

# YOUR **HIGH** **HOLYDAY** COMPANION

5782/2021

This companion will help you experience  
a meaningful Yom tov



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# Preface

Dear Friend,

We are proud to present you with ‘Your High Holyday Companion’. With clear instructions, insightful explanations and moving stories, it will guide you and your family through the entire High Holiday period, from before Rosh Hashanah until the end of Simchat Torah, including prayers and customs.

To utilise this guide to the maximum, we encourage you to use it in conjunction with a Machzor. Throughout this guide we will be referencing to the Artscroll, Chabad & Birnbaum Machzorim.<sup>1</sup> However, even if you don’t have a Machzor, you will still benefit greatly from this guide.

Note: All times in this guide are Melbourne times.

Much of the content of this guide has been culled, modified and adapted from sources including: NLE Resources, The Rosh Hashanah Survival Kit, Chabad.org, and more.

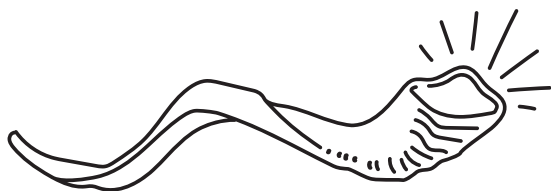
The Hebrew word for year—*shana*—also means change. Let us seek to repair the pain and disruption that recent change has brought upon us. Let us pray for a year of positive and peaceful change; communally, nationally and globally.

This guide contains words of holiness. Kindly do not discard.

Wishing you and your family a *shana tova*, a healthy, safe and a sweet new year!

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<sup>1</sup> The Artscroll & Chabad Machzorim can be purchased at Gold’s World of Judaica ([www.golds.com.au](http://www.golds.com.au) or 03 9527 8775) or at Chai Books ([www.chaibooks.com.au/highholidays](http://www.chaibooks.com.au/highholidays) or 0438260 055). They both offer shipping and click and collect. The Birnbaum Machzor is currently out of print. Alternatively, you may wish to contact your Synagogue to borrow a Machzor.



# The Month of Elul

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**AUGUST 9 - SEPTEMBER 6**

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## Introduction

**A**s the final month in the Jewish calendar year, Elul is traditionally a time for reflection. Just like a business person periodically analyses their profits and losses to inform their future plan, the month of Elul provides an opportunity to assess the progress of the previous year and plan new spiritual endeavours for the year ahead.

Historically, the month of Elul is associated with divine forgiveness: after the Jews of the desert sinned by worshipping the golden calf on 17<sup>th</sup> Tammuz, Moses ascended Mt. Sinai to seek G-d's forgiveness. A little over a month later, on the first of Elul, G-d revealed to Moses His "Thirteen Attributes of Mercy"—the key to divine forgiveness—intimating that He had begun to forgive the Jewish people for their sin. G-d's complete forgiveness was granted forty days later, on Yom Kippur.

Thus, the Chassidic masters teach that the month of Elul is infused with divine forgiving energy, making it a particularly potent time for personal improvement. Like a king who goes out to the field to lovingly connect with his subjects on their own turf, in the month of Elul, G-d meets us in the course of our mundane lives. He overlooks our human shortcomings and gently encourages us to evolve into a better version of ourselves.

## Shofar

### ■ HOW TO:

It is customary to blow the *shofar* (ram's horn) on each day of Elul, except for Shabbat and the day before Rosh Hashanah, 18<sup>th</sup> September.

You can purchase a *shofar* from Gold's World of Judaica or Chai books (see contact information above).

### ■ MEANING:

The daily *shofar* blasts serve as a spiritual wake-up call. Every morning it reminds us, "The month of Elul is here. Today is an opportunity for reflection and improvement. Make the most of it".

## Selichot

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### AUGUST 28 - SEPTEMBER 6

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### ■ HOW TO:

In the week leading up to the High Holidays it is customary to say *selichot*—communal prayers for divine forgiveness. This year, Ashkenazi

Jews begin saying *selichot* on the Saturday night before Rosh Hashanah, September 12<sup>th</sup>, and continue until Friday, September 18<sup>th</sup>. Many Ashkenazi congregations continue saying Selichot during the week between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. Other than the first Saturday night *selichot*, which are traditionally recited after midnight, *selichot* are said in the morning, before *Shacharit*.

The *selichot* prayers do not appear in the High Holiday Machzor.<sup>2</sup>

## ■ MEANING:

*Selichot* are a collage of Torah verses and Hebrew prayers in poetic form. Formalised in the 9<sup>th</sup> century by Rabbi Amram Gaon and his contemporaries, we ask G-d to forgive us on a personal and communal level. “G-d’s Thirteen Attributes of Mercy”—the key to divine forgiveness—are the centrepiece of the *selichot* and are recited on numerous occasions throughout.

The Midrash relates:

When King David prophetically foresaw the destruction of the Holy Temple and the cessation of the offering of the sacrifices, he wondered; “Without the daily sacrifices, how will the Jews atone for their sins?” G-d replied, “When suffering will befall the Jews because of their sins, they should gather before Me in complete unity. Together they shall confess their sins and recite the *Selichot* and I will answer their prayers.”

# Hatarat Nedarim

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## SEPTEMBER 6

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## ■ HOW TO:

Following *Shacharit* on the morning of the last day of Elul, it is customary to annul vows that one may have made throughout the year. This ceremony is known as *Hatarat Nedarim* and is conducted in the presence of three men, who act as judges and annul the vows.

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2 See footnote 1

Found in the machzor, we recite a succession of paragraphs expressing regret for having made any vows

The three men must be physically present during *hatarat nedorim*.

## ■ MEANING:

The Torah attributes great significance to the words that we speak. In Jewish law a person is legally bound to keep a verbal promise; doing otherwise is considered “disgracing one’s words”.

As the year ends, we seek to annul any commitments we may have made but were unable to uphold. To do so we convene a panel of three judges who annul our promises.



# Rosh Hashanah

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**SEPTEMBER 6-8**

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**T**he Jewish New Year, Rosh Hashanah actually translates as “Head of the Year.” Just like the head controls the body, our actions on Rosh Hashanah have a tremendous impact on the rest of the year.

Rosh Hashanah is a day of prayer; a time to ask the Almighty to grant us a year of peace, prosperity and blessing. But it is also a joyous day when we proclaim G-d as King of the Universe. The Kabbalists teach that the continued existence of the universe depends

on G-d's desire for a world, a desire that is renewed when we re-accept His kingship each year on Rosh Hashanah.

There are Various names for this Holiday

- › The most common name for this holiday is Rosh Hashanah.
- › The Torah refers to this day as Yom Teruah (Day of Shofar Blowing).
- › In our prayers, we often refer to it as Yom Hazikaron (Day of Remembrance) and Yom Hadin (Day of Judgement), since this is the day when G-d recalls all of His creations and determines their fate for the year ahead.
- › Together with Yom Kippur (which follows 10 days later), these days are called the Yamim Nora'im (Days of Awe, or High Holidays).

# *Rosh Hashanah Eve*

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**EVE OF SEPTEMBER 6**

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## **Candle Lighting**

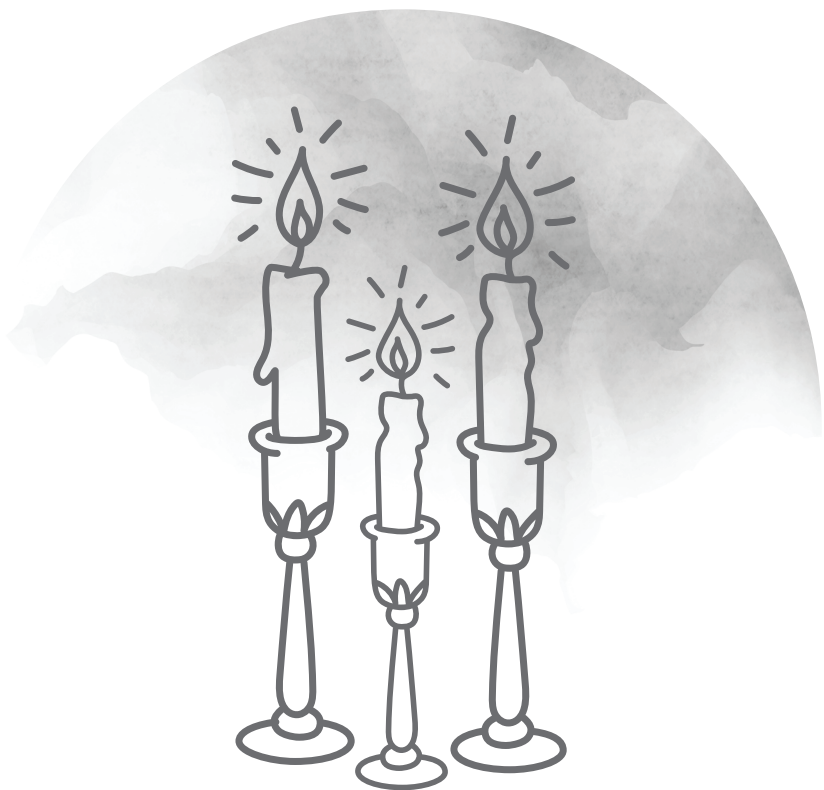
Candle lighting for Rosh Hashanah eve this year is at 5:44 pm.

### ■ **HOW TO:**

Married women light two candles, with many adding an additional candle for each child. Unmarried ladies and girls light one candle. If there is no women present a man should light.

After lighting the candle(s), draw your hands three times around the lights and towards your face, then place them over your eyes and recite the following two blessings.

The first blessing thanks G-d for giving us the day of Rosh Hashanah ("the Day of Remembrance"); the second blessing is the *shehechyanu* blessing, thanking G-d for giving us the opportunity to celebrate another Jewish holiday.



בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ  
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב (מִנְהַג חב"ד שֶׁל יוֹם הַזְכָּרוֹן)

*Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us  
with His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Yom Tov light.  
(in Chabad, rather than 'and Yom Tov' say 'and the Day of Remembrance')*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְמַן הַזֶּה

*Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has granted us life,  
sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.*

## ■ MEANING:

The Mitzvah of lighting candles on the eve of Shabbat and Jewish Holidays serves a practical as well as spiritual function. Practically, the candles' soft light add to the ambience of the family meal—this is their Halachic function. Spiritually, the candle represents the human. Whilst the flame flickers, seeking to ascend, the wick and oil hold it steady; together they create the candle's enchanting glow. The human too, is comprised of a soul that seeks transcendence and a body that drags it down with its physical needs. Through creating harmony between the two we discover true beauty.

## Evening Prayers

The evening prayers can be found on p. 46 in the Artscroll Machzor, p. 21 in Birnbaum and p. 23 in the Chabad Machzor.

## SOME WORDS OF ADVICE REGARDING PRAYERS

We offer a few general words of advice that perhaps will help you get more from the High Holiday prayers.

- › Five minutes of prayer recited with understanding, feeling and emotion means far more than hours of lip-service. If a particular prayer touches you, linger there for a while, chew it over and digest it well, allowing the words to caress you and enter your soul. Apply that prayer to your own life and situation and use it as a connection to G-d. If you're feeling adventurous, close your eyes for a few minutes and meditate over those words.
- › Don't let your lack of proficiency in Hebrew get you down. G-d understands English! He can discern what is in your heart in whatever language you express yourself.
- › Rosh Hashanah is all about making a plan for your life (or at least the coming year). Spend some time answering life's most important (and often most difficult) questions. To help you, the following are a few questions that you can ponder during the High Holiday season. Don't try

to answer the questions at once. Take some time and meditate on each question and think deeply about it.

1. When do I feel that my life is most meaningful?
2. What was my most significant achievement of the past year?
3. What was my biggest mistake during the past year?
4. What is the most important decision I need to make this year?
5. What endeavour gives me the strongest feeling of self-respect?
6. Over the last year, did my most important relationships become closer and deeper, or was there a sense of stagnation and drifting?
7. What can I do to nurture those relationships this coming year?

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## SPOTLIGHT ON PRAYERS:

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The two primary components of the evening prayer are Shema and the Amidah. The Shema can be found on p. 52 in the Artscroll Machzor, p. 23 in Birnbaum Machzor and p. 30 in the Chabad Machzor. The Amidah can be found on p. 62 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.31 in Birnbaum Machzor and p. 33 in the Chabad Machzor.

### ■ HOW TO:

### SHEMA:

Recite the first verse of the Shema out loud, with your hand covering your eyes, to enable full concentration. Recite the second verse of the Shema in an undertone.

If you are saying the Shema in Hebrew, repeat the final three words of the Shema, “אני ה' אלו-הים”, before continuing to proceed to the paragraph “אמת”.

## AMIDAH:

It is customary to pray the Amidah standing. Before beginning, take three steps back, then three steps forward, as if approaching a mighty king. Pray the Amidah quietly—but audibly—while standing with your feet together.

### ■ MEANING:

**Shema:** The Shema prayer is the oldest existent Jewish prayer. Moses commanded the Jews to recite these three paragraphs each morning and night. Doing so gave them strength to remain committed to their divine mission and overcome all obstacles as they entered the Promised Land.

The four primary themes of the Shema are G-d's unity, the commandment to love G-d, a commitment to G-d's directives and remembering our nation's Exodus from Egypt.

**Amidah:** The Amidah was formulated by Ezra the Scribe in the fifth century BCE and is the centrepiece of regular prayer services. The Jewish people had been defeated by the Babylonians and were exiled throughout the Babylonian empire. Many no longer spoke fluent Hebrew, the common language of Jewish prayer and felt unable to pray. To remedy this, Ezra, a native of Babylon, instituted the Amidah prayer—a standardised formula that praises G-d's greatness, requests our personal and national needs and thanks G-d for His endless care. To this day, the Amidah remains the staple of the three daily prayers.

On Shabbat and Jewish Holidays, the middle section of the Amidah—which on a regular week day contains thirteen requests for material needs—is replaced with a blessing that describes the holiness of the day. Because Shabbat and Jewish Holidays are days of joy, instead of dwelling upon things that we lack and possibly souring our mood, we focus on our good fortune—the opportunity to celebrate the special day.

The middle section of the Rosh Hashanah Amidah focuses on G-d's awesome majesty; the day's primary theme.

## PSALM 24: L'DOVID MIZMOR

לְדָוִד מִזְמוֹר לִי הָאָרֶץ וּמִלּוּאָה תִּבֵּל וְיִשְׁבִּי בָּהּ.  
כִּי הוּא עַל יָמִים יִסְדָּה וְעַל נְהֻרֹת יִכּוֹנְנָהּ.

