:15-9:45pm

- Chavrusa learning - Halacha

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- Daf Yomi | 8:45-9:45pm

- Mishna Yomis | 8:45-9:00pm

- ZERA SHIMSHON SHIUR | 8:15-9:00pm Thursday Nights

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- Evening Shuirim in Halacha and Hashkafa by prominent Morei Horah



**זמני הסליחות עד ערב ראש השנה**  
**Monday Sep 11 - Thursday Sep 14**  
 20 Minutes before each Shachris

4:30 am 18 Main, Sefardi Minyan  
 5:45 am 20↑ | 5:55 כותיקן Tent א | 6:10 Tent ג  
 6:25 Tent ד | 6:40 Tent א | 6:55 Tent א | 7:10 אהל ראובן  
 7:25 אהל שושנה | 7:30 18 Main, Sefardi Minyan  
 7:40 אהל ראובן | 7:55 אהל שושנה | 8:10 אהל ראובן  
 8:25 אהל שושנה | 8:40 אהל ראובן | 8:55 אהל שושנה  
 9:10 אהל ראובן | 9:25 אהל שושנה | 9:40 אהל ראובן  
 9:55 אהל שושנה | 10:10 אהל ראובן | 10:25 אהל שושנה  
 10:40 אהל ראובן | 10:55 אהל שושנה

*Shachris Minyanim regular times & locations*

**Evenings | Tent א**

10:00 pm | 11:00 pm | 12:00 am  
 1:00 am | 1:30 am

**ערב ראש השנה**

**Thursday Night, Sep 14th**

*Selichos:*

10:00 Tent ב | 11:00 Tent א | 12:00 Tent ב | 1:00 Tent א

*Selected Selichos:*

10:00 20↑ | 11:00 20↑ | 12:00 20↑ | 1:00 20↑

**Friday, Sep 15th**

**עלות: 5:12, חצות: 12:51**

4:45 Sefardi Minyan 18 Main | 5:00 Vasikin 20↑  
 5:15 Select Tent א | 5:20 Tent ג | 5:35 Tent ד | 6:00 Tent ב  
 6:15 אהל שושנה | 6:30 אהל ראובן | 6:45 New tent | 7:00 20↑  
 7:15 20 Porch | 7:30 אהל שושנה | 7:30 Sefardi 18 Main  
 7:45 אהל ראובן | 8:00 New tent | 8:15 20↑  
 8:30 20 Porch | 8:45 אהל שושנה | 9:00 אהל ראובן  
 9:15 New tent | 9:30, 20↑ | 9:45 20 Porch | 10:00 אהל שושנה  
 10:15 אהל ראובן | 10:30 New tent

*Selected Selichos | Tent ב left side*

6:00am | 7:00 | 8:00 | 9:00

**ערב ראש השנה**

**Early Mincha**

18 Main Beis Medrash

1:22pm | 1:45 | 2:00 | 2:15 | 2:30 | 2:45 | 3:00  
 3:15 | 3:30 | 3:45 | 4:00 | 4:15 | 4:30 | 4:45

**מוצאי ראש השנה**

**Late Maariv**

18 Main Beis Medrash

8:30pm | 8:45 | 9:00 | 9:15 | 9:30 | 9:45 | 10:00  
 10:15 | 10:30 | 10:45

**מנחה ומעריב צום גדליה ובימי עשרת ימי תשובה**

**Monday - Thursday**

1:22 18 Main | 1:30 מנחה גדולה Tent ב | 1:45 Tent א  
 2:00 18 Main | 2:15 Tent א | 2:30 18 Main | 2:45 Tent א  
 3:00 18 Main | 3:15 Tent א | 3:30 18 Main | 3:45 Tent א  
 4:00 18 Main | 4:15 Tent א | 4:30 18 Main | 4:45 Tent א  
 5:00 18 Main | 5:10 Tent א | 5:15 Tent ב | 5:25 plag Tent א  
 5:30 Tent ג | 5:45 18 Main | 6:00 Tent ב | 6:15 Tent א  
 6:30 18 Main | 6:40 Tent א | 6:50 18 Main

**Mincha Followed by Maariv**

**Plag: 5:44-5:40**

**Shkiya: 7:00-6:55**

5:25 | 15 min before plag | Tent א  
 6:45 | 15 min before Shkiya | Tent ב  
 6:50 | 10 min before Shkiya | 18 Main  
 7:00 | at Shkiya | Tent ג  
 7:05 | 5 min after Shkiya | Tent ד  
 7:10 | 10 min after Shkiya | Tent ב  
 7:18 | 18 min after Shkiya | Tent א  
 7:25 | 25 min after Shkiya | 18 Main  
 7:30 | 30 min after Shkiya | Tent ג  
 7:38 | 38 min after Shkiya | Tent ד  
 7:45 | 45 min after Shkiya | Tent ב

**Tzom Gedalya**

Sefardi Minyan 6:30pm with Birchah Kohanim

*Zmanim of Ohr Chaim Chabad*

**Schedule for Rosh Hashana**

**Erev R"H, 29 Elul 5783**

6:58pm Mincha/Kabbalos Yom Tov

**Tishrei 1 5784**

10:00 am Shacharis  
12:15 pm Tekias Shofar  
6:55pm Mincha  
7:45pm Maariv

**Tishrei 2**

10:00 am Shacharis  
12:15 pm Tekias Shofar  
6:30 pm Mincha followed by Tashlich  
Shkia is 7:02pm  
7:43 pm Maariv