מִי יַעֲלֶה בְּהַר יְהוָה וּמִי יָקוּם בְּמִקְוֹם קִדְשׁוֹ.  
 נָקִי כַפַּיִם וּבֵר לֵבָב אֲשֶׁר לֹא נָשָׂא לִשְׂוֹא נַפְשִׁי וְלֹא נִשְׁבַּע לְמַרְמָה.  
 יֵשָׂא בִּרְכָה מֵאֵת יְהוָה וּצְדָקָה מֵאֱלֹהֵי יִשְׁעוֹ.  
 זֶה דּוֹר דִּרְשָׁיו מִבְּקָשֵׁי פִנְיָה יַעֲקֹב סֵלָה.  
 שָׂאוּ שְׁעָרִים רִאשֵׁיכֶם וְהִנָּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד.  
 מִי זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד יְהוָה עֲזוּז וְגִבּוֹר יְהוָה גְּבוֹר מִלְחָמָה.  
 שָׂאוּ שְׁעָרִים רִאשֵׁיכֶם וּשְׂאוּ פִתְחֵי עוֹלָם וַיָּבֹא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד.  
 מִי הוּא זֶה מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד יְהוָה צְבָאוֹת הוּא מֶלֶךְ הַכְּבוֹד סֵלָה.

*A Psalm of David: the earth is G-d's and the fullness thereof, the inhabited world and those who dwell in it. For He founded it upon the seas, and established it upon rivers. Who may ascend the mountain of G-d, and who may stand in the place of His holiness? The clean of hands and the pure of heart, who has not borne My soul in vain, and has not sworn deceitfully. He will bear G-d's blessing and righteousness from the G-d of his deliverance. This is the generation of those who seek Him, the seekers of Your Presence, [G-d of] Yaakov, selah. Lift up your heads, gates, and be uplifted [you] entranceways to eternity, so that the King of Glory may enter. Who is this King of Glory? G-d, strong and mighty; G-d, the Mighty One in battle. Lift up your heads, gates, and lift up, entranceways to eternity, so that the King of Glory may enter. Who is He, this King of Glory? L-rd of Hosts, He is the King of Glory, selah.*

## **MEANING:**

As mentioned, the primary theme of Rosh Hashanah is G-d's majesty over the world. In this vein we recite Psalm 24, as its three stanzas follow the following narrative: the world is G-d's handiwork and possession; yet it has difficulty recognising Him; but ultimately, the world acknowledges its "glorious King".

Commentators suggest that King David composed Psalm 24 upon purchasing the land in Jerusalem upon which the Temple would eventually be built. The Temple served as the ultimate manifestation of G-d's kingship in this world. Though it no longer stands, each person has the opportunity to function as a mini-Temple, bringing greater spiritual awareness into the world around them.

# Rosh Hashanah Greetings

The customary greeting for the first night of Rosh Hashanah can be found on p. 90 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.47 in Birnbaum Machzor and p. 44 in the Chabad Machzor. The greeting is as follows:

To a man:

לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה תִּכְתֵּב וְתִחַתֵּם.

To a woman:

לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה תִּכְתְּבִי וְתִחַתְמִי.

*May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year!*

## Meal

### KIDDUSH:

The *kiddush* text can be found on p. 94 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.47 in Birnbaum Machzor and p. 46 in the Chabad Machzor.

### ■ HOW TO:

It is customary that the father of the household recites Kiddush; everyone listens and answers *amen* after each of the blessings and are thereby included in the Mitzvah.

Take the full cup in your right hand, pass it to your left hand, and then lower it onto the palm of your right hand, in which it will remain until you conclude reciting *kiddush*.

After reciting *kiddush*, pour some wine from the cup to be distributed to those at the table and then drink a significant amount of the remaining wine while seated.

סְבִרֵי מֶרֶן וְרִבּוֹתֵי,

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הַגֶּפֶן

*Attention! our masters and our teachers: Blessed are You, L-rd, our G-d, King of the Universe, Creator of the fruit of the vine.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר בָּחַר בָּנוּ מִכָּל-עַם וְרוֹמַמְנוּ  
מִכָּל לָשׁוֹן, וְקִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו. וְתַתֵּן לָנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה. אֶת יוֹם  
הַזִּכְרוֹן הַזֶּה יוֹם תְּרוּעָה מְקִרָא קֹדֶשׁ זִכָּר לִיציאת מצרים. כִּי בָנוּ  
בְּחֵרְתָּ וְאוֹתָנוּ קִדְּשָׁתָּ מִכָּל-הָעַמִּים. וּדְבַרְךָ אֱמֶת וְקִים לְעַד: בְּרוּךְ  
אַתָּה יי מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל הָאָרֶץ מְקִדֵּשׁ יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיוֹם הַזִּכְרוֹן:

*Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who chose us from among all people, and exalted us above all (tongues) languages, and sanctified us with His commandments. And [You] gave us G-d, this day of Remembrance a day of sounding the shofar, with love a day of holy assembly commemorating the exodus from Egypt.*

*For us have You chosen and us have You sanctified from among all peoples; and Your word is true and enduring forever. Blessed are You L-rd, King over all the earth Sanctifier of Yisrael and the Day of Remembrance.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַחֲיָנוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה.

*Blessed are You, L-rd, our G-d, King of the Universe*

*Who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this season.*

## ■ MEANING:

As tonight is also Shabbat, we begin *kiddush* by mentioning the Torah's account of the first Shabbat of creation. We then continue with the regular Rosh Hashanah *kiddush*.

Tonight's Kiddush comprises the following three sections: Torah's account of the first Shabbat (*yom hashishi*), blessing G-d for the wine (*hagafen*), blessing G-d for choosing us and gifting us the holiday of Rosh Hashanah and blessing G-d for the opportunity to celebrate another holiday (*shehechyanu*).

The final blessing is recited at the outset of all major Jewish holidays. Women have said this blessing when they lit the holiday candles.



## Symbols

### ■ HOW TO:

Tonight's meal is redolent with symbolic culinary customs, many of them thousands of years old. The two most widely observed customs are to eat round challahs and an apple dipped in honey.

Before eating the challah, wash your hands, three times on each hand, and make the *hamotzi* blessing.

Before eating the apple, say the blessing before eating a fruit and a special prayer:

*Ba-ruch a-tah Ado-nai E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-olam bo-re pri ha-etz.*

ברוך אתה ה' אלוקינו מלך העולם בורא פרי העץ

*Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe,  
who creates the fruit of the tree.*

*Ye-hi ratzon she-ti-cha-desh alei-nu shanah tovah u-m'tu-kah.*

יהי רצון שתחדש עלינו שנה טובה ומתוקה

*May it be Your will to renew for us a good and sweet year.*

## ■ MEANING:

Jewish customs are unique because, unlike much of Judaism, they were not mandated by G-d, but developed by humans. They celebrate the human initiative in the G-d-Human relationship and they provide a window into how our ancestors interpreted religious events. Tonight's culinary customs are replete with symbolism:

Round challahs are reflective of the cyclical nature of the New Year and its four seasons. The spiral hints to the progress and growth we hope to experience throughout year. Indeed, the Hebrew word for year (שנה) is etymologically linked with the concept of change (שינוי).

Apple dipped in honey: one of the names that the Zohar (the primary text of Kabbalistic tradition) uses to refer to Paradise is the "holy apple orchard". This is because apples are the 'perfect' fruit: sweet, round and smooth, with a pleasant smell. On this auspicious night we wish for a year of paradise-like perfection.

## POMEGRANATES AND CARROTS:

Pomegranates and carrots are both associated with quantity. Pomegranates have hundreds of seeds, while *merren*, the Yiddish word for carrots, means "more". These foods reflect our hope for a year replete with meaningful actions.

## HOW TO GET AHEAD:

Many people eat parts of the head of a fish or a ram, while proclaiming a wish that "we be a head and not a tail."



It is customary to avoid nuts as well as vinegar-based, sharp foods, most notably the horseradish traditionally eaten with gefilte fish, symbolising our hope to avoid a bitter year.

In many communities, there are additional traditional foods eaten, each symbolising a wish for the coming year.

## ■ STORY:

The seeds of the pomegranate contain another message relevant to Rosh Hashanah:

Rabbi Meir served on the Rabbinic court in Usha, in Roman occupied Israel, in the first century CE.

The Talmud tells of the surprising relationship that Rabbi Meir maintained with Elisha, the teacher of his youth. Historic events had influenced Elisha to completely assimilate into Roman culture and the Jewish community almost universally rejected him for his apostasy. Despite this Rabbi Meir continued to consult him on various Rabbinic and scientific matters. Their intriguing conversations are legendary in Talmudic lore.

Sages of the time frowned upon Rabbi Meir's relationship with Elisha. However, Rabbah bar Sheila, an Iraqi Rabbi who lived some three hundred years later, framed it in a different light:

“Rabbi Meir saw a pomegranate; he ate the seeds but threw away the peel”, utilising the beneficial parts and disregarding that which was unpleasant or harmful.

Tonight we eat pomegranates—we ask G-d to look at us with Rabbi Meir's forgiving eyes.

# *First Day of Rosh Hashanah*

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SEPTEMBER 7

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## **Shacharit**

The Rosh Hashanah shacharit prayers can be found on p. 136-592 in the Artscroll Machzor. p.133- 383 in Birnbaum Machzor p. 79-249 in the Chabad Machzor. Note that the prayers of the two days of the holiday vary slightly. Your Machzor will provide relevant instructions.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON PRAYERS:

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### **SHEMA:**

The Shema prayer can be found on p. 290 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.189 in Birnbaum Machzor and p. 105 in the Chabad Machzor.

### ■ **HOW TO:**

*see above – 1<sup>st</sup> Night Rosh Hashanah*

### **AMIDAH:**

The Amidah can be found on p. 296 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.195 in the Birnbaum Machzor and p. 109 of the Chabad Machzor.

### ■ **HOW TO:**

*see above – 1<sup>st</sup> Night Rosh Hashanah*

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

When we get to the climax of the prayer service, the top rung of the ladder, the Amida, what do we hear? Nothing. Just lips moving.

But why? Why, after all the hubbub, when we get to the heart of our personal conversation with G-d, do we finally go silent? One answer is that the lead-up prayers are about us talking. The Amida is about G-d listening.

In general, prayer serves two functions. The verb “to pray” - *l’hitpalel* - is actually reflexive, meaning to judge oneself. At this level, we are working on ourselves, our appreciation, our emotions and our consciousness. For this we need voice, we need to resonate, to feel the prayer.

But the word “prayer” itself - *tefillah* - is beyond that, it’s about selflessness. In fact, it is so selfless that we enter into the realm of divine where we can actually create a new will within G-d Himself.

## HAMELECH:

הַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּא רָם וְנִשְׂאָ.

*The King Who sits on a throne [that is] exalted and uplifted.*

## ■ MEANING:

The *hamelech* prayer marks a stage of increased intensity in the Rosh Hashanah prayers and is commonly sung with a melody. This is because it describes G-d as an awesome king, the theme of the day.

## ■ STORY:

Reb Aharon of Karlin (1736-1772), one of the early Chassidic masters, once fainted at this point of the High Holiday prayers. When later asked why, he explained that the prayer reminded him of the encounter between Rabbi Yochanan and Vespasian, as recounted in the Talmud:

Vespasian, a Roman General, lay siege on Jerusalem, starving its inhabitants. After months of suffering Rabbi Yochanan approached the Roman camp to negotiate a peace deal. He greeted Vespasian enthusiastically, “Greetings to you, o King”. Vespasian declined the flattery, accusing Rabbi Yochanan, “I am not the King; and if I am indeed the King, why did you not come here till now?”

“Upon recalling this encounter and pondering the import of addressing G-d as ‘my King’”, Reb Aharon concluded, “I fainted”.

## L’EL ORECH DIN:

לֵאל עוֹרֵךְ דִּין: לְבוֹחַן לְבָבוֹת בְּיוֹם דִּין: לְגוֹלָה עֲמוּקוֹת בְּדִין: לְדוֹבֵר  
מִשְׁרִים. בְּיוֹם דִּין: לְהוֹגֵה דְעוֹת בְּדִין: לְוֹתִיק וְעֵשֶׂה חֶסֶד בְּיוֹם דִּין:  
לְזוֹכֵר בְּרִיתוֹ בְּדִין: לְחוֹמֵל מַעֲשָׂיו בְּיוֹם דִּין: לְטֹהֵר חוּסֵי בְּדִין: לְיֹדֵעַ  
מַחֲשָׁבוֹת בְּיוֹם דִּין: לְכוֹבֵשׁ כַּעֲסוֹ בְּדִין: לְלוֹבֵשׁ צְדָקוֹת בְּיוֹם דִּין:  
לְמוֹחַל עֲוֹנוֹת בְּדִין: לְנוֹרָא תְהִלּוֹת בְּיוֹם דִּין: לְסוֹלֵחַ לַעֲמוּסֵי בְּדִין:  
לְעוֹנֶה לְקוֹרְאָיו בְּיוֹם דִּין: לְפוֹעֵל רַחֲמָיו בְּדִין: לְצוֹפֶה נְסִתְרוֹת בְּיוֹם  
דִּין: לְקוֹנֶה עֲבָדָיו בְּדִין: לְרַחֵם עָמוֹ בְּיוֹם דִּין: לְשׁוֹמֵר אֱהָבָיו בְּדִין:  
לְתוֹמֵךְ תְּמִימָיו בְּיוֹם דִּין:

*To the Almighty Who apportioned judgment; Who examines hearts on the day of judgment; Who reveals depths [of the heart] in judgment; Who speaks uprightly on the day of judgment; Who utters knowledge in judgment; to Him Who is steadfast, and yet deals kindly on the day of judgment; Who recalls His covenant in judgment; Who has pity on His works on the day of judgment; Who purifies those who trust in Him, in judgment; Who knows the thoughts of man on the day of judgment; Who suppresses His anger in judgment; Who is clothed in righteousness on the day of judgment; Who forgives iniquities in judgment; Who is awesome in praise on the day of judgment; Who pardons those borne by Him, in judgment; Who answers those who call upon Him on the day of judgment; Who exercises His compassion in judgment; Who scrutinizes secrets on the day of judgment; Who acquires His servants, in judgment; Who has compassion on His people on the day of judgment; Who preserves those who love Him, in judgment; Who supports His perfect ones on the day of judgment.*

### ■ MEANING:

Like many of the High Holiday poems, this prayer follows an alphabetical motif. It elaborates on G-d’s merciful conduct on Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Judgement.

# Torah Reading

Today's Torah Reading can be found on p. 402 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.259 in Birnbaum Machzor or p. 164 in the Chabad Machzor. The Haftorah Reading can be found on p. 416 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.267 in Birnbaum Machzor or p. 170 in the Chabad Machzor.

Even if you are not praying in a synagogue and the Torah will not be read, it is recommended to read the Torah portion yourself.

## ■ SYNOPSIS:

Today's Torah reading recounts the miraculous birth of our patriarch, Isaac to his elderly parents Abraham and Sarah. The Haftorah tells a story that occurred approximately a thousand years later, of another woman who also miraculously bore a child later on in life: Hannah, the mother of Samuel the Prophet. According to our tradition, both Sarah and Hannah conceived on Rosh Hashanah, hence the connection between the day and its readings.