**Schedule for Yom Kippur**

**Erev Y"K 5784**

Candle Lighting/Fast Begins 6:32pm  
Kol Nidre 6:40 pm (Rabbi Jacobson will speak after)

**Yom Kippur**

10:00 am Shachris  
12:30 pm Yizkor (Rabbi Jacobson will speak prior)  
**Musaf & Avoda** (Rabbi Jacobson will give insights into Davening)  
5:00 pm **Mincha** (Rabbi Jacobson will speak after Mincha)  
6:30pm **Neilah**  
7:30pm **Maariv** (Fast Ends)  
Followed by Kiddush L'vanah and Havdalah





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**ראש השנה תשפ"ד**  
**SCHEDULE**



**Erev Rosh Hashana / Friday**

כ"ט אלול / SEP 15

SLICHOS / EARLY MINCHA SEE SEPARATE FLYER'S

Candle Lighting 6:47 pm  
Mincha 6:55 PM  
CHABAD 6:58 PM <sup>20 UPSTAIRS</sup>  
Shkia 7:05 PM  
Kabolos Shabbos & Maariv Follows Mincha

הרחמן  
הוא יחדש עלינו  
שנה טובה ומתוקה

**1st Day Rosh Hashana / SHABBOS**

א' תשרי / SEP 16


Shachris Vasikin (neitz 6:38) 5:40 AM <sup>TENT ב</sup>  
Shachris Brochas 8:45 Hudu 9:00 AM <sup>TENT א</sup>  
Shachris 10:00 AM <sup>20 UPSTAIRS</sup>  
Early Mincha (Mincha Gedola) 1:18 PM  
Mincha 6:30 PM <sup>TENT א</sup>  
Mincha 6:55 PM <sup>20 UPSTAIRS</sup>  
Shkia 7:04 PM  
Maariv 7:49  
Candle Lighting (not before) 7:54 PM

**2nd Day Rosh Hashana / SUNDAY**

ב' תשרי / SEP 17

Shachris Vasikin (Neitz 6:38) 5:40 AM  
SHOFER (not before) 8:00 AM  
Shachris 9:00 AM <sup>TENT א</sup>  
SHOFER (not before) 11:20 AM  
Shachris 10:00 AM <sup>20 א</sup>  
SHOFER 12:15PM <sup>20 א</sup>  
Mincha 5:30 PM  
Tashlich  
SHOFER FOR WOMEN 5:15 PM <sup>18 MAIN</sup>  
Mincha 6:30PM <sup>TENT א</sup>  
Mincha 6:30PM <sup>20 א</sup>  
Shkia 7:02 PM  
Maariv 7:52 PM

LATE MAARIV SEE SEPARATE FLYER



**PRAYER IS NOT  
A TRANSACTION;  
IT IS A RELATIONSHIP.**

-RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS

STORIES TO inspire



**בית מדרש אור חיים**  
BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM  
COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTER  
18 FORSHAY ROAD, MONSIEY, NEW YORK 10952  
UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF RABBI AARON LANKREY

**זמנים לתקיעת שופר**  
Shofer will be Blown

8:00am not before	Tent ב
11:20 not before	Tent א
12:15pm not before	20 Upstairs
5:15 Before Mincha	18 Main

*Wishing the Kehilla a*

שנה טובה ומתוקה!  
אשר!



## There is a Way to Blow Shofar on Shabbos Kodesh!

When Rosh Hashanah falls out on Shabbos Kodesh, technically there is still a *Mitzvah* of *Shofar*, however Chazal said not to perform this *Mitzvah*. Why did Chazal do so; did they not fear the *Yom Hadin*, and recognize that Klal Yisroel could very much use the *Zechus* that comes along with the *Mitzvah* of *Shofar*?

The Gemara in *Menochos* 110a says that anyone who toils in the *Parshah* of *Korbonos*, is as if he brought those *Korbonos*. It says in the *Sefer* מעבר יבק from a *Midrash*, that Eliyahu Hanavi stands in the Bais Hamikdash every day and is *Makriv* two *Temidim*. Thus, even nowadays when we don't have a Bais Hamikdash, *Korbonos* are still being brought. When we were *Zoche* to have a Bais Hamikdash, the *Temidim* came from Klal Yisroel, as these *Korbonos* were purchased with the money from the *Terumas Halihska*, which came from the *Tzibur* – all of Klal Yisroel had a share in it. However, now that we are not *Zoche* to a Bais Hamikdash, and the *Temidim* are not being brought with the money from the *Tzibur*, how can we connect ourselves to those *Korbonos*?

If one says the words of the *Korbonos*, it shows he wants to be connected to the *Korbonos*, and that makes him part of the *Korbonos* brought by Eliyahu. If one says it, then it is like Eliyahu becomes like his *Shliach*, and becomes

partners with Eliyahu. So, although Eliyahu is doing the main part, actually bringing the *Korbonos*, being that he becomes partners with Eliyahu, they both have an equal share, and thus he has an integral part in the *Temidim*.

The same applies to the blowing of the *Shofar*, for the *Shofar* was always blown in the Mikdash, even on Shabbos. Thus, even now, Eliyahu is blowing the *Shofar* according to the *Din* in the Bais Hamikdash, even though it is Shabbos. Thus, by us saying words, showing that we want to have a part in it, we connect ourselves to Eliyahu, and we in fact have a part in it, and are *Mekayeim* the *Mitzvah* of *Shofar* on Shabbos Kodesh. (קהלת יעקב)

If we treat Shabbos properly, *Shabbos Kodesh* comes and speaks on our behalf. It will plead for us to be *Zoche* in *Din*, and it will work. While in a year that we actually blow *Shofar*, we as human beings, are limited in what we can achieve spiritually, to be completely *L'shem Shomayim*. However, now that we are not allowed to blow the *Shofar* on Rosh Hashanah that falls out on Shabbos, and one really wants to, and says words *Mesaken* by Chazal about the blowing, then he is connected to the blowing of Eliyahu. His *Shofar* blowing is certainly on an exalted level, and we can have a *Zechus* in that blowing. Our not blowing the *Shofar*, can actually bring us the greatest *Zechus* of blowing the *Shofar*. We must take this to heart, and truly seek to connect ourselves to the blowing of the *Shofar*, and in this *Zechus*, our *Tefilos* should reach all the way to the *Kisai Hakovod*, and should be *Zoche* to a *Ksiva V'chasima Tovah*.

## Rosh Hashanah

Judaism isn't only a Religion, It's a Relationship!

It's a question that has been asked many times before, with many different answers given. Yom Kippur is a *Yomtov* that is taken very seriously. We fast and beg Hashem for forgiveness - but something is out of order here - Yom Kippur comes after the day of judgment? - After Rosh Hashanah?! Shouldn't the order be reversed, with Yom Kippur coming before Rosh Hashanah? Wouldn't it make more sense to cleanse ourselves - before we go into judgment in front of the King of Kings?

Rabbi Sneh answers this question with a parable. There was once a common man who threw a stone at the king when the King visited his hometown. The king's advisors were aghast. They recommended the man be put to death. Instead the king asked for the man to be brought to his castle. There he gave him beautiful new clothes and fed him fine foods. After a few days of being in the royal court, he saw how well respected the king was and how magnanimous he was to everyone in his kingdom.

RABBI BEN ZION SNEH



The man then fully regretted his previous behaviors, once he saw how great the king really was. So too with us- we cannot possibly stand before our King of Kings without realizing how great He really is. Therefore on Rosh Hashanah we anoint Hashem as our King, praising Him and getting close to Him by celebrating a royal *Yomtov* first- with the best food, drink and fine clothing. Only then can we truly ask for forgiveness on Yom Kippur and mean it deep inside.

May Hashem grant complete forgiveness to the entire Jewish people in this year of tragedy, pain and confusion. And may we merit to see Hashem's greatness in a revealed and open way, feeling the love He has for every single one of us.

A *Kesiva Ve Chasima Tovah* and a *Gut Gebentched* year to all!

Written by R' Avrohom Hillel Reich based on a lesson and story by Harav Ben Tziyon Sneh Shlita



# בית מדרש אור חיים

BAIS MEDRASH OHR CHAIM

*Siyum Masechta Jaanis. A true kiddush Hashem!  
Men and ladies enjoyed the nachas and beautiful event.*



*Rabbi Berger speaking at the Night Kollel*



*Rabbi Scheiner giving a shiur at the Night kollel*



# Standing Together

Rabbi Shimshon Pincus, zt"l

It is a special zechus for a Jew to be part of the klal, to be part of the community of a shul or yeshiva, kollel, or an ongoing shiur. This has the aspect of kol ish, "every Jewish person," standing together. We will focus here on learning frameworks. The very fact that a person is part of such a framework, that he adjusts his life to fit into it, provides him great benefit, even if he feels at times that it constricts him and holds him back from his personal growth. He will gain more from being part of the tzibbur than he would from doing his learning and avodah on his own. One of the tremendous pluses of being part of a greater community such as this is the support that surrounds a person for the positive things he is doing. This support could be compared to crutches. This advantage alone justifies being part of a tzibbur. We don't always need crutches, but when we do need them, we can't make it without them.

Time after time, I have seen bachurim, young men or baale batim who wanted to do their avodah alone, without a community framework. They indeed had some good periods of a half a year or a year. But in the end, the world is a whirlwind and blows us off our path. People go through hard times and experience financial, medical, or family crises.

Let's say a person learns in a kollel, or has a chavrusa, or goes to a daf yomi shiur. He knows that despite all the crises and things he is going through, he must somehow manage to get to his framework, and the community pulls him along. His head is spinning, but he survives, and in the end, he gets past the crisis and continues moving forward and growing. But those who thought they were smart enough to do it on their own, as soon as a crisis came along, they got knocked over and couldn't get back on their feet, because there was no one there to help them get up.

The world is like a whirlwind. A person finds himself in all sorts of unexpected situations. When he has a community around him, when he has a chavrusa, a shiur, a kollel, sederim, notes and chiddushim he is writing down, it's like he's on a train. Even when his head is not working, the train keeps on going and he goes along with it. But if he gets off the train and starts to run on his own, he might outrun the train for a while, but after a few miles he is liable to fall into a pit or get stuck in a ditch, and there will be no one there to pull him out. When that happens, he will just stay there. Shlomo Hamelech taught us: – If the spirit of the ruler [i.e., the Yetzer Hara] comes upon you, do not leave your place.

My rabbi and teacher R. Leib Malin zt"l would always say: "Be a yachid within the tzibbur," be an individual within the community. A person who wishes to grow spiritually should do it within the framework of the tzibbur. Between the regular learning sessions of the yeshiva, review what you learned. At night, dedicate a half hour to learn Halachah or go over dapim of Gemara. But the main thing is, "Do not leave your place." Don't break the framework that was set up for you, because this framework is critical for your success. You don't know what will be tomorrow.

It's true that a person whose whole life is only what his learning framework dictates cannot grow spiritually, because the framework was set for the needs of the tzibbur, and the tzibbur is composed of people on various levels. Therefore, someone who aspires to be special must do avodah on his own, as well.