# Shofar

## ■ MEANING:

Rabbi Sadiah Gaon, a leading Iraqi Rabbi in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, enumerates ten symbolic allusions of the Shofar:

### 1. The Return of the King

On Rosh Hashana, the anniversary of creation, G-d renews the creative energy that sustains our world. Once more, He is crowned as King of the universe. Just as trumpets are sounded at a coronation; the shofar announces G-d's continued kingship.

### 2. The Great Alarm Clock

On Rosh Hashana, the first of the Ten Days of Repentance, we awake from our spiritual slumber. The shofar is like an alarm that calls on us to examine our deeds and correct our ways, as we return to G-d.

### 3. The Reminder

The shofar was blown at Mt. Sinai when the Torah was given. On Rosh Hashana, we blow the shofar to remind us to rededicate ourselves to Torah study—and to remind G-d of our original commitment and sincerity.

### 4. The Voice

The shofar reminds us of the voice of the prophets, who like the blast of the shofar called upon us to correct our ways, follow G-d's commandments and act properly with others.

### 5. The Tears

The shofar's cry reminds us of the cries and tears shed for the destruction of the Holy Temple in Jerusalem, galvanising us to bring Mashiach and hasten the rebuilding of the Temple.



## **6. The Sacrifice**

The shofar, made of a ram's horn, reminds us of the binding of Isaac and the ram G-d provided as a sacrifice in his place. By blowing the shofar, we remember the faith of the Patriarchs and our own capacity for self-sacrifice.

## **7. The Awesome**

The shofar fills us with awe and humility as we contemplate the true infinitude of G-d, how He fills all space and time.

## **8. The Introspection**

The shofar will be blown on the Day of Judgment when Moshiach comes. We blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana to remind us to examine our deeds and contemplate how we can improve them.

## **9. The Celebration**

The shofar blast will signal the return of the Jewish people when Moshiach comes. We blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana to remind us of G-d's salvation in our own lives.

## **10. The Unity**

The shofar blast when Moshiach comes will herald a time of universal understanding and recognition of G-d's unity. We blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana to remind us of G-d's unity.

## **■ STORY:**

Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov (circa 1700-1760), the founder of Chassidism, explained the call of the Shofar with the following anecdote:

A King had an only son, the apple of his eye. The King wanted his son to master different fields of knowledge and to experience various cultures, so he sent him to a far-off country and supplied him with a generous quantity of silver and gold. Far away from home, the son squandered all the money until he was left completely destitute. In his distress he resolved to return to his father's house and, after much difficulty, he managed to arrive at the gate of the courtyard to his father's palace.

In the passage of time, he had actually forgotten the language of his native country and he was unable to identify himself to the guards. In utter despair he began to cry out in a loud voice and the King, who recognized

the voice of his son, went out to him and brought him into the house, kissing him and hugging him.

The meaning of the parable: The King is G-d. The prince is the Jewish people. The King sends a soul down to this world in order to fulfil the Torah and mitzvot. However, the soul becomes very distant and forgets everything to which it was accustomed and in the long exile it forgets even its own “language.” So, it utters a simple cry to its Father in Heaven. This is the blowing of the *shofar*, a cry from deep within, expressing regret for the past and determination for the future. This cry elicits G-d’s mercies, and He demonstrates His abiding affection for His child and forgives him.

## ■ STORY

Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Bardichev (1740-1810), a Chassidic Master who lived not long after the Baal Shem Tov, gave an alternative parable for the meaning of the Shofar.

A king was once traveling in the forest and lost his way, until he met a man who recognised that he was the king and escorted his master out of the forest and back to his palace. The king later rewarded his saviour with many presents and elevated him to a powerful ministerial post.

Sometime later the man committed an act which was considered rebellious against the king and he was sentenced to death. Before he was taken out to be executed, the king granted him one last request.

The man said: “I request to wear the clothes I wore when I escorted His Majesty when he was lost in the forest, and that His Majesty should also wear the clothes he wore then.”

The king complied and when they were both dressed in the garments they wore at the time of their meeting, the king was reminded how much he owed the man and called off the execution.

The meaning of the parable is that when G-d gave the Torah to Israel, he offered it first to all the nations of the world. They all refused, except the people of Israel, who willingly accepted the yoke of Heaven and fulfilled the commandments of the Creator.

But now we have transgressed and rebelled, like the man in the parable, and with the arrival of the Day of Judgment we are fearful indeed. So, we blow the *shofar* to recall the *shofar* blowing that accompanied our original acceptance of the Torah and coronation of G-d. This merit stands by us,

and G-d forgives us all our sins and inscribes us immediately for a year of goodness and life.

## **Mussaf**

The Mussaf Amida prayer can be found on p. 448-468 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.293-313 in Birnbaum Machzor and p. 180-192 in the Chabad Machzor.

### ■ **HOW TO:**

It is customary to pray the Amidah standing. Before beginning, take three steps back, then three steps forward, as if approaching a powerful individual. Pray the Amidah quietly—but audibly—while standing with your feet together.

### ■ **MEANING:**

On each major Jewish Holiday, as well as on every Shabbat, we pray *mussaf*—an additional prayer. This serves as a replacement for the additional sacrifices that were offered in the Temple on these special days.

The *mussaf* prayer usually consists of seven blessings—three blessings praising G-d, one blessing focusing on the theme of the day and a final blessing thanking G-d. The *mussaf* prayer of Rosh Hashanah is unique with three middle blessings, focusing on the day's three themes; totalling nine blessing in totals. Many have noted that this is the same number of times that Hannah mentioned G-d's name in her prayer for a child, as recorded in today's *haftorah* reading.

The middle three blessings are *malchiyot* (kingship), *zichronot* (remembrance), and *shofarot* (blasts):

*Malchiyot*: we acknowledge G-d's creation of all existence, His sovereignty over the entire world, and our eternal acceptance of His rule.

*Zichronot*: we proclaim our faith that G-d is the one who providentially and constantly cares for all that He has made, reviewing all of man's actions and rewarding and punishing man accordingly.

*Shofarot*: we express our acceptance of the principles of the Torah as if it were once again being given amidst thunder and lightning and mighty shofar blasts. We also express our anticipation of the final redemption that will be marked by the sounding of the shofar of Mashiach.

Each blessing follows the same basic structure: beginning with an introductory statement, followed by ten relevant scriptural quotations and concluding with a request that these themes come to fruition.

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

The concepts of these three blessings can be applied to our personal lives.

**Kingship:** Loyalty is the bedrock of any relationship. To be disloyal to a spouse, a friend, or to your country is to shatter the relationship. At this point in the service a Jew must consider where his or her loyalty ultimately lies.

**Remembrance:** If you want to know what your priorities truly are, then consider those things you always remember – even without setting the alarm on your watch.

*You (G-d) remember everything that has ever occurred ... all that is hidden; all that seems to be a secret ... A person's innermost thoughts, plans and motivations.... You carefully consider everyone's actions...*

It is impossible to fathom G-d. G-d is at once above and beyond all that defines and confines us - absolutely transcendent and at the same time imminent. He cares about our every thought and action because he cares about us. We are not asked to fully understand G-d, only to remember Him and to know that we too are always remembered.

**Blasts:** Wake up! It's time to rethink and recommit, making sure that we remember where our loyalties lie and never forgetting the commitments we have made.

## UNETANEH TOKEF:

וְנִתְּנָה תִּקְוָה קְדֻשָּׁת הַיּוֹם. כִּי הוּא נוֹרָא וְאִיּוֹם. וְבוֹ תִּנְשָׂא מַלְכוּתְךָ.  
וְיִכּוֹן בְּחֶסֶד כְּסָאֲךָ. וְתִשָּׁב עָלָיו בְּאַמֶּת. אֲמֶת כִּי אַתָּה הוּא דִּין וּמוֹכִיחַ  
וְיִוָּדַע וְעַד. וְכוֹתֵב וְחוֹתֵם וְסוֹפֵר וּמוֹנֶה. וְתִזְכֹּר כָּל הַנִּשְׁכָּחוֹת. וְתִפְתָּח  
אֶת סֵפֶר הַזְכוֹנוֹת. וַיִּמְאֲלֵיו יְקָרָא. וְחוֹתֵם יָד כָּל אָדָם בּוֹ. וּבִשְׁוֹפֵר  
גָּדוֹל יִתְקַע. וְקוֹל דְּמָמָה דְּקָה יִשְׁמַע. וּמַלְאָכִים יַחְפְּזוּן. וְחִיל וְרַעְדָּה  
יֵאֲחִזּוּן. וַיֹּאמְרוּ הִנֵּה יוֹם הַדִּין. לִפְקֹד עַל צָבָא מְרוֹם בְּדִין. כִּי לֹא יִזְכוּ  
בְּעֵינֶיךָ בְּדִין. וְכָל בָּאֵי עוֹלָם יַעֲבִרוּן לִפְנֶיךָ כְּבֵנֵי מְרוֹן. כְּבִקְרַת רוּעָה  
עֲדָרוּ. מַעֲבִיר צֹאנוֹ תַּחַת שִׁבְטוֹ. כֵּן תַּעֲבִיר וְתִסָּפֵר וְתִמְנֶה. וְתִפְקֹד  
נַפֶּשׁ כָּל חַי. וְתַחֲתֶךָ קִצְבָה לְכָל בְּרִיּוֹתֶיךָ. וְתִכְתֹּב אֶת גְּזֵר דִּינָם:

*Let us describe the great holiness of this day, for it is awesome and frightening. On this day, Your Kingship is uplifted, and Your throne is established with kindness and You sit upon it in truth. True that You are judge, admonisher, knower and witness; and You inscribe, seal, record and count, and recall all forgotten things. You open the book of records and it reads of itself; and the signature of every man is in it. A great shofar is sounded, and a silent, gentle voice is heard; and the angels are alarmed, pangs of fear and trembling seize them. The heavenly host is arraigned in judgment, for they are not guiltless in Your eyes in judgment. All mankind pass before You like young sheep.*

*As a shepherd inspects his flock, making his sheep pass under his rod, so do You cause to pass, count, number, and review the soul of every living being, determining the life-span of every creature; and You record the decree of their judgment.*

בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה יִכְתְּבוּן וְכִיּוֹם צוֹם כְּפוּר יַחְתִּמוּן. כֶּמָּה יַעֲבִרוּן. וְכֶמָּה  
יִבְרֹאוּן. מִי יַחֲיֶה. וּמִי יָמוּת. מִי בִקְצוֹ. וּמִי לֹא בִקְצוֹ. מִי בַמִּים. וּמִי  
בָאֵשׁ. מִי בַחֲרִב. וּמִי בַחֲיָה. מִי בַרְעֵב. וּמִי בַצָּמָא. מִי בַרְעֵשׁ. וּמִי  
בַמַּגָּפָה. מִי בַחֲנִיקָה וּמִי בַסְּקִילָה. מִי יָנוּחַ. וּמִי יָנוּעַ. מִי יִשְׁקֵט. וּמִי  
יִטָּרֵף. מִי יִשְׁלֹו. וּמִי יִתִּיֶסֶר. מִי יַעֲנִי. וּמִי יַעֲשֶׂר. מִי יִשְׁפֹּל. וּמִי יָרוּם:

*On Rosh Hashana their decree is inscribed, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed, how many will pass away and how many will be created, who will live and who will die; who will come to his timely end, and who to an untimely end; who will perish by fire and who by water; who by the sword and who by the beast; who by hunger and who by thirst; who by earthquake and who by the plague; who by strangling and who by stoning; who will be at rest and who will wander about; who will have serenity and who will be confused; who will be tranquil and who will be tormented; who will become poor and who will become wealthy; who will be brought to a low state and who will be uplifted.*

**וְתִשְׁוֶבָה וְתִפְלָה וְצִדְקָה מַעֲבִירִין אֶת רוֹעַ הַגְּזֵרָה:**

*But repentance, and prayer and charity annul the evil decree.*

## ■ MEANING:

This famous prayer describes the awe-inspiring scene of G-d judging all of creation on Rosh Hashanah, the annual Day of Judgement. Its composition is attributed to a Rabbi Amnon, leader of the Mainz Jewish community in the years preceding the 11<sup>th</sup> century Rhineland massacres.

Its four paragraphs follow this sequence:

- › The scene: G-d is seated in the throne of judgement; before Him is the book of all our deeds; each individual's performance is carefully scrutinised.
- › The stakes: G-d decides who will live and who will die; who will enjoy success and who will experience suffering.
- › Hope: despite fate, our positive actions and thoughts have the power to influence His decision. G-d forgives; G-d pardons; G-d exercises clemency – if we truly repent and pray and give to others.
- › Humility: a moving reflection on the fragility of human life and the eternity of G-d.

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

“But repentance, prayer, and charity annul the evil of the decree”

How do these actions annul a harsh decree? Obviously, we cannot make Hashem change His mind.

Rambam taught that the reason repentance repeals a decree is because a person undergoes a character change by repenting, so that he is no longer the same person who committed the sin, and one person cannot be punished for the sins that another did (Laws of Teshuvah 2:4).

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

“But *Teshuvah* (repentance), *Tefillah* (prayer) and *Tzedaka* (charity) annul the evil of the decree”.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, pointed out that the common English translation of these words is inaccurate and rather than ‘repentance, prayer and charity’ it should be rendered ‘return, connection and righteousness’.

“Repentance” means regret and contrition for sins or omissions of good deeds; and the resolve to start afresh. *Teshuvah*”, by contrast, emphasises the idea of *return*. A Jew is intrinsically good and wants to do good; sin is completely antithetical to his nature. If he does transgress, the transgression does not impugn his essential self but is a *foreign* thing that has adhered to him. *Teshuvah*, then, is the return to that essential, real self of a Jew.

“Prayer” is the idea of supplication, petition; one entreats G-d to grant one’s requests. If nothing is lacking, or there is no desire for anything, there is no “prayer.” “*Tefillah*,” on the other hand, means union with G-d. In contrast to “prayer,” with its emphasis on *G-d* fulfilling one’s request, *tefillah* stresses *man’s* striving to achieve connection with G-d.

“Charity” commonly means alms, gratuitous benefactions for the poor. The giver of charity is a benevolent person, giving when he need not. He does not *owe* the poor anything, but gives because of his generosity. “*Tzedakah*” has a completely opposite meaning. Instead of connoting benevolence, it is the idea of *justice* – that it is only right and just that one gives *tzedakah*.

The true Jewish meaning of *teshuvah*, *tefillah* and *tzedakah*, then, is a Jew returning to his true self – *teshuvah*; a Jew achieving union with G-d – *tefillah*; and a Jew acting justly – *tzedakah*. When Jews perform these services in the Ten Days of Repentance, then, notwithstanding the good granted on Rosh HaShanah, G-d gives yet more on Yom Kippur.