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הערות על  
תפילת ראש השנה  
הגאון הרב חיים קנייבסקי זצ"ל

מסוד חכמים ונבונים ומלמד דעת מבינים אפתחה פי בתפלה ובתחנונים. צ"ב מהו סוד חכמים ונבונים. וי"ל דבע"ז ב' פליגי ר"א אומר שואל צרכיו ואח"כ יתפלל ר' יהושע אומר יתפלל ואח"כ שואל צרכיו וחכ"א שואל צרכיו בשו"ת או בבקשות הקודמות ומסיק שכן הלכה כחכמים, וזהו מסוד חכמים ונבונים שקבעו שתחלה יתפלל שבח ואח"כ יבקש בקשותיו אפתחה פי בתחלה בתפלה ואח"כ בתחנונים.

כבקרת רועה עדרו מעביר צאנו תחת שבטו. פי' כבעה"ב שמעביר מעשר בהמה תחת שבטו כמש"כ מעביר צאנו תחת שבטו וכמ"ש בר"ה י"ז א' בר"ה כל באי עולם עוברין לפניו כבני מרון כבני אימרנא פירש"י של מעשר בהמה והעשירי סוקרו בשבט לסימן כך כל מי שנגזר עליו אפשר להכיר וכמ"ש בהוריות י"ב א' ואף שהאדם שנגזר עליו אין יודע כלום כמו שהכבש אין יודע שסקרו עליו וכ"כ בשם האריז"ל שאפשר להכיר מי שנגזר עליו.

ותשובה ותפלה וצדקה מעבירין את רוע הגזרה. בר"ה ט"ז ב' חשיב ד' דברים ומוסיף שם שינוי השם והכא לא חשיב לי' משום שזה לא תלוי בעצמו אלא באחרים.

היום הרת עולם. פי' כמו בהריון וכמו ששם יכול הקב"ה להפך מזכר לנקבה כמו שהי' בדינה (עי' ברכות ס' א') כן בכל הגזרות שנגזר בר"ה אפשר להפך, וכמ"ש בר"ה י"ז ב' הרי שהיו ישראל צדיקים גמורים כו' הרי שהגזרה מתקיימת אלא שנהפכת ע"ש.

כתב מהרי"ל (מובא בד"מ או"ח ס"ס תקפ"ב ושו"ע שם) בשם הירושלמי מאן דדמיך בריש שתא דמיך מזלי' וכן מובא בדרשות ר"י בן שועיב דרשה לר"ה בשם הירושלמי (ולפנינו חסר זה בירושלמי). והנה תיבת דמיך הוא תרגום שכיבה עי' ב"ר פע"ב סי' ג' לכן ישכב עמך הלילה עמך הוא דמיך עמי לית הוא דמיך אלא שחז"ל השתמשו בלשון מושאל ע"ז גם על שינה ומיתה כידוע, ומדקאמר כאן מאן דדמיך ולא אמר מאן דניים י"ל דדוקא בשוכב לישן יש קפידיא אבל המתנמנם בישיבה וכיו"ב אין קפידיא בזה. וכן מש"כ הרמ"א יושב בטל כישן דמי דוקא יושב דהיינו בקביעות.

(טעמא דקרא)

# The Uniqueness of Rosh HaShana's Judgment

-Rabbi Yissachar Frand-



When we approach the judgment of the New Year, there is no status quo. We do not approach the Almighty with a presumption of what has been (*chazaka d'm'ikara*). We do not walk into Judgment on Rosh HaShana with the idea "I have been alive until now, I will remain alive this coming year; I have been healthy and wealthy until now, so it will all continue indefinitely during the coming year". That is not a correct attitude to have on Rosh Hashana. When Rosh HaShana's judgment for the New Year arrives, there is nothing that is a given.

Rav Pam once commented on the Penitential prayer that we say in *selichos* prior to and during the *Yomim Noraim* (Days of Awe), "We come before You, knocking on Your door like paupers and beggars" The simple interpretation is that we are paupers because we do not have sufficient good deeds to our credit. However, Rav Pam says that it is to be interpreted literally — when we appear before the Almighty on Rosh HaShana we are penniless. What does it mean we are penniless? We have money in the bank, we have a portfolio, we have a house, and we have assets! What does it mean, "We're paupers and beggars"?

Rav Pam explains that it means that nothing is a given. We

start out afresh. There aren't any "*chazakos*". "You had success until now, but today, there is a fresh Judgment."

The reason we do not tremble before *Yom HaDin* is because it is very hard for us to actually believe this idea. It is very difficult for us to internalize this concept, but in fact, the status quo is not guaranteed.

Life can change in a minute. People are swept away by natural tragedies, by sudden changes of fortune, by unexpected diagnoses, and by unforeseen political changes. These sudden changes in one's health or fortune or personal status are the most shocking things that can happen to a person. Yesterday, everything was wonderful. Overnight, things can change in such a way that a person is no longer able to function. That is the Day of Judgment of Rosh Hashana. There are no presumptions of status quo. We cannot be lulled into this false sense of security that we have been healthy, wealthy, and wise until now, presumably it will continue like that as well.

On Rosh Hashana, all bets are off. We knock on Your doors like paupers and penniless people do. This is the reality. This is why the *Din* of Rosh Hashana is so awesome.



## IN COURT Rabbi Efreim Goldberg

"Do you solemnly swear or affirm that you will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, so help you G-d?"

"I do."

Though there wasn't formal training for this in Rabbinical school, over my career I have appeared in court on behalf of others at least a few dozen times. Often it is to testify on a divorce matter, but I have also served as a character witness on drug issues, financial disputes, and even a horrible false accusation.

Remarkably, more often than not, the occasions that I have been asked to come to court have fallen during this time of the year. As I think back on those court appearances, it strikes me that there are many comparisons we can draw to the great court dates we will all face just a short time from now on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, and the lessons we can learn:

**Fate** – The tension, anxiety and uncertainty in a courtroom are palpable; there is much we can learn from observing the temperament, behavior and disposition of those appearing before a human judge. As we stand before the Almighty, how can we truly feel and acknowledge that our fate is in His hands?

**Decorum** – The decorum in a courtroom is impeccable. How is the decorum in G-d's courtroom? Do we create an atmosphere that is equally intolerant of distractions and frivolous conversation? Do our dress and behavior reflect the seriousness and majesty of the forum in which we stand and the reason we are there?

**Preparation** – No lawyer or client walks into a courtroom without having prepared. The strategy is devised, the witnesses are prepped, and opening and closing arguments are scripted and rehearsed. How much preparation do we do? Do we dedicate a few moments to clear our minds and focus our thoughts before making our presentation before the Judge of Judges?

**Swearing in** – I find it noteworthy that before a witness testifies, the court asks him or her to swear or affirm in G-d's name that he or she will tell the truth. Implicitly, the statement acknowledges G-d's existence and the consequences of dishonoring His name by lacking fidelity to the truth. Do we always say what we mean and mean what we say? Are we honest, truthful and precise when reporting experiences to others? Does the fear of G-d lead us to be honest with G-d — and ourselves?

**Record** – Every courtroom has either a stenographer sitting and typing each word that is uttered, or a recording device that captures everything that is said. The *mishna* in *Avos* encourages us to always remember Who is above us and therefore to recognize that an eye is always watching, an ear is always listening, *v'chol ma'asecha b'sefer nichtavimv* – and all of our deeds are recorded forever. Do we live with a cognizance and consciousness that what we say and do matters and that they enter the record of our lives, even when nobody is around to see it?

**Contempt of Court** – Part of the proceedings I recently observed included an accusation that one party had been in contempt of court for not following a court order. The judge turned to the accused party and said, "Do you understand that when I issue a ruling, if the other party can supply evidence that you knowingly and willingly disobeyed me, I will find you in contempt of my court and there will be great consequences." Do we honor and obey the rulings of the Judge of Judges? Do we recognize that our choices have consequences and we are accountable for what we do? Are we in contempt of G-d's court?

The comparisons could go on, but it is evident what I am trying to communicate at this solemn season of the Jewish year. Sitting in a courtroom in this time of the year, I have found, among the best sources of inspiration and motivation to prepare for the Days of Awe so that they are, indeed, awesome days of prayer, introspection, reflection, and growth.



# Rosh Hashana:

## Reaching the Heavenly Throne, One Step at a Time

- Rabbi Eli Mansour

In the famous final Mishna of *Masechet Yoma*, Rabbi Akiva presents two analogies for the purification achieved through the process of Teshuva. First, he cites the verse in the Book of *Yehezkel* (36:25) in which G-d proclaims, "I shall sprinkle upon you purifying waters, and you shall be pure." Here, the purification of Teshuva is compared to the purifying Para Aduma waters, which are sprinkled on a person or object that had come in contact with a human corpse, in order to purify it. Then, Rabbi Akiba references a verse from the Book of *Yirmiyahu* (17:13), "*Mikveh Yisrael Hashem*" – "G-d is Israel's Mikveh'." In this verse, Teshuva is likened to immersion in a Mikveh.

Rav Yishak Elhanan Spektor of Kovno (1817-1896) explained that these two analogies represent two vastly different models of repentance. A *Mikveh* purifies a person through the immersion of his or her entire body in the water. If even one strand of hair extends outside the water, the immersion is invalid. Immersion in a Mikveh, then, represents what we might call "180-degree Teshuva," where a person makes a complete about-face, swiftly transforming from a sinner to a righteous *Tzaddik*, "cleansing" himself or herself entirely, like one who immerses in the *Mikveh* waters.

The *Para Aduma* waters, by contrast, reach only a very small portion of the person's body. The person becomes pure by virtue of just part of his body receiving the purifying waters. This model, Rav Spektor explained, represents what we might call "four-degree Teshuva," repentance by taking small steps forward. Only a small portion of a person's conduct is improved – just like a small portion of a person's body comes in contact with the *Para Aduma* waters – but this suffices to bring a degree of purity.

I am familiar with a number of people who succeeded in following the Mikveh model of Teshuva, in completing transforming themselves in a very short period of time, entirely changing their behavior. But for the vast majority

of us, the more practical model of Teshuva is that of the sprinkling of the Para Aduma waters. Rarely does one succeed in making long-lasting changes in his or her behavior through a sudden overhaul. Permanent change occurs through small steps, making one simple change at a time. For most of us, committing ourselves to never again speak *lashon ha'ra* is not practical. What we can do, however, is commit to eliminate *lashon ha'ra* from our conversations at the Shabbat table. For most of us, it is not practical to commit to become proficient in the Talmud during the coming year. But we all can make a commitment to add a period of time each day, or least each week, for advanced Torah learning. This is "small-step Teshuva," and for the vast majority of us, this is the way it should be done.