## ■ STORY:

The Archbishop of Mainz insisted that his friend and advisor, Rabbi Amnon, convert to Catholicism. To buy time, Rabbi Amnon requested three days to consider the offer. Immediately, he regretted giving even the pretence that he could possibly accept a foreign religion. After spending the three days in prayer, he refused to come to the archbishop as promised. When he was forcibly brought to the archbishop's palace the archbishop ordered his hands and legs amputated – limb by limb – as punishment for not returning to the palace as he'd promised. At each amputation, Rabbi Amnon was again given the opportunity to convert, which he refused. He was sent home, with his severed limbs, on a knight's shield.

When Rosh Hashanah arrived a few days later, Rabbi Amnon asked to be carried before the Ark during the prayers. With his last breath, he recited the Unetanneh Tokef prayer and then died.

Three days later, he appeared in a dream to Rabbi Kalonymus ben Meshullam, a famous Mainz liturgist (who later fell victim to the crusaders 1096 attack on nearby Worms). Rabbi Amnon begged Rabbi Kalonymus to transcribe the prayer and to see that it was included in the text of the High Holiday services. It has since become an integral part of the High Holiday services.

## HAYOM HARAT OLAM

הַיּוֹם הָרֵת עוֹלָם. הַיּוֹם יַעֲמִיד בְּמִשְׁפָּט כָּל יְצוּרֵי עוֹלָמִים.  
אִם בְּבָנִים. אִם פְּעֻבָּדִים. אִם פְּבָנִים רַחֲמָנוּ כְּרַחֵם אָב עַל בָּנִים.  
וְאִם פְּעֻבָּדִים עֵינֵינוּ לְךָ תְּלוּיֹת.  
עַד שֶׁתַּחֲנֶנּוּ וְתוֹצִיא כְּאוֹר מִשְׁפָּטֵנוּ אִיוֹם קְדוֹשׁ:

*On this day, the world came into being; on this day, He makes stand in judgment— all the creatures of the worlds— whether as children, or as servants; if as children, have compassion on us as a father has compassion on his children! If as servants, our eyes are fixed on You until You favor us, and bring forth our judgment as the light, Revered and Holy One!*



### ■ MEANING:

The theme of this prayer is renewal. We say it three times, corresponding to the middle three sections of the *Mussaf* prayer. In spiritual terms, our world has experienced three renewals: the six days of Creation, the period after the Flood, and the day of the giving of the Torah. – our Heritage

### ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

In this prayer, we address G-d as both Father and King. At our spiritual core, we are G-d's children, endlessly seeking His intimacy. Though G-d may seem distant, we can relate to Him like subjects to a king. The trick is to fuse the two: leverage our soul's child-like love for G-d with the mundane reality of our world.

## Minchah

Minchah is prayed in the afternoon. The Minchah prayer can be found on p. 598 of the Artscroll Machzor, p.390 in Birnbaum Machzor or on p. 272 of the Chabad Machzor.

# Tashlich

## ■ HOW TO:

It is customary to go to a natural body of water containing fish on Rosh Hashanah afternoon and recite a short prayer; this is known as *tashlich*.

**There are various venues where Tashlich may be recited. It may also be recited after Rosh Hashana until Hoshana Rabba. Please contact your Shule or Rabbi for more details.**



The tashlich prayer can be found on p. 630 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.423 in the Birnbaum Machzor or p. 291 in the Chabad Machzor.

## ■ MEANING:

The core of the *tashlich* prayer is a collection of verses from scripture that express G-d's endless forgiveness. By reciting these prayers, we ask G-d to help us rid—*taschlich*—ourselves of our negative habits.

Why water and fish? In Kabbalistic tradition, water, which naturally flows to the lowest point, is a symbol for G-d's far-reaching kindness. Fish, who do not have eyelids, are representative of G-d's constant providence.

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

Throughout the temptations of daily life, we sometimes pick up negative habits. These come to us in times of despair or due to acts of arrogance. We purchase them in fits of anger or digest them in moments of weaknesses. We might own them. We might carry them. And we might even relish some of them.

But they never become us. They never become who we are. And they definitely aren't what we really want to be. They are always a separate entity that can be disowned, disavowed and cast away at any time. The symbolic act of throwing away our sins brings that message home in a dramatic, concrete manner.

# Second Night of Rosh Hashanah

SEPTEMBER 7

## Candle Lighting

Candle lighting for the second night of Rosh Hashanah eve should be lit **after** 6:42 pm, from a pre-existing flame.

### ■ HOW TO:

Light candles: *See above – 1<sup>st</sup> night Rosh Hashanah*

The first blessing thanks G-d for giving us the day of Rosh Hashanah; the second blessing is the *Shehechyanu*, thanking G-d for giving us the opportunity to celebrate another Jewish holiday.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ  
לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם טוֹב: (מִנְהַג חַב"ד שֶׁל יוֹם הַזְכָּרוֹן)

*Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to kindle the Yom Tov light (in Chabad, rather than ‘and Yom Tov’ say ‘and the Day of Remembrance’).*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה

*Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has granted us life, sustained us, and enabled us to reach this occasion.*

### ■ MEANING:

*see – 1<sup>st</sup> Night Rosh Hashanah*

## Evening Prayers

The evening prayers can be found on p. 46 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.23 in the Birnbaum Machzor and p. 28 in the Chabad Machzor.

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### SPOTLIGHT ON PRAYERS

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The two primary components of the evening prayers are Shema and the Amidah. The Shema can be found on p. 52 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.23 in the Birnbaum Machzor and p. 30 in the Chabad Machzor. The Amidah can be found on p. 62 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.31 in the Birnbaum Machzor and p. 33 in the Chabad Machzor.

#### ■ HOW TO:

**Shema:** *see 1<sup>st</sup> Night Rosh Hashanah*

**Amidah:** *see 1<sup>st</sup> Night Rosh Hashanah*

#### ■ MEANING:

*See 1<sup>st</sup> Night Rosh Hashanah*

## Meal

### KIDDUSH:

The kiddush text can be found on p. 94 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.47 in the Birnbaum Machzor and p. 46 in the Chabad Machzor.

#### ■ HOW TO:

*See 1<sup>st</sup> Night Rosh Hashanah*

## NEW FRUIT

### ■ HOW TO:

On the second night of Rosh Hashanah, a “new fruit,” i.e., a fruit which you have not yet eaten this season, should be present on the table when the holiday candles are lit and during the kiddush. While reciting the *shehecheyanu* blessing after candle-lighting and after the kiddush, one should have in mind to include the new fruit.

Eat the fruit following *kiddush*, before washing for bread. Before eating the fruit, say the *borei peri ha'etz* blessing.

### ■ MEANING:

The custom to eat a new fruit on the second night of Rosh Hashanah is related to the *shehecheyanu* blessing that you would have made either during candle lighting or Kiddush.

At the onset of each Jewish Holiday, we say the *shehecheyanu* blessing, an expression of gratitude for something new. As we have at this point already celebrated a complete day of Rosh Hashanah, it is unclear whether it is appropriate to repeat *shehecheyanu* again. We therefore eat a new fruit, upon which a *shehecheyanu* is also recited.



# Second Day Rosh Hashanah

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SEPTEMBER 8

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## Shacharit

The Rosh Hashanah shacharit prayers can be found on p. 136-592 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.431-641 in the Birnbaum Machzor and p. 79-249 in the Chabad Machzor. Note that today's prayers differ slightly from yesterday's. Your Machzor will provide relevant instructions.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON PRAYERS

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**Shema:** The Shema prayer can be found on p. 290 in the Artscroll Machzor. P.449 in the Birnbaum Machzor and p. 105 in the Chabad Machzor.

### ■ HOW TO:

**Shema:** *see 1<sup>st</sup> Night Rosh Hashanah*

**Amidah:** The Amidah can be found on page. 296 in the Artscroll Machzor and p. 109 of the Chabad Machzor.

### ■ HOW TO:

*See 1<sup>st</sup> Night Rosh Hashanah*

## HAMELECH:

הַמֶּלֶךְ יוֹשֵׁב עַל כִּסֵּא רָם וְנִשְׂא.

*The King Who sits on a throne [that is] exalted and uplifted.*

## ■ MEANING:

See 1<sup>st</sup> day Rosh Hashanah

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

What is a King today and what relevance does it have to my life?

Visualise yourself as an animated character in a 3D animation where the animator can change anything or make anything happen.

That animator is the King! With awesome powers, his creative decisions determine whether you exist, how you exist and the past, present and future of your existence. Yet, through some magical technology, your character can talk to the animator and make suggestions.

That's exactly what we do in prayer. We cut out of the drama, take three steps and address the Director. The Infinite and Omnipotent Mastermind Animator of the entire universe (which is what's meant by calling Him a king). And He listens to our suggestions, very carefully. What an opportunity!

## ATAH HU ELOKEINU:

אַתָּה הוּא אֱלֹהֵינוּ: בְּשָׁמַיִם וּבָאָרֶץ: גִּבּוֹר וְנִעְרָץ: דָּגוּל מִרְבָּבָה: הוּא  
שָׁח וְיָהִי: וְצוּה וְנִבְרָאוּ: זָכְרוּ לְנֶצַח: חֵי עוֹלָמִים: טָהוֹר עֵינַיִם: יוֹשֵׁב  
סִתְר: כְּתֵרו יְשׁוּעָה: לְבוּשׁו צְדָקָה: מַעֲטָהו קְנָאָה: נֶאֱפֵד נִקְמָה: סִתְרו  
יוֹשֵׁר: עֲצָתו אֱמוּנָה: פְּעֻלָּתו אֱמֶת: צְדִיק וְיֹשֶׁר: קְרוֹב לְקוֹרְאָיו בְּאֵמֶת:  
רֵם וּמִתְנַשֵּׂא: שׁוֹכֵן שְׁחָקִים: תּוֹלָה אֶרֶץ עַל בְּלִימָה: חֵי וְקִיָּם נוֹרָא  
וּמִרּוֹם וְקִדּוּשׁ:

*You are our G-d, in heaven and upon earth, mighty and revered! Surrounded with myriad angels, He spoke and it [the world] was! He commanded and all was created! His mention [Name] is eternal! Life of [all] the worlds, He is of pure eyes! He dwells in concealment; His crown is deliverance! His garment is righteousness, His robe is zeal! He is clothed with vengeance His secret is uprightness! His counsel is faithful, His work is truth! He is just and upright, He is near to those who call upon Him in truth! Exalted and uplifted, He*

*dwells in the heavens! He suspends the earth in space! He is living and enduring, awesome, exalted and holy!*

## ■ MEANING:

This prayer uses colourful metaphors to describe the paradoxes of G-d's immanence and transcendence.

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

“He spoke and it came into being”: the metaphor of speech indicates that creation is an act of divine expression. Everything in our world contains divinity. It is humanity's mission to reveal it.

## ■ STORY:

Chassidic lifestyle is inspired by the notion that G-d continuously generates divine speech, keeping the world in existence:

A Chassid was explaining his religious beliefs to a sceptic of the Chassidic ways. “Tell me”, said the Chassid, “Imagine G-d wanted to destroy the world, how would he do so?”

“Well, I guess He could spread a great fire that'd consume the entire planet.” “But what about the ashes that'd remain?” “He could throw them in the ocean.” “And the ocean?” the Chassid persisted. The friend shrugged his shoulders in defeat.

“If G-d wanted to destroy the world,” the Chassid explained, “He'd simply stop creating it”.

## AVINU MALKEINU

אַבִּינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ אֵין לָנוּ מֶלֶךְ אֶלָּא אַתָּה:

*Our Father our King! we have no King except You.*

אַבִּינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ:

*Our Father, our King! deal with us [kindly] for the sake of Your Name..*

אַבִּינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ חֲדַשׁ עֲלֵינוּ שָׁנָה טוֹבָה:

*Our Father, our King! renew for us a good year*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ בְטַל מַעֲלֵינוּ כָּל גְּזֵרוֹת קִשּׁוֹת:

*Our Father, our King! annul all harsh decrees concerning us.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ בְטַל מַחֲשָׁבוֹת שׂוֹנְאֵינוּ:

*Our Father, our King! annul the designs of those who hate us.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ הִפְר עֲצַת אוֹיְבֵינוּ:

*Our Father, our King! thwart the plans of our enemies.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ כֵּלָה כָּל צָר וּמַשְׁטִין מֵעָלֵינוּ:

*Our Father, our King! rid us of every oppressor and adversary.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ סָתוּם פִּיּוֹת מַשְׁטִינֵנוּ וּמַקְטִירֵגָנוּ:

*Our Father, our King! close the mouths of our adversaries and our accusers.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ כֵּלָה דְּבַר וְחָרֵב וְרָעָב

וְשָׂבִי וּמַשְׁחִית וְעוֹן מִבְּנֵי בְרִיתְךָ:

*Our Father, our King! remove  
pestilence, sword, famine,  
captivity, destruction and [the  
burden of] iniquity from the  
members of Your covenant.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ מִנֵּעַ

מִגִּפָּה מִנַּחֲלַתְךָ:

*Our Father, our King!  
withhold the plague  
from Your inheritance.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ סָלַח

וּמַחֵל לְכָל עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ:

*Our Father, our King!  
forgive and pardon all our  
iniquities.*



אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ מַחַה וְהַעֲבֵר פְּשָׁעֵינוּ וְחַטָּאתֵינוּ מִנֶּגֶד עֵינֶיךָ:

*Our Father, our King! blot out and remove our transgressions and sins from before Your eyes.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ מַחֲזֵק בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ הָרַבִּים כָּל שְׁטָרֵי חֻבוֹתֵינוּ:

*Our Father, our King! erase in Your abundant mercy all records of our liabilities.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ הַחֲזִירְנוּ בְּתַשׁוּבָה שְׁלָמָה לְפָנֶיךָ:

*Our Father, Our King! bring us back in wholehearted repentance before You.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ שְׁלַח רְפוּאָה שְׁלָמָה לְחֹלֵי עַמֶּךָ:

*Our Father, our King! send healing to the sick among Your people.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ קַרַע רָע גָּזֵר דִּינֵנוּ:

*Our Father, our King! tear up the evil [parts] of our sentence.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ זְכָרְנוּ בְּזַכְרוֹן טוֹב לְפָנֶיךָ:

*Our Father, our King! remember us favorably before You.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ כְּתֹבנוּ בְּסֵפֶר חַיִּים טוֹבִים:

*Our Father, our King! inscribe us in the Book of Good Life.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ כְּתֹבנוּ בְּסֵפֶר גְּאֻלָּה וִישׁוּעָה:

*Our Father, our King! inscribe us in the Book of Redemption and Deliverance.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ כְּתֹבנוּ בְּסֵפֶר פְּרִנָּסָה וְכִלְכָּלָה:

*Our Father, our King! inscribe us in the Book of Maintenance and Sustenance.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ כְּתֹבנוּ בְּסֵפֶר זְכוֹת:

*Our Father, our King! inscribe us in the Book of Merits.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ כְּתֹבנוּ בְּסֵפֶר סְלִיחָה וּמַחֲלָה:

*Our Father, our King! inscribe us in the Book of Pardon and Forgiveness.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלֶכְנוּ הַצְמַח לָנוּ יְשׁוּעָה בְּקֶרֶב:

*Our Father, our King! cause deliverance to spring forth for us soon.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ הָרַם קֶרֶן יִשְׂרָאֵל עִמָּךְ:

*Our Father, our King! raise up the might of Yisrael Your people.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ הָרַם קֶרֶן מְשִׁיחֶךָ:

*Our Father, our King! raise up the might of Your anointed.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ מִלֵּא יְדֵינוּ מְבָרְכוֹתֶיךָ:

*Our Father, our King! fill our hands with Your blessings.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ מִלֵּא אֲסָמִינוּ שְׂבַע:

*Our Father, our King! fill our storehouses with abundance.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ:

*Our Father, our King! hear our voice, spare us and have compassion upon us.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ קַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן אֶת תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ:

*Our Father, our King! accept our prayer with compassion and favor.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ פָּתַח שַׁעֲרֵי שָׁמַיִם לְתַפִּלָּתֵנוּ:

*Our Father, our King! open the gates of heaven to our prayer.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ זְכוֹר כִּי עָפָר אֲנַחֲנוּ:

*Our Father, our King! remember, that we are dust.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ נָא אַל תִּשְׁיִבֵנוּ רֵיקָם מִלִּפְנֶיךָ:

*Our Father, our King! please do not turn us away empty-handed from You.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ תִּהְיֶה הַשָּׁעָה הַזֹּאת שְׁעַת רַחֲמִים וְעֵת רָצוֹן מִלִּפְנֶיךָ:

*Our Father, our King! let this hour be an hour of compassion and a time of favor before You.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ חַמּוּל עָלֵינוּ וְעַל עוֹלָלֵינוּ וְטַפָּנוּ:

*Our Father, our King! have compassion upon us, and upon our children and infants.*

אֲבִינוּ מֶלְכֵנוּ עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן הַרוּגִים עַל שֵׁם קְדֻשָּׁךְ:

*Our Father, our King! do it for the sake of those who were slain for Your Holy Name.*

**אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן טְבוּחִים עַל יְחֻדְךָ:**

*Our Father, our King! do it for the sake of those who were slaughtered for [proclaiming] Your Unity.*

**אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן בָּאֵי בָאֵשׁ וּבַמַּיִם עַל קְדוּשַׁת שְׁמֶךָ:**

*Our Father, our King! do it for the sake of those who went through fire and water for the sanctification of Your Name.*

**אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ נִקּוּם נֶקֶמַת דָּם עֲבָדֶיךָ הַשְּׁפוּף:**

*Our Father, our King! avenge the spilled blood of Your servants.*

**אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַנְךָ אִם לֹא לְמַעַנֵּנוּ:**

*Our Father, our King! do it for Your sake if not for ours.*

**אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַנְךָ וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ:**

*Our Father, our King! do it for Your sake and deliver us.*

**אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן רַחֲמֶיךָ הַרְבֵּים:**

*Our Father, our King! do it for the sake of Your great mercy.*

**אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ הַגָּדוֹל הַגִּבּוֹר וְהַנּוֹרָא שֶׁנִּקְרָא עָלֵינוּ:**

*Our Father, our King! do it for the sake of Your great, mighty, and awesome Name which is proclaimed upon us.*

**אָבִינוּ מַלְכֵנוּ חַנּוּן וְעֲנֵנוּ כִּי אֵין בָּנוּ מַעֲשִׂים**

**עֲשֵׂה עִמָּנוּ צְדָקָה וְחֶסֶד וְהוֹשִׁיעֵנוּ:**

*Our Father, our King! favor us and answer us for we have no accomplishments; deal with us charitably and kindly and deliver us.*

## ■ MEANING:

The following Talmudic anecdote reveals the ancient origins of the legendary Avinu Malkeinu prayer:

During a drought, Rabbi Eliezer approached the synagogue Ark and recited the twenty-four blessings for fast days, but his prayer was not answered.

Following him, Rabbi Akiva approached the ark and exclaimed: “Our Father, our King, we have no King but You; our Father, our King, for Your sake have mercy upon us,” and rain fell.

### ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

It was the genius of Rabbi Akiva to juxtapose two ideas – G-d is our King and we are His subjects, yet G-d is also our Father and we are His children – and with utter simplicity pray that G-d look at us with the love of a parent, before considering our lives with the detachment of a king.

### ■ STORY:

A retail merchant who dealt in fabrics made his way to his wholesale supplier to buy the goods he needed for his business. The wholesaler instructed his workers to wait on the merchant and to bring him all that he ordered. Standing in the middle of the warehouse, the merchant bellowed all sorts of orders and requests.

“I want 1,000 metres of that cloth, 2,000 metres of the blue velvet, 3,000 metres of that white silk,” he shouted, and on and on he went, requesting many other items. When it came time to reckon up the price of the goods and to pay the bill, the merchant took the wholesaler to the side and, very embarrassed, whispered in his ear: “Listen, I can’t give you any money for this right now. Please allow me credit until I can pay you.”

So it is with us, said the Dubno Maggid. We shout out all sorts of requests to G-d in the Avinu Malkeinu prayer. We want forgiveness, health, a good life, wealth, redemption, and many other things. But when it comes down to the last verse (to pay the bill, so to speak), we whisper: “Our Father, our King, be gracious to us and answer us, though we have no worthy deeds (with which to pay You for our large order); please grant us charity and kindness, and save us.” - The New Rosh Hashanah Anthology

## Torah Reading

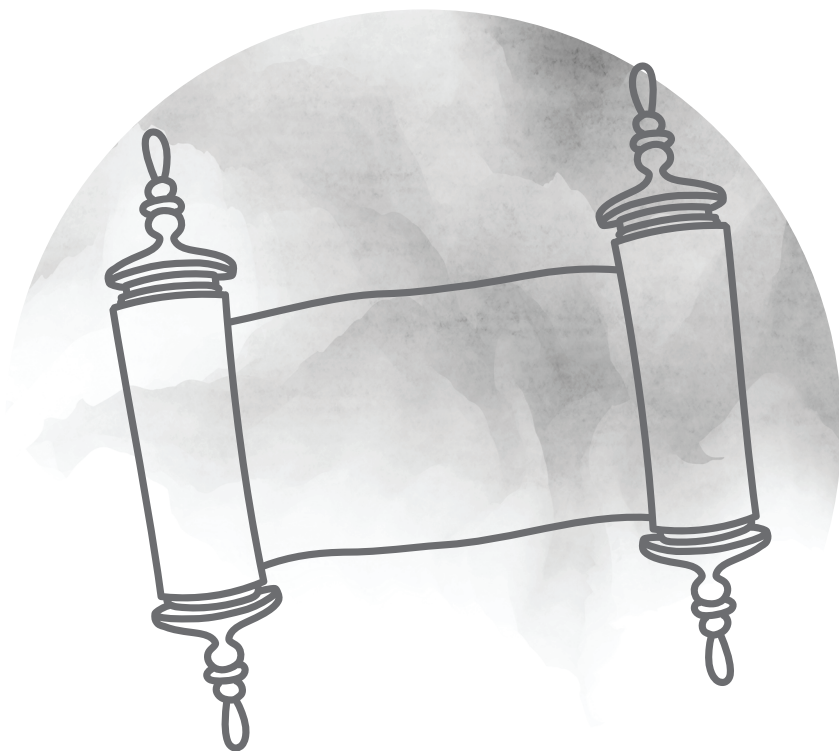
Today’s Torah Reading can be found on p.402 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.529 in the Birnbaum Machzor and p. 164 in the Chabad Machzor.

The Haftorah Reading can be found on p.416 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.535 in the Birnbaum Machzor and p.170 in the Chabad Machzor.

## ■ SYNOPSIS:

Today's Torah Reading discusses the Binding of Isaac. On the day when we are judged by G-d we invoke the merit of our forefathers and their willingness to sacrifice all for G-d's sake. Additionally, the ram which Abraham offered in Isaac's stead is associated with the Shofar. The reading concludes with the birth of Rebecca, Isaac's destined soul mate.

Today's *haftarah* is a reading from Jeremiah about G-d's everlasting love for the Jewish people, and the future ingathering of their exiles. In the last verse of this hauntingly beautiful reading, G-d says, "Is Ephraim—the Children of Israel—not My beloved son? Is he not a precious child, that whenever I speak of him I recall him even more?" This follows one of the primary themes of the Rosh Hashanah prayers, our attempt to induce G-d to remember us in a positive light on this Day of Judgment. – Chabad.org





## Shofar

### ■ HOW TO:

*See 1<sup>st</sup> day Rosh Hashanah*



## Mussaf

The Mussaf Amida prayer can be found on p. 448-468 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.557-577 in the Birnbaum Machzor and p. 180-192 in the Chabad Machzor.

### ■ HOW TO:

*See 1<sup>st</sup> Day Rosh Hashanah*

### ■ MEANING:

Each of the Mussaf's three sections—Kingship, Remembrance and Shofar—cite ten relevant verses from the Torah. The Mishnah points out that ten is a symbolic number: the number of divine utterances with which G-d created the world and the number of commandments He gave us on Mt. Sinai.

In this vein, the Chassidic masters taught: it is our job to utilise the Torah (Ten Commandments) to reveal the innate holiness of the world (created with ten divine utterances).

### ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

A major theme of Rosh Hashanah is Zichronot – memories.

There have been two competing motives for being Jewish in our time. One is the Torah commandment to “*remember Amalek*,” a nation who sought to destroy us as we fled from Egypt. The other is that the Torah tells us to “*Remember the Shabbat day to keep it holy*.”

We can be Jews because of “Remember Amalek.” That is to say, our Judaism can be fuelled by a focus on fighting Anti-Semitism, by our determination to remember their schemes and stand up against it.

Or we can focus on “Remember the Shabbat Day to keep it holy.” That is to say, our Judaism can be nurtured by all the meaningful teachings and the beautiful way of life offered in our tradition.

Are we Jewish for positive or negative reasons? Oy Jews or Joy Jews? Sure, we must always remember Amalek, but our primary memory must be Shabbat and what it represents, the positive joys of the Jewish experience, the beauties of our mitzvos, customs and rituals, the wisdom of the Torah, the Jewish values of finding holiness in the everyday.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON PRAYERS

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### UNETANEH TOKEF

*See 1st day Rosh Hashanah*

### VECHOL MAÁMINIM

וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא אֵל אֱמוּנָה: הַבּוֹחַן וּבּוֹדֵק גְּנוּזֵי נִסְתָּרוֹת: וְכָל  
מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא בּוֹחֵן כָּלִיּוֹת: הַגּוֹאֵל מִמָּוֶת וּפּוֹדֶה מִשַּׁחַת: וְכָל  
מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא גּוֹאֵל חֶזֶק: הַדֵּן יַחֲדֵי לְבָאֵי עוֹלָם: וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים  
שֶׁהוּא דִּין אֱמֶת: הַהֲגוֹי בְּאֵהִיָּה אֲשֶׁר אֵהִיָּה: וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא  
הֵיָּה הוּא וִיָּהִיָּה: הַיֹּדֵאֵי שְׁמוֹ כֵּן תִּהְלֶתּוּ: וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא לֹאִין  
בִּלְתּוֹ: הַזֹּכֵר לְמִזְכְּרֵיוֹ טוֹבוֹת זְכוּרוֹת: וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא זֹכֵר  
הַבְּרִית: הַחֹתֵךְ חַיִּים לְכָל חַי: וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא חַי וְקַיִם: הַטּוֹב,  
וּמְטִיב לְרָעִים וְלְטוֹבִים: וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא טוֹב לְכָל: הַיּוֹדֵעַ יֵצֵר  
כָּל יְצוּרִים: וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא יוֹצֵרם בְּבֶטֶן: הַכֹּל יָכוֹל וְכוֹלֵלם יַחַד:  
וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא כָּל יָכוֹל: הֶלֶן בְּסֶתֶר בְּצֵל, שְׂדֵי: וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים  
שֶׁהוּא לְבָדּוֹ הוּא: הַמְּמַלִּיךְ מְלָכִים וְלוֹ הַמְּלוּכָה: וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים  
שֶׁהוּא מְלֶךְ עוֹלָם: הַנוֹהֵג בְּחֶסֶדוֹ כָּל דּוֹר: וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא לוֹצֵר  
חֶסֶד: הַסּוֹבֵל וּמַעֲלִים עֵין מְסוּרִרִים: וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא סוֹלֵחַ  
סֵלָה הַעֲלִיּוֹן, וְעֵינָיו אֵל יִרְאִיו: וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא עוֹנֶה לַחֹשׁ:  
הַפּוֹתֵחַ שַׁעַר לְדוֹפְקֵי בִתְשׁוּבָה: וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא פִתּוּחָה יָדוֹ:  
הַצּוֹפֶה לְרָשָׁע וְחַפֵּץ בְּהַצְדָּקוֹ: וְכָל מַאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא צַדִּיק וְיֵשֶׁר:

הַקָּצֵר בְּזַעַם וּמֵאֲרִיךְ אֶף: וְכֹל מֵאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא קָשָׁה לְכַעַס: הֶרְחוּם,  
וּמִקְדִּים רַחֲמִים לְרִגְזוֹ: וְכֹל מֵאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא רַךְ לְרִצּוֹת: הַשְׁוֶה;  
וּמִשְׁוֶה קֶטֶן וְגָדוֹל: וְכֹל מֵאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא שׁוֹפֵט צָדֵק הַתֵּם וּמִתְּמָם  
עִם תְּמִימִים: וְכֹל מֵאֲמִינִים שֶׁהוּא תִּתֵּן פָּעֵל:

*And all believe that He is the faithful Almighty; who probes and searches hidden secrets. And all believe that He probes man's conscience; Who redeems from death and rescues from the grave. And all believe that He is a Mighty Redeemer; Who alone judges all who enter the world. And all believe that He is a true Judge; Who is called, "I am that I am". And all believe that He is was, and always will be; Certain is His Name, so is His praise. And all believe that He is, and there is none beside Him; Who is mindful of those who mention Him, recalling them with favor. And all believe that He is mindful of the covenant; Who apportions life to all the living. And all believe that He is Living and Permanent; Who is the source of goodness, and is beneficent to the wicked and the good. And all believe that He is good to all; Who knows the impulsive nature of all His creatures. And all believe that He formed them in the womb; Who is able to accomplish all things, and He completed their formation at one time. And all believe that He is able to accomplish all things; Who abides in the secret place— in the shelter of Shaddai, And all believe He is the only One; Who grants kingship to kings, and [all] sovereignty is His. And all believe that He the eternal King; Who guides every generation with kindness. And all believe that He preserves kindness; Who is patient, and overlooks the rebellious. And all believe that He pardons, Selah; Who is most high, and His eye looks to those who fear Him. And all believe that He answers prayer; Who opens the door to those who knock in repentance. And all believe that His hand is open; Who eagerly waits for the wicked [to repent], and desires his justification. And all believe that He is just and upright; Who is slow to anger, and long suffering. And all believe that He is difficult to anger; Who is merciful, and His compassion precedes His anger. And all believe that He is easily reconciled; Who is equal in His judgment and treats equally the small and the great. And all believe that He is a just Judge; Who is perfect and completely just with those who are perfect [with Him:] And all believe that He is perfect in all His work.*

## ■ MEANING:

Like many of the High Holiday poems, this prayer too follows an alphabetical motif. Each line begins with “All believe that” and is followed by a statement about G-d’s abilities, omniscience and kindness, culled from descriptions that scripture ascribes to G-d.

## ■ STORY:

“Who opens a gate to those who knock in repentance”: In this vein, the Talmud tells the following story:

Elazer ben Durdaya strayed from the path of Jewish life and became addicted to the allurements of lust and passion. One day he was overwhelmed by his lowly moral situation, and realised that his life was being wasted. He felt an intense need to return to G-d.

In his earnest desire to repent and with deep anguish, Elazer sought external help, and he called out, “Mountains and hills, ask mercy for me.” “Ask mercy for you? We must ask mercy for ourselves.” “Heaven and earth, ask mercy for me.” “Ask mercy for you? We must ask for ourselves.”

He called out to the sun and the moon, the stars and the planets. They all gave him the same response. Elazer sat upon the ground, and after a long and period of probing introspection, he placed his head between his knees and expired while crying, “It all depends on me – the responsibility is totally mine!”

A heavenly voice emerged and declared, “Rabbi Elazer is worthy of Eternal Life.”

## ■ STORY:

Reb Mendel Futerfas spent 14 years in hard labour camps because of his involvement in the chassidic underground in Stalinist Russia. The camp authorities knew that he would not perform ordinary work on the Jewish holidays, so they gave him chores that did not involve forbidden tasks, but that was the extent of their tolerance. It goes without saying that they did not provide him with time to pray or a prayer book.

One Rosh HaShanah, while Reb Mendel was performing the chores he was given, he was singing the holiday prayers to himself. While he was reciting the Musaf service and singing the hymn *vechol maaminim*, which declares how ‘all men share in the belief in G-d’, he stopped and thought: ‘Why am I in a hard-labour camp? Because there are people who do not believe and

whose unwillingness to believe was so fierce that they tried to crush – both physically and spiritually – those who did’.

As he was thinking, he noticed one of the guards looking at him closely. The guard was tall and imposing. He had a scar running across his face that made him look particularly threatening. With such a person eyeing him, it was better not to take time out to think. Reb Mendel returned to his chores and shortly afterwards, the guard moved on.

On Yom Kippur, as Reb Mendel was going about his assigned chores, he saw the guard with the scar approaching. The guard manoeuvred Reb Mendel into a corner, where no one else could see or hear what they were saying.

“Are you fasting today?” the guard asked Reb Mendel.

Reb Mendel answered in the affirmative. There was no way he could deny it; his observance was common knowledge.

“So am I,” the guard continued. “Ten days ago, I heard you chanting a tune and it brought back memories of my father taking me to shul as a child. I realised that it was Rosh Hashanah and I counted the days until Yom Kippur. I am also fasting.”

Reb Mendel and the guard both sensed that others might be looking, and each turned to go his way. But Reb Mendel’s quandary had been solved. He proceeded, humming the tune: **vechol maaminim**, “All believe.”

## Minchah

Minchah is prayed in the afternoon. The Minchah prayer can be found on p.598 of the Artscroll Machzor, p.389 in the Birnbaum Machzor or on p.272 of the Chabad Machzor.

## Maariv

The maariv prayer can be found on p. 646 in the Artscroll Machzor or p. 293 in the Chabad Machzor.

## Havdalah

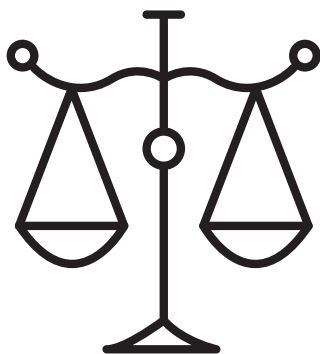
Following ma'ariv, we say havdalah, marking the holiday's conclusion. It can be found on p. 670 of the Artscroll Machzor or p. 306 of the Chabad Machzor. It is not found in the Birnbaum Machzor.

### ■ HOW TO:

It is customary that the father of the household recites Kiddush, and everyone present listens and answers *amen* after each of the blessings.

It is customary to stand while reciting *Havdalah*. Take the full cup of wine in your right hand, pass it to your left hand, and then lower it onto the palm of your right hand. Recite the blessing over wine and the *havdala* blessing

As tonight is not Saturday night, we do not make blessings on spices and flame.



# Ten Days of Returning

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**9-15 SEPTEMBER**

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**T**he period between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is fused with particular spiritual potency and is an apt time for prayer, self-reflection, Torah study and increased positive activity. These ten days are known collectively as The Ten Days of Returning.

Rabbi Isaac Luria of Tzfat (1534-1572), the father of modern Kabbalah, taught that the seven days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur correspond to the days of the week, each day representing all the

corresponding days of the year—Sunday representing all the previous year’s Sundays etc. Each of these days provides an opportunity to rectify anything negative that a person may have done, or any positive activity a person may have neglected, on the equivalent day throughout the year.

# *Fast of Gedaliah*

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**9 SEPTEMBER**

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## ■ HOW TO:

The day following Rosh Hashanah is a fast day, known as the Fast of Gedaliah. In Melbourne the fast begins at 5:09am and concludes at 6:38pm. Many have the custom to say special *selichot*—communal prayers for divine forgiveness—on the Fast of Gedaliah. These prayers can be found in the pre-High Holiday *selichot* book.

## ■ MEANING:

After destroying the first Temple and exiling most of Israel’s Jews in 423 BCE, Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon installed Gedaliah as governor over Israel’s remaining Jewish population. Under Gedaliah’s benevolent rule the Jewish population regained semi-autonomy, but in 339 BCE a jealous political rival murdered Gedaliah along with many of his confidants. Faced with chaos, Israel’s remaining Jews fled the country, marking the end of Jewish settlement in Israel until the Second Temple Period.

# *Shabbat Shuvah*

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**11 SEPTEMBER**

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The theme of Returning—the central theme of these ten days,—is reflected in the *haftorah* reading of this Shabbat. Taken from the prophet Hosea, the *haftorah* begins with the words “Return—*shuvah*—Israel to your G-d”. The Shabbat is therefore called *shabbat shuvah* and is an opportune time to pray, study, reflect and give to others.

# Day Before Yom Kippur

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15 SEPTEMBER

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## KAPPAROT:

On the morning of the day before Yom Kippur, many communities have the custom to perform *kapparot*—a ritual that helps atone for our sins through charity. We do so by waving a chicken, fish or money, whilst saying the text provided in the Machzor, symbolically redeeming our life with the *kappara*. After the ceremony make sure to donate the money to a charitable cause.

## MALKUT:

Before praying Minchah on the day before Yom Kippur, it is customary for men to receive symbolic “lashes”— by having another person softly ‘whipping’ them on the back for the sins they may have committed over the past year. Though only symbolic, receiving the *malkut* helps engender feelings of humility and repentance.

The recipient of the lashes kneels on the ground, facing north. The ‘whipper’ taps the belt on the recipient’s shoulders and back in a triangular sequence, thirteen times, totalling 39 taps.

## MIKVAH:

Many have the custom to immerse in a *mikvah* (ritual pool) on the day before Yom Kippur. Immersing in a private pool or at the beach can suffice to fulfil this pre-Yom Kippur custom.

## MEALS:

Just as is a mitzvah to fast on Yom Kippur, it is considered a mitzvah to eat on the day before Yom Kippur. We cannot honour the day of Yom Kippur itself with festive meals so we do so the day before. It is customary to have at least two meals on the day: one in the early afternoon and the second immediately before beginning the fast. Many have the custom to eat *kreplach*—ground meat wrapped in dough—at these meals.

## BLESSING CHILDREN:

Due to the spiritual potency of the time it has become a widespread custom for parents to bless their children before Yom Kippur begins. The traditional text of the blessing can be found in your Machzor. Be sure to add your own personal blessings and prayers as you bless your children at these most opportune moments.

## Minchah

The minchah prayer can be found on p. 6 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.1 in the Birnbaum Machzor or p. 9 in the Chabad Machzor. The confession prayer al chet is added at the end of the Amidah.



# Yom Kippur

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15-16 SEPTEMBER

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## **Spiritual Elevation: Disconnect from Physicality**

On Yom Kippur, the Torah instructs us to “afflict” ourselves by abstaining from an assortment of physical pleasures. There are two reasons given for this: a) on this holy day, when our connection to G-d is most prominent, we are similar to angels who have no physical needs. b) We afflict ourselves to demonstrate regret for our past misdeeds.

There are five types of pleasure that we avoid on Yom Kippur—from sundown on the eve of the holiday until the conclusion of Yom Kippur the following night.

- › Eating or drinking
- › Wearing leather footwear
- › Bathing or washing
- › Applying ointment, lotions or creams
- › Engaging in any form of marital intimacy

We also abstain from all activities generally forbidden on Shabbat, e.g., turning on lights, driving etc.

It is customary not to wear gold jewellery on Yom Kippur, as gold is reminiscent of the sin of the Golden Calf. On the Day of Atonement we do not want to “remind” the Prosecutor (Satan) of our previous sins.

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## DETAILS

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### FASTING:

Fasting on Yom Kippur is of utmost importance. This is true even if in order to fast a person must spend the entire day resting in bed.

All adults over bar or bat mitzvah, including pregnant or nursing women must fast.

Starting from the age of nine, children should be encouraged to fast for a short period of Yom Kippur. They shouldn't be given to eat after sundown on the eve of Yom Kippur and even breakfast should be slightly delayed.

People who are ill, post-partum woman, diabetics, people currently taking medication and those of advanced age, who would find it difficult or dangerous to fast, should consult a competent local Orthodox rabbi well in advance of Yom Kippur.

An ancient High Holiday prayer book suggests that an ill person who has been instructed by a rabbi to eat on Yom Kippur recite the following prayer before eating:

*Behold I am prepared to fulfil the mitzvah of eating and drinking on Yom Kippur, as You have written in Your Torah: “You shall observe My statutes and My ordinances, which a man shall do and live with them. I am G-d.” In the merit of fulfilling this mitzvah, seal [my fate] and [that of] all the ill of Your*

*nation Israel, for a complete recovery. May I merit next Yom Kippur to once again fulfil [the mitzvah of] “you shall afflict yourselves [on Yom Kippur].” May this be Your will. Amen.*

## LEATHER FOOTWEAR:

Shoes or slippers that contain any leather at all, whether in their uppers, soles, heels, or in an insert, should not be worn.

The prohibition applies to footwear only. Wearing a leather belt, kippah, or jacket presents no problem whatsoever.

Children should also wear non-leather footwear.

## WASHING AND BATHING:

The prohibition against washing or bathing applies to both hot and cold water and even washing only part of one’s body is forbidden. In the words of the Sages: “Even to insert a finger in cold water is forbidden.”

Nevertheless, there are several exceptions to this rule. They are:

- › It is permitted to wash hands upon exiting the lavatory.
- › It is permitted to wash any area of the body that has become soiled.
- › Upon awakening in the morning, one performs the ritual hand washing—but washes only until the knuckles.
- › Before they administer the Priestly Blessing, the Cohanim –Priests’- hands are ritually washed by the Levites in the normal fashion.
- › It is permitted to wash hands before handling food.
- › Someone who needs to bathe or wash for health reasons should consult a competent Orthodox Rabbi.

## Candle Lighting

It is customary to light a *ner neshama* - yahrzeit candle that burns throughout the 26 hours of Yom Kippur, to commemorate one’s deceased relatives. Some have the custom to light one candle for each loved one. It is also customary for each household to light another 26-hour candle for the living – *ner*

*shel chayim*. These candles should be lit *before* the regular Yom Tov candle lighting.

Candle lighting in Melbourne is at 5:52pm; the fast also commences at this time.

## ■ HOW TO:

Married women light two candles, with many adding an additional candle for each child. Unmarried ladies and girls light one candle. If there are no women at home, the man should light instead

After lighting the candle(s), draw your hands three times around the lights and towards your face, then place them over your eyes and recite the following two blessings.

The first blessing thanks G-d for giving us the day of Yom Kippur; the second blessing is the *Shehechyanu*, thanking G-d for giving us the opportunity to celebrate another Jewish holiday.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו  
וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל יוֹם הַכִּפּוּרִים:

*Blessed are You, L-rd, our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us to kindle the light of the Day of Atonement.*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה:

*Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, Who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this season.*

# Yom Kippur Night

15 SEPTEMBER

## Kol Nidrei

The Kol Nidrei prayer can be found on p. 56 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.45 in the Birnbaum Machzor or p. 35 in the Chabad Machzor.

*Say three times*

כָּל נִדְרֵי וְאֶסְרֵי וּשְׁבוּעֵי וְחַרְמֵי וְקוֹנָמִי וְקוֹנוֹיִי. וְקִנּוּסֵי דְנִדְרָנָא.  
וְדִאֲשְׁתַּבְּעָנָא. וְדִאֲחֲרִימָנָא. וְדִאֲסָרָנָא עַל נַפְשִׁתָנָא. מִיּוֹם כְּפוּרִים זֶה  
עַד יוֹם כְּפוּרִים הַבָּא עָלֵינוּ לְטוֹבָה. בְּכָל־הוֹן אַחֲרִטָנָא בְּהוֹן. כְּלָהוֹן יִהְיוּ  
שָׂרוֹן. שְׁבִיקוֹן, שְׁבִיתוֹן, בְּטָלִין וּמִבְטָלִין, לֹא שְׂרִירִין וְלֹא קִימִין: נִדְרָנָא  
לֹא נִדְרֵי. וְאֶסְרָנָא לֹא אֶסְרֵי. וּשְׁבוּעָתָנָא לֹא שְׁבוּעוֹת:

*All vows, (self-imposed) prohibitions, oaths, consecrations, restrictions, interdictions and any other expression of vows, which that I may vow, swear, dedicate (for sacred use), or which I may proscribe for myself or for others; from this Yom Kippur until next Yom Kippur— may it come to us at a good time— We regret them all; may they all be absolved, remitted, cancelled, declared null and void. Let our vows no longer be considered vows and our prohibitions no longer be prohibited and our oaths not be considered oaths.*

*Say three times*

וְנִסְלַח לְכָל עַדְת בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְלַגֵּר הַגֵּר בְּתוֹכָם כִּי לְכָל הָעָם בְּשִׁגָּגָה:

*Forgive the entire congregation of the Children of Israel and the proselyte who dwells amongst them; for the entire people acted unintentionally.*

*Say once*

סָלַח נָא לַעֲוֹן הָעָם הַזֶּה כְּגֹדֶל חֲסִדְךָ וְכֹאֲשֶׁר נִשְׁאַתָּה לַעֲם הַזֶּה  
מִמִּצְרִים וְעַד הַנֶּה: וְשֵׁם נְאֻמָּר:



*Please pardon the sins of this nation in accordance with the greatness of Your lovingkindness; and as You forgave this people from when it left Egypt until now. And there it is said:*

*Say three times:*

**וַיֹּאמֶר יי סְלַחְתִּי כְּדַבַּרְךָ:**

*“And G-d said I have pardoned [them] as you have asked”*

*Those who have already recited the blessing of Shehecheyanu below before lighting the Yom Tov candles, do not recite it again now*

**בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה:**

*Blessed are You, L-rd, our G-d, King of the Universe Who has kept us alive and sustained us and brought us to this time.*

## ■ MEANING:

Kol Nidrei is arguably the most famous prayer in the entire High Holiday liturgy. More a statement than prayer, it is a peculiar declaration in which, before G-d and His heavenly court, we annul in advance any promises that we may make in the future year. Incorporated into the liturgy sometime in the 10<sup>th</sup> century, its composer remains a mystery.

The prayer contains three sections:

- › Body of the prayer - announcing the voidance of all vows
- › Conclusion - instances in scripture where G-d forgives the Jewish people
- › *Shehechyanu* - thanking G-d for giving us the opportunity to celebrate this holiday.

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

The Zohar, the primary text of Kabbalistic tradition, provides insight into the spiritual function of the Kol Nidrei prayer:

By creating humanity in His image, G-d set in motion a reciprocal process between humans and Himself—humans' attitude toward G-d would, in kind, shape G-d's attitude toward them.

Through releasing our vows, we are inviting G-d to do the same. In the event that He has pledged not to bring the redemption just yet, or if He has made an oath to bring negativity to the world in the following year, we ask that He release these vows and instead grant us a year of happiness and redemption.

## ■ STORY:

In the weeks leading up to the High Holidays, the community felt that something was amiss. Their Rabbi, Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740-1810), usually so upbeat and positive, looked downcast. His eyes had grown red from weeping and an uncharacteristic sigh would often escape his lips. Perhaps, they thought, he sees a terrible calamity decreed for the coming year, G-d forbid.

Several days before Yom Kippur, Rabbi Levi Yitzchak summoned his secretary. "Lately, the number of people coming to request that I pray for them on Yom Kippur has been steadily increasing," said the Rebbe.

“It’s time we set a fixed price for the requests. I think we should ask for two groschen for each name written in a request.”

Despite the secretary’s surprise at the Rabbi’s uncharacteristic behaviour, he spread the news: the Rebbe was demanding two groschen for each name.

A sense of urgency was felt throughout the town—the Rebbe’s strange stipulation, coupled with his ominous behaviour of the last few weeks, fed the feeling that it was of utmost importance to be included in the Rebbe’s list. Two groschen was not such a great sum, but for an impoverished peddler or tailor with a dozen children to register, it was no small expense. Still, not a soul stayed behind. This year, no one was taking any chances.

Around mid-day on the day of Kol Nidrei eve, a woman approached the secretary and begged for an exemption. “I am a poor widow with an only child, without a single groschen in my purse. How can I pay four groschen so that my child and I may be inscribed in the book of life? Please, have mercy on me and my fatherless child and allow me to add our names to the Rebbe’s list. I promise to pay the entire sum as soon as I have the money.”

Levi Yitzchak wouldn’t hear of it. The widow left, heartbroken, but resolved to attain the promised redemption for herself and her child. One way or another, she would get the money.

Hours passed. The last of the petitioners had already left and the hour of *Kol Nidrei*, the solemn prayer which opens the Yom Kippur service, was fast approaching.

A small, shawled figure was seen hurrying along the deserted street. It was the widow, a folded piece of paper and a few coins in her hand. “Thank G-d the Rebbe is still home,” she cried. “Here Rebbe. Please pray for me and for my only child that we may be inscribed in the book of life.”

“But you only have two groschen here,” protested Rabbi Levi Yitzchak, peering at the coppers she had placed on the table. “You can only write one name on the list.”

“Holy Rebbe,” cried the woman, “I have been running about all day, borrowing from everyone that I know. This is all I was able to come up with. Please pray for us both! I promise to pay the rest within a week.”

"I'm sorry," insisted the Rebbe, "the price is two groschen per name. Which name do you want to include?"

With trembling fingers, the woman crossed out her own name. "Pray for my son, Rebbe," she said, her eyes brimming with tears, "that he should have a year of life, health and happiness."

Upon hearing these words, Levi Yitzchak's eyes came alive with a fiery light. Grasping the widow's two groschen in one fist and her paper in the other, he raised them triumphantly to heaven: "Father in Heaven! Look! Look what a mortal mother is prepared to do for her child! And You—shall it be said You are less a parent to *Your* children?! Can You look this woman in the eye and refuse to grant Your own children a year of life, health and happiness?!"

"Come," said Rabbi Levi Yitzchak to his secretary and to the widow, "let us go to *Kol Nidrei*."



The Ma'ariv prayer, recited following Kol Nidrei, can be found on p. 66 of the Artscroll Machzor, p.51 in the Birnbaum Machzor or p. 42 of the Chabad Machzor. The Shema / Amidah prayers can be found on p. 68-78 of the Artscroll Machzor, p.59-73 in the Birnbaum Machzor or p. 44-47 of the Chabad Machzor. A collection of inspiring and thought-provoking prayers are recited following the Amidah.

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## SPOTLIGHT ON PRAYERS

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### YAALEH:

יַעֲלֶה תַּחֲנוּנֵנוּ מֵעֶרֶב. וַיָּבֹא שׁוֹעֲתָנוּ מִבֶּקֶר. וַיֵּרָאָה רְנוּנֵנוּ עַד עֶרֶב:  
יַעֲלֶה קוֹלֵנוּ מֵעֶרֶב. וַיָּבֹא צְדָקָתָנוּ מִבֶּקֶר. וַיֵּרָאָה פְּדִינֵנוּ עַד עֶרֶב:  
יַעֲלֶה עֲנוּיֵנוּ מֵעֶרֶב. וַיָּבֹא סְלִיחָתָנוּ מִבֶּקֶר. וַיֵּרָאָה נֶאֱקָתָנוּ עַד עֶרֶב:  
יַעֲלֶה מְנוּסָנוּ מֵעֶרֶב. וַיָּבֹא לְמַעַנּוּ מִבֶּקֶר. וַיֵּרָאָה כְּפוּרֵנוּ עַד עֶרֶב:

יַעֲלֶה יִשְׁעֵנוּ מֵעֶרֶב. וַיָּבֹא טְהִרְנוּ מִבֶּקֶר. וַיֵּרָא הַנוֹנֵנוּ עַד עֶרֶב: יַעֲלֶה  
 זְכוּרֵנוּ מֵעֶרֶב. וַיָּבֹא וְעוֹדֵנוּ מִבֶּקֶר. וַיֵּרָא הַדֶּרֶתֵנוּ עַד עֶרֶב: יַעֲלֶה  
 דְּפִקְנוּ מֵעֶרֶב. וַיָּבֹא גִילָנוּ מִבֶּקֶר. וַיֵּרָא בְקִשְׁתָּנוּ עַד עֶרֶב: יַעֲלֶה  
 אֲנִקְתָּנוּ מֵעֶרֶב. וַיָּבֹא אֵלֵינוּ מִבֶּקֶר. וַיֵּרָא אֵלֵינוּ עַד עֶרֶב:

*May our supplication ascend from the evening, and may our cry come from the morning, and may our song appear till evening.*

*May our voice ascend from the evening, and may our righteousness come from the morning, and may our redemption appear till evening.*

*May our affliction ascend from the evening, and may our pardon come from the morning, and may our groaning appear till evening.*

*May our refuge ascend from the evening, and may it come for His sake from the morning, and may our atonement appear till evening.*

*May our deliverance ascend from the evening, and may our purification come from the morning, and may our supplication appear till evening.*

*May our remembrance ascend from the evening, and may our gathering come from the morning, and may our splendor appear till evening.*

*May our knocking ascend from the evening, and may our exultation come from the morning, and may our petition appear till evening.*

*May our sighing ascend from the evening, and may it come before You from the morning, and may its effect appear to us till evening.*

## ■ MEANING:

Many High Holiday poems were written as acrostics, with words following the order of the Hebrew alphabet, *Ya'aleh* however is a reverse acrostic, beginning with *tav* and concluding with *alef*, demonstrating that after man reaches the full extent of his understanding, he should go back to the beginning and deepen his spiritual understanding even more.

The prayer follows a repetitive sequence that describes our prayers this eve and tomorrow morning and our hopes for a beneficial outcome before the conclusion of Yom Kippur.

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

Day and night can also be understood allegorically; day connotes times when G-d's presence is readily felt, night refers to circumstances where His providence is hidden.

The message: in all situations, no matter how challenging, G-d is present, albeit concealed. We can always reach out to Him for comfort and help.

## ■ STORY:

“And may our joy arise from morning” implies that our Yom Kippur confessions contain an element of joy.

The Baal Shem Tov, founder of the Chassidic revolution, once arrived in a town, not long before the High Holidays. Seeking information about the town's festival services, he was told that the city's Rabbi led the prayers every year.

“Is there anything unique about his prayers,” The Baal Shem Tov asked of the townsmen. “



Yes”, they revealed, somewhat hesitantly, “He sings the sombre Yom Kippur confessional prayers to joyous, upbeat tunes”.

Curious, the Baal Shem Tov requested an explanation. The Rabbi explained, “Suppose you served as the janitor of a mighty king’s stables. What an opportunity—to serve the King! Wouldn’t you dance and sing, even as you were shovelling away the filth?”

The Baal Shem tov appreciated the insight into the privilege and potential of Yom Kippur, as we exercise the opportunity to cleanse our soul from sin and decided to stay in town for Yom Kippur.

## KI HINEI:

כִּי הִנֵּה כַּחֲמֶר בְּיַד הַיּוֹצֵר. בְּרָצוֹתוֹ מְרַחֵב וּבְרָצוֹתוֹ מְקַצֵּר. כֵּן אֲנַחְנוּ בְּיַד  
הַיּוֹצֵר חֹסֵד נוֹצֵר. לְבִרְיַת הַבֵּט וְאֶל תִּפְּן לִיִּצֵּר: כִּי הִנֵּה כְּאֵבֶן בְּיַד  
הַמְּסַתֵּת. בְּרָצוֹתוֹ אוֹחֵז וּבְרָצוֹתוֹ מְכַתֵּת. כֵּן אֲנַחְנוּ בְּיַד מְחִיָּה  
וּמְמוֹתֵת. לְבִרְיַת הַבֵּט וְאֶל תִּפְּן לִיִּצֵּר כִּי הִנֵּה כְּגִרְזֵן בְּיַד הַחֶרֶשׁ.  
בְּרָצוֹתוֹ דֹּבֵק לְאוֹר וּבְרָצוֹתוֹ פֶּרֶשׁ. כֵּן אֲנַחְנוּ בְּיַד תּוֹמֵךְ עֵינֵי וְרֵשׁ.  
לְבִרְיַת הַבֵּט וְאֶל תִּפְּן לִיִּצֵּר: כִּי הִנֵּה כְּהֶגֶה בְּיַד הַמֶּלֶח. בְּרָצוֹתוֹ אוֹחֵז  
וּבְרָצוֹתוֹ שֹׁלַח. כֵּן אֲנַחְנוּ בְּיַד אֵל טוֹב וְסֹלַח. לְבִרְיַת הַבֵּט וְאֶל תִּפְּן  
לִיִּצֵּר: כִּי הִנֵּה כְּזֹכוּכִית בְּיַד הַמְּזַגֵּג. בְּרָצוֹתוֹ חוֹגֵג וּבְרָצוֹתוֹ מְמוֹגֵג. כֵּן  
אֲנַחְנוּ בְּיַד מַעֲבִיר זֶדוֹן וְשׁוֹגֵג. לְבִרְיַת הַבֵּט וְאֶל תִּפְּן לִיִּצֵּר: כִּי הִנֵּה  
כְּיִרְעָה בְּיַד הָרוֹקֵם. בְּרָצוֹתוֹ מִיֵּשֶׁר וּבְרָצוֹתוֹ מַעֲקָם. כֵּן אֲנַחְנוּ בְּיַד  
אֵל קֹנֵא וְנוֹקֵם. לְבִרְיַת הַבֵּט וְאֶל תִּפְּן לִיִּצֵּר: כִּי הִנֵּה כְּכֶסֶף בְּיַד הַצּוֹרֵף.  
בְּרָצוֹתוֹ מְסַגֵּס וּבְרָצוֹתוֹ מַצְרֵף. כֵּן אֲנַחְנוּ בְּיַד מַמְצִיא לְמוֹזֵר תֶּרֶף.  
לְבִרְיַת הַבֵּט וְאֶל תִּפְּן לִיִּצֵּר:

*Like clay in the hands of the potter, if he wills, he can expand it, if he wills, he can contract it; so too are we in Your hand, Preserver of kindness. Heed the covenant and not the accuser!*

*Like stone in the hand of the mason, if he wills, he holds it [in position], if he wills, he smashes it; so too are we in Your hands, Causer of life and death. Heed the covenant and not the accuser!*

*Like iron in the hand of the smith, if he wills, he puts it to the fire, if he wills, he removes it; so too are we in Your hand, Supporter of the poor and destitute Heed the covenant and not the accuser!*

*Like the rudder in the hand of a seaman, if he wills, he holds it if he wills, he lets it go; so too are we in Your hand, Almighty, Who is good and pardons. Heed the covenant and not the accuser!*

*Like glass in the hand of the glazier, if he wills, he shapes it, if he wills, he dissolves it; so too are we in Your hand, Absolver of intentional and unintentional sin. Heed the covenant and not the accuser!*

*Like a tapestry in the hand of an embroiderer, if he wills, he makes it straight if he wills, he makes it crooked; so too are we in Your hand, jealous and vengeful Almighty heed the covenant and not the accuser!*

*Like silver in the hand of the refiner if he wills, he adulterates it, if he wills, he keeps it pure; so too are we in Your hand, Who prepares a cure for our wounds. Heed the covenant and not the accuser!*

## ■ MEANING:

Appearing in Machzor's from early 12<sup>th</sup> century, the *ki hinei kachomer* prayer applies moving metaphors to describe humanity's dependence on G-d. "Like clay in the hands of the potter", "like a stone in the hand of a cutter", "like silver in the hands of the smith". Each stanza concludes with a request that G-d remember His covenant with the Jewish people and act kindly towards us.

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

"Like silver in the hands of the silversmith": Just like silver must undergo refinement in order that its purest elements may be extracted, we too must work hard to shake off our negative habits and to unleash the full potential that lies buried within.

Through gifting us the Torah, G-d gave us the ability to shape our minds and morals according to His will.

## SHEMA KOLEINU:

שְׁמַע קוֹלֵנוּ יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ חוּס וְרַחֵם עָלֵינוּ

וְקַבֵּל בְּרַחֲמִים וּבְרָצוֹן אֶת תְּפִלָּתֵנוּ:

הַשִּׁיבֵנוּ יי אֵלֶיךָ וְנִשְׁוֶבָה חֲדָשׁ יָמֵינוּ כְּקֶדֶם.

אֶל תִּשְׁלִיכֵנוּ מִלְפָּנֶיךָ וְרוּחַ קִדְשְׁךָ אֶל תִּקַּח מִמֶּנּוּ:

אֶל תִּשְׁלִיכֵנוּ לַעֲת זְקֵנָה כְּכֹלֹת כְּחֵנוּ אֶל תַּעֲזֹבֵנוּ

*Hear our voice, L-rd, our G-d; spare us and have compassion on us  
and accept our prayers mercifully and willingly.*

*Lead us back to You, L-rd and we shall find the way back;  
renew our days as of old.*

*Cast us not away from Your Presence and Your holy spirit take not from us.*

*Do not cast us off in time of old age, when our strength fails,  
do not forsake us.*

### ■ MEANING

This prayer is repeated in each of the Yom Kippur prayers. We acknowledge our shortcomings, ask G-d to help us return to Him and request that G-d answer our prayers.

### ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

Shema is one of the key words of Judaism, perhaps the key word. It's almost impossible to translate, because it has so many shades of meaning. It means variously to hear, to listen, to pay attention, to understand, to internalise and to respond.

Judaism is a religion of holy words: Torah is G-d's word to us and tefillah - prayer - is our word to G-d.

And behind the service of Yom Kippur lies an extraordinary historical drama. In biblical times there were holy places. The land of Israel was holy. Holier still was Jerusalem. Within Jerusalem the holiest site was the Temple. And within the Temple there was a place supremely sacred, called the holy of holies.

And there are holy times within Judaism too. There are the festivals. Holier still is Shabbat. Holier even than that is the one day - Yom Kippur. The Day of Atonement.

Thirdly there are holy people. Israel itself is called a holy nation. Within it the holiest of tribes are the Leviim, the Levites. Among the Leviim, holier still, are the Cohanim, the priests. And among priests was one holier than all others, the Cohen Gadol, the High Priest.

And once a year, the holiest man entered the holiest place, on the holiest day and sought atonement for all Israel.

But then the Temple was destroyed. Jerusalem was reduced to ruins. There were no more sacrifices and no more High Priests.

What remained? Just the day itself. And us, the Jewish people. And that was when our ancestors discovered that wherever we pray becomes a mikdash me'at, a minor temple. Every prayer said from the heart is like a sacrifice. And when there is no High Priest to bring our prayers to G-d, G-d listens to each of us as if we were the High Priest.

We no longer have the service of the Temple, but we still have the service of the heart and the knowledge that G-d listens to every word we say if it comes from the heart. Though we lost all else, we still have the words.

Shema koleinu. G-d, Hear our voice. Have pity and compassion on us, for we have nothing to give You but our prayers.

## ■ STORY:

Rabbi Dovber of Mezritch (1704-1772), the successor to the Baal Shem Tov, offered a metaphor to understand exile:

A father plays a game of hide-and-seek with his child. The child is forced to search for the father; when finally found the two of them enjoy greater intimacy than before. Similarly, G-d hides from His children, the Jewish people. He forces us to search for Him, requiring us to dig deeper into our soul in order to discover Him. When we finally do find G-d and leave exile, our connection with Him will be that much deeper.

But what happens if the child gets fed up with the game and gives up? Surely, the father wouldn't remain in hiding! So, we implore G-d: "we've been in exile for far too long, we no longer have strength to continue searching for You; don't forsake us—stop hiding!"

# Yom Kippur Day

16 SEPTEMBER

## Shacharit

The Shacharit prayers for Yom Kippur can be found on p. 282 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.219 in the Birnbaum Machzor or p.115 in the Chabad Machzor.

### SPOTLIGHT ON PRAYERS

#### ASHAMNU:

##### ■ HOW TO:

While saying each confession, gently strike your heart with a closed fist.

אֲשָׁמְנוּ. בָּגַדְנוּ. גָּזַלְנוּ. דָּבַרְנוּ דְּפִי. הֶעָוִינוּ. וְהִרְשָׁעְנוּ. זָדוּנוּ. חָמְסְנוּ.  
טָפְלָנוּ שָׁקַר. יַעֲצָנוּ רָע. כָּזַבְנוּ. לָצָנוּ. מִרְדְּנוּ. נָאֲצָנוּ. סָרְרָנוּ. עֲוִינוּ.  
פָּשַׁעְנוּ. צָרְרָנוּ. קִשְׁיָנוּ עֲרָף. רָשָׁעְנוּ. שָׁחַתְנוּ. תַּעֲבָנוּ. תַּעֲנִינוּ. תַּעֲתִיעֵנוּ:

*We have trespassed; We have betrayed; We have stolen; We have slandered.  
We have caused others to sin; We have caused others to commit sins;  
We have sinned with malicious intent; We have forcibly taken others'  
possessions even though we paid for them; We have added falsehood upon  
falsehood; We have joined with evil individuals or groups; We have given  
harmful advice; We have deceived; we have mocked; We have rebelled  
against G-d and His Torah; We have caused G-d to be angry with us; We  
have turned away from G-d's Torah; We have sinned deliberately; We  
have been negligent in our performance of the commandments; We have  
caused our friends grief; We have been stiff-necked, refusing to admit  
that our suffering is caused by our own sins. We have committed sins. We  
have committed sins which are the result of moral corruption; We have  
committed sins which the Torah refers to as abominations; We have gone  
astray; We have led others astray.*

## ■ MEANING:

The *ashamnu* prayer is a confession that follows an alphabetic motif. It contains confession for sins that we may have committed through our words or actions. Many of the confessions, though, are ambiguous—lending flexibility for each individual to interpret them as personally relevant.

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

The *ashamnu* prayer uses the language “we”, not “I”. “We have sinned”, “We have betrayed” Rabbi Isaac Luria of Tzfat, the father of Modern Kabbala, explained: the Jewish people are a body—a sickness in one limb weakens the entire organism. We all must help each other grow and improve.

**Avinu Malkeinu:** See 2nd Day Rosh Hashanah

# Torah Reading

Today's Torah Reading can be found on p. 452 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.409 in the Birnbaum Machzor or p. 202 in the Chabad Machzor. Today's haftorah reading can be found on p. 462 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.417 in the Birnbaum Machzor or p. 207 in the Chabad Machzor.

## ■ SYNOPSIS

Today's Torah reading describes the High Priest's activities in the Holy Temple on the day of Yom Kippur.

The climax of the service was when the High Priest entered the innermost chamber in the Temple, the Holy of Holies, to attain forgiveness for the Jewish people. Today's mussaf prayer describes this event in great detail.

In today's haftorah, Isaiah gives the Jews of his time a lesson regarding the role that fasting plays in Returning to G-d; an apt theme for Yom Kippur.

# Yizkor

## ■ HOW TO:

There are four variants on the Yizkor prayer: for a deceased father, a deceased mother, deceased relatives and Jewish martyrs. Before saying the Yizkor prayer(s), it is customary to pledge toward charitable causes in memory of the loved one(s) that you are remembering.

*In memory of a father:*

יִזְכּוֹר אֱלֹהִים נְשִׁמַּת אָבִא מוֹרִי (פלוני בן פלוני) שֶׁהָלַךְ לְעוֹלָמוֹ בְּעֶבְרָה  
שְׁבִלֵי נֶדֶר אֲתָן צְדָקָה בְּעֵדוֹ בְּשִׁכְרָה זֶה תְּהֵא נִפְשׁוֹ צְרוּרָה בְּצִרוֹר  
הַחַיִּים עִם נְשִׁמוֹת אֲבֹרָהֶם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב שָׂרָה רַבֵּקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה וְעִם  
שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצְדִיקְנִיּוֹת שְׁבָגָן עֵדֶן וְנֹאמֵר אָמֵן:

*May G-d remember the soul of my father, my teacher, (father's name) son of (his father's name) and that of his father) who has gone to his world, because I pledge, without vowing, to donate charity for his sake In this merit, may his soul be bound up in the bond of life, with the souls of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah and with the other righteous men and women who are in the Gan Eden (Paradise) and let us say Amein.*



*In memory of a mother:*

יִזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים נִשְׁמַת אִמִּי מוֹרְתִי (פְּלוֹנִית בַּת פְּלוֹנִי) שֶׁהִלְכָה לְעוֹלָמָהּ  
בְּעֵבוֹר שְׁבִלִי נָדָר אֶתֵּן צְדָקָה בְּעֵדָה וּבִשְׂכָר זֶה תִּהְיֶה נִפְשָׁה צְרוּרָה  
בְּצִרוֹר הַחַיִּים עִם נִשְׁמוֹת אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל  
וְלֵאָה וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצַדִּיקָנוֹת שְׁבִגְן עֵדֶן וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:

*May G-d remember the soul of my mother, my teacher, (mother's name)  
daughter of (her father's name) who has gone to her world. because I pledge,  
without vowing, to donate charity for her sake. In this merit, may her soul  
be bound up in the bond of life, with the souls of Avraham, Yitzchak and  
Yaakov, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah and with the other righteous men  
and women who are in Gan Eden (Paradise) and let us say, Amein.*

*In memory of other relatives:*

יִזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים נִשְׁמוֹת זִקְנֵי וְזִקְנוֹתֵי דוּדֵי וְדוּדוֹתֵי אַחֵי וְאֶחָיוֹתֵי שֶׁהִלְכוּ  
לְעוֹלָמָם בְּעֵבוֹר שְׁבִלִי נָדָר אֶתֵּן צְדָקָה בְּעֵדָם וּבִשְׂכָר זֶה תִּהְיֶינָה  
נִפְשוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצִרוֹר הַחַיִּים עִם נִשְׁמוֹת אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק וְיַעֲקֹב  
שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצַדִּיקָנוֹת שְׁבִגְן עֵדֶן וְנֹאמַר  
אָמֵן:

*May G-d remember the soul of my grandfathers, grandmothers, uncles,  
aunts, brothers and sisters who have gone to their world, because I pledge,  
without vowing, to donate charity for their sake. In this merit may their  
souls be bound up in the bond of life, with the souls of Avraham, Yitzchak  
and Yaakov, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah and with the other righteous  
men and women who are in Gan Eden (Paradise) and let us say, Amein.*

*In memory of Jewish martyrs:*

יִזְכֹּר אֱלֹהִים נִשְׁמוֹת כָּל קְרוֹבֵי וּקְרוֹבוֹתֵי וְכָל הַקְדוּשִׁים שֶׁנִּהְרְגוּ  
שֶׁנִּשְׁחָטוּ וְשֶׁנִּשְׂרָפוּ וְשֶׁנִּטְבְּעוּ וְשֶׁנִּחְנְקוּ עַל קְדוּשַׁת הַשֵּׁם בְּעֵבוֹר  
שְׁבִלִי נָדָר אֶתֵּן צְדָקָה בְּעֵד הַזִּכְרָת נִשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם וּבִשְׂכָר זֶה תִּהְיֶינָה  
נִפְשוֹתֵיהֶם צְרוּרוֹת בְּצִרוֹר הַחַיִּים עִם נִשְׁמוֹתֵיהֶם שֶׁל אַבְרָהָם יִצְחָק  
וְיַעֲקֹב שָׂרָה רִבְקָה רָחֵל וְלֵאָה וְעִם שְׂאֵר צְדִיקִים וְצַדִּיקָנוֹת שְׁבִגְן עֵדֶן  
וְנֹאמַר אָמֵן:

*May G-d remember the souls of all my relatives and all the hallowed martyrs who were killed, slaughtered, burned, drowned and strangled for the sanctification of Your Name, because I pledge, without vowing, to donate charity for the sake of their memory. In this merit, may their souls be bound up in the bond of life, with the souls of Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov, Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel and Leah and with the other righteous men and women who are in Gan Eden (Paradise) and let us say Amein.*

## ■ MEANING:

Remembering the souls of loved ones on Yom Kippur and donating to charitable causes in their memory is an ancient Jewish custom. Indeed, the Torah refers to Yom Kippur as *Yom haKippurim*, in the plural, because it is a day of forgiveness for both the living *and* the dead.

The Yizkor practice attests to two fundamental Jewish principles: the eternality of the soul and the power of those still living to affect those on high.

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

Recalling the departed is not merely a convenient form of emotional release, but an act of solemn piety and an expression of profound respect. The Yizkor memorial service was instituted so that Jews may pay homage to their forebears and fondly recall their good deeds.

The memorial service is founded on a vital principle of Jewish life, the same motivation for reciting Kaddish. It is based on the absolute belief that the living, by acts of piety and goodness, can redeem the dead. A son can bring honour to the father and the “merit of the children” reflects the values of their parents. This merit is achieved, primarily by living on a high ethical and moral plane, by being responsive to the demands of G-d and sensitive to the needs of our fellowman. The formal expression of this merit is accomplished by prayer to G-d and by contributions to charity. – The Jewish Way in Death and Mourning

The preferred place to recite *Yizkor* is in a synagogue following the reading of the Torah. However, when that cannot be done, it is possible—and encouraged—to recite the prayer at home, along with a mental pledge to donate funds to charity in memory of the departed after the holiday.

## ■ STORY:

Sholom Asch, a Yiddish novelist, shares a story about the indomitable parent-child connection:

An elderly Jewish couple in Russia were forced by the government to house a soldier in their home. They moved out of their bedroom and a gruff young man moved in with his pack, rifle and bedroll.

On Friday night, the couple prepared to sit down for Shabbat dinner. To their surprise, the soldier joined them. He stared with wide eyes as the old woman kindled the Shabbat candles. He listened intently as the old man chanted the Kiddush. His face was a picture of bewilderment. Something about this scene—the candles, the chant, the taste of the challah, had captured him.

Finally, he rose from his seat and beckoned the old man to follow him, back into the bedroom. He pulled his heavy pack from the floor onto the bed and began to pull things out. Uniforms, equipment and ammunition spilled out. Until finally, at the very bottom, he pulled out a small velvet bag, tied with a drawstring. “