The Talmud teaches that Teshuva reaches the *Kiseh Ha'kabod* (heavenly throne). Rav Shimshon of Ostropoli (d. 1648) noted that if we write the letters of "*Kiseh Ha'kabod*" incrementally, starting with the letter Kaf, followed by Kaf-Samech, then Kaf-Samech-Alef, then Kaf-Samech-Alef-Heh, and so on, each time adding the next letter, all the letters combine for a total Gematria of 713 – the Gematria of the word "Teshuva."

After making this observation, Rav Shimshon was asked why the phrase "Kiseh Ha'kabod" needs to be associated with the word "Teshuva" in such a convoluted way, by adding one letter at a time. He explained that this is precisely how Teshuva reaches the heavenly throne – incrementally, by taking one small step followed by another small step. If the notion of Teshuva seems frightening or intimidating, it is only because we think Teshuva means "immersing," making a complete transformation all at once. But there is also another model of Teshuva – making one small improvement at a time, which is something each and every one of us, without exception, is fully capable of. Let us all choose one small step we can take to improve as we begin the new year, and this small step will then bring us closer to the heavenly throne, rendering us worthy of a happy, healthy year, Amen.

## ROSH HASHANA STORY Rabbi Avi Geller

"When the cat's away, the mice will play." When the king was on a distant journey, Robert -- the servant who always cleaned the king's bedroom -- decided to try out the king's bed, the most comfortable bed in the kingdom. "I wonder what it would feel like to take a little nap there?" he thought. So for the entire afternoon he slept soundly in the royal bed.

John, who was in charge of the king's stable, wondered how it would feel to mount the king's stallion. At that, he was riding all over the king's forest.

William, in charge of the king's crown, constantly kept the diamonds and rubies shining. "I would like to be king for a day," thought William as he seated himself on the royal throne wearing the shiny crown.

Suddenly the palace was in an uproar! The king had returned unexpectedly! One servant was sound asleep in the king's bed,

another was riding the royal stallion, and a third was wearing the king's crown and sitting on the throne. "Off with their heads!!" the king cried.

This story relates to our task as we prepare for the coming Rosh Hashana.

We think of ourselves as the decision makers and catalysts of our lives. We imagine ourselves in the driver's seat and wearing the crown. Before Rosh Hashana we must contemplate the fact that the "King" will soon appear in our little world, in all His glory. So we must quickly remake the bed, return the horse to its proper place, and take off the crown before it is too late. Recognize the true Ruler of the universe and humble ourselves before Him. And let us proceed to blow the shofar -- the coronation of the King of Kings.

(Heard from Rabbi Yaakov Mendelson)

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# Bound Behind the Bank

This true story happened to me on the first day of Elul, September 1, 1989. I was driving through a seedy section of downtown Elizabeth, New Jersey, when I spotted a branch of my bank. I parked in a deserted parking lot behind the building, walked to the front entrance, and then remembered that I had left my Kollel check in my car. I trotted back, unlocked the car door, and leaned inside and finally found the envelope with my precious monthly stipend. I straightened up and turned around. An over-sized hand was pushed in front of my neck.

Reeking of alcohol, three men had formed a tight semicircle around me. The man on my left was clutching a whiskey bottle like a hammer. His dark, glassy eyes revealed a mean, desperate gaze. The scrawny guy on my right was about my size—he looked scared and hungry. But the one in the middle was huge. He loomed above me.

“Got some?” the big guy asked. My bulging eyes stared down at the maze of lines in his palm and slowly read their way up his outstretched arm. A skull with crossed bones and a variety of other tattoos adorned his long, bare arm. At the top, the ragged edges of a torn sleeve accentuated his broad shoulder. I nervously tilted my head back and lifted my eyes over his protruding chin. A deep scar had formed a trench from his chin to just below his left eye.

“Give us some money,” said the guy with the empty bottle. “We’re real hungry.”

I closed my eyes. Why is this happening to me! All of the Chassidic dictums about life were flying through my mind. Everything happens for a reason. All is for the good. Only fear God. They made sense in yeshiva where I had been learning for the past year. But now?

I opened my eyes and let go of the air stuck in my thought. Today is the first day of Elul, the last month of the Jewish year when Rabbi Shneur Zalman, the first Chabad rebbe, taught that “the King—that is God—is in the field.”

Oh, God, please be with me now. I have a wife and a three-month-old baby.

Everything happens for a reason, I repeated to myself. “Any of you Jewish?” I knew it was highly unlikely, nevertheless, a Lubavitcher has to ask.

“Yeah, I’m Jewish,” the big guy said.

“You’re Jewish?” I said, in disbelief. “Do you have a Jewish name?”

“Shmuel Yankel ben Moshe,” he said with pride.

“Wow. Did you have a bar mitzvah?”

“Yuh. Boruch atah... the big guy, or should I say, Shmuel Yankel, began singing the Haftorah blessings.

“Hey, why are you asking me for a few dollars?” I asked.

“You can ask God for millions. It’s just before Rosh Hashanah, and God has left His palace and is happy to take our requests. He’s here in the streets with you and me, and we can ask Him for anything.”

As I spoke, I reached for a bag on the car seat.

“Do you know what tefillin are? Let’s put them, I’m sure God will hear you.”

The sleeve was torn off his shirt. I slid the tefillin over his bare arm, past the chorus line of tattoos, and—what’s this? I had reached a patch of little holes. Oh, my God, those must be needle tracks.

I slipped my yarmulke from beneath my hat and he put it on his head.

“Now, repeat after me. Boruch atah....” We said each word of the blessing, and then I tightened the knot around his upper arm, and wrapped the tefillin strap around his arm, trying my best to cover some of the tattoo figures with the leather tefillin straps. As I wound the leather strap around his forearm, I explained that the hand tefillin is bound around the upper arm, next to the heart, to show that our actions must be heartfelt and bound to God.

I could not reach the top of his head. “Shmuel Yankel, please lower your head.” He was more than 6 and a half feet tall. I put the other box of tefillin on his head.

The guy with the bottle had been pacing back and forth. “Let’s do it already,” Shark finally snapped.

“You just wait,” Shmuel Yankel whacked his right arm into his partner’s chest. “Can’t you see I’m prayin’!”

Shark backed off like a guppy. He threw down the bottle and kicked it into the weeds.

Shmuel Yankel said the Shema with me. “God is right here with you, Shmuel Yankel,” I said, with a choked voice.

“Ask Him whatever your heart desires.”

A huge single tear rolled down from his eye into the deep scar under his eye. I watched the large tear slowly roll down along the groove. (More than 30 years I can still see that tear slowly rolling down the scar and around the bend on his cheek.)

“I used to go to synagogue all the time,” Shmuel Yankel said. “I liked going. But after my bar mitzvah, my parents got divorced and we stopped going.”

*Continued on pg. 16 >>>*



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-Continued from pg. 14-

During this entire parking lot ceremony, the long-haired guy stood quietly, motionless. He looked mesmerized.

"What's your name?" I asked.

"Mike," he said with a slurred French accent. "My friends call me Mike. But my real name is Michel."

"Michel, are you Jewish?" I knew that it was highly unlikely, but he had that longing look in his eyes.

"No, I'm Catholic," he said. "I don't really practice it anymore."

"It's okay whatever you are. God created everybody, and made everyone unique and with his own unique purpose in life."

"My mother," Michel said, hesitatingly, "my mother told me she was born Jewish. The Nazis killed her parents, and she joined the French resistance. My father was also in the Resistance. After the war, they married and she became Catholic."

"Michel, you are Jewish!" I exclaimed. "If your mother was born Jewish, then you're Jewish. Nothing can take that away. Once a Jew, always a Jew. It's ingrained in the soul. Put these on and we'll celebrate your bar mitzvah."

I was more nervous than Michel. Placing my yarmulke on his head, I said, "Repeat after me. Boruch..."

"Bah rook," he said with a shaky voice. It was obvious that he had never uttered the guttural Hebrew 'ch' sound in his life. I excitedly put the tefillin on his arm and head. As the black box graced his stringy oily black hair, his dark eyes twinkled. Michel looked like a long-lost prince who had been dragged through the mucky alleys of medieval Europe, beaten and abused, and now had finally stumbled back to the gates of his royal home, crying out to his father, the king. The king ran to the street and hugged his long-lost son.

Michel repeated after me the words of the Shema prayer and stood silently, his eyes closed, for a few endless minutes.

"We can take them off now," I finally whispered.

Like a helpless baby, Michel held out his arm and I removed the straps that were bound around his forearm. I couldn't believe what was happening. The King must really be in the field!

Turning to the third guy, Shark-turned-Guppy, I asked, "And what's your name?"

"Joe," he blurted out. His hands were trembling.

Joe had safely positioned himself about six feet away, in front of the hood of my old Ford Galaxy. I was still standing by my car door.

"Is your mother Jewish?"

"No! She's Catholic. My grandmother was Catholic. And I'm Catholic. I'm not putting those things on."

"Don't worry, Joe. You don't have to, you're not supposed to," I said, showing him that I was putting them back in their bag. "A Gentile, that is, someone who is not Jewish, doesn't have to do this commandment. But if a Gentile

observes the seven commandments that God instructed Gentiles to follow, then he or she will get a share in the World to Come. "I then explained the Seven Noahide Laws, stuttering a little when I stated the prohibition against stealing. "The only catch is that a person has to observe these laws—not because they make sense, and not because he's afraid he might get caught—but because God commanded them to all people, through Moses the Lawgiver."

Joe listened silently, with no visible response.

"Hey, let's celebrate Michel's bar mitzvah," I said, breaking the silence. "I have some cake in the car."

I split the cake with Shmuel Yankel, Michel and Joe.

"L'chaim. To life," I said, raising my cake.

I told Michel what a great day it was for him, and how fortunate he was to have put on tefillin for the first time in his life. All three thanked me for the bar mitzvah, and we all shook hands and said good-bye.

"Wait! Here's a couple of dollars," I said, running after them.

Shmuel Yankel raised his arm, strong and high, "No, thanks, we're okay. We're okay."

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# JOKES

## Two Extra Guests

A Jewish couple won the lottery. They immediately set out to begin a life of luxury. They bought a magnificent mansion in Knightsbridge and surrounded themselves with all the material wealth imaginable. Then they decided to hire a butler. They found the perfect butler through an agency, very proper and very British, and brought him back to their home. The day after his arrival, he was instructed to set up the dining room table for four, as they were inviting the Cohens to lunch. The couple then left the house to do some shopping. When they returned, they found the table set for eight. They asked the butler why eight, when they had specifically instructed him to set the table for four? The butler replied, "The Cohens telephoned and said they were bringing the Blintzes and the Knishes."

Wife texts husband on a cold winter's morning:  
"Windows frozen, won't open."  
Husband texts back:  
"Gently pour some lukewarm water over it."  
Wife texts husband:  
"Computer really messed up now."

My granddaughter called me one evening. She started by saying, "Grandma! Guess where I'm calling from?" Hearing no identifying noises in the background, I responded, "I give up. Where are you calling from?" She answered, "My bedroom! I found a telephone in Mommy's closet that she wasn't using, and Daddy fixed it so that I can use it in my bedroom. And Grandma! It's really neat! It has this round thing on it, with holes in it. You put your finger in a hole and turn it around and it gets your phone!" My granddaughter had just

discovered that before push-button phones, there were dial phones. How old can a person get?! Now I know why my son asked me if I knew Abraham Lincoln!



## Things Moms Would Probably Never Say

~ "Yeah, I used to skip school a lot, too."

~ "Just leave all the lights on . . . it makes the house look more cheery."

~ "Let me smell that shirt. Yeah, it's good for another week."

~ "Go ahead and keep that stray dog, honey. I'll be glad to feed and walk him every day."

~ "Well, if Timmy's mom says it's okay, that's good enough for me."

~ "The curfew is just a general time to shoot for. It's not like I'm running a prison around here."

~ "I don't have a tissue with me . . . just use your sleeve."

~ "Don't bother wearing a jacket. The wind chill is bound to improve."

There's a fine line between a numerator and a denominator. (. . . Only a fraction of people will get this joke.)

## Puns

What do dentists call their x-rays?  
*Tooth pics!*

Did you hear about the first restaurant to open on the moon?  
*It had great food, but no atmosphere.*



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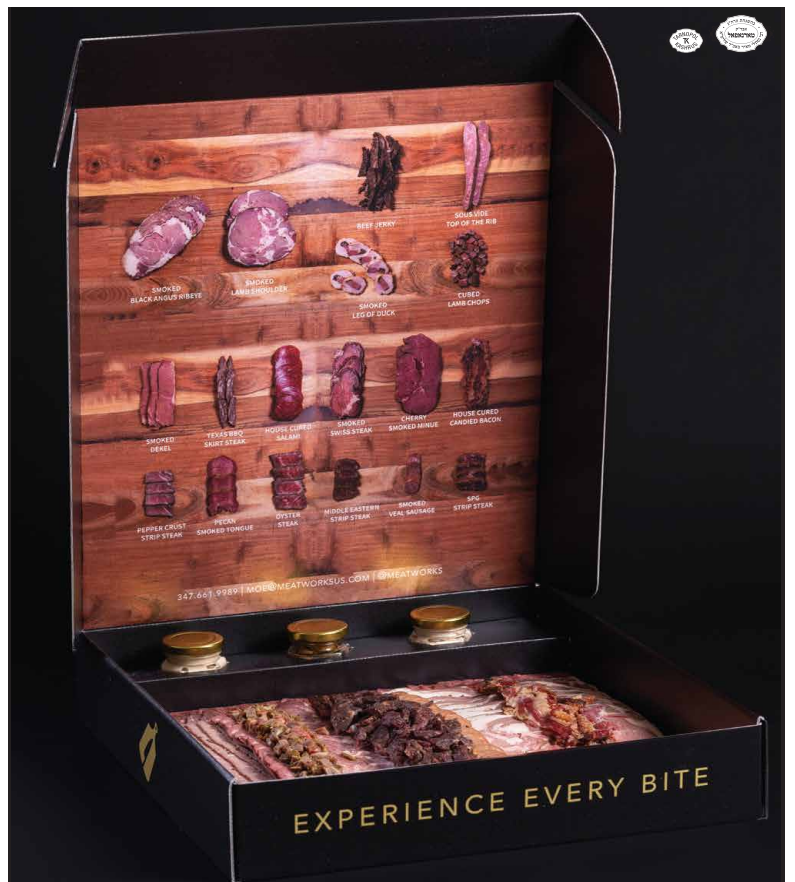
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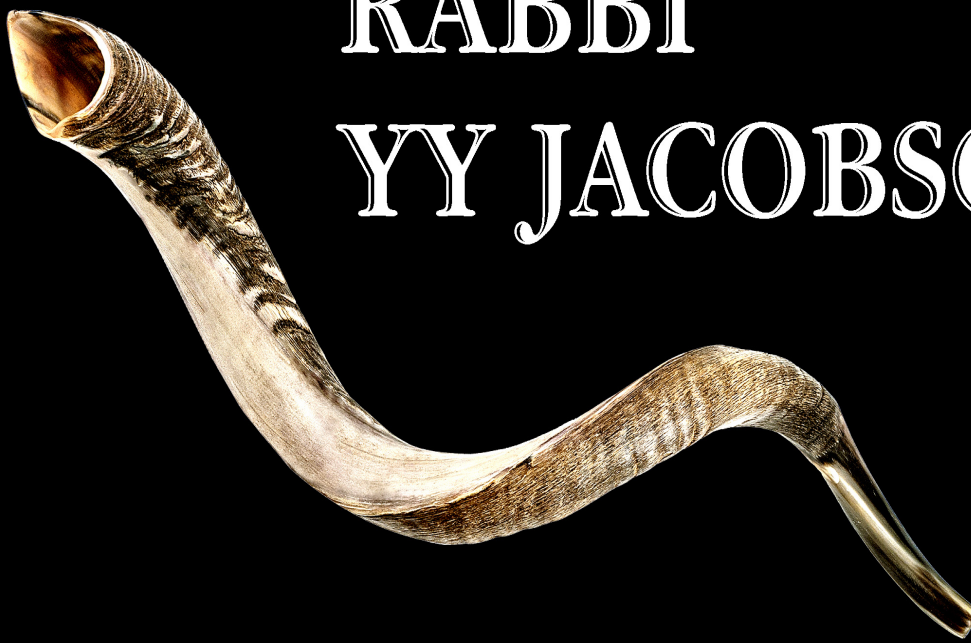
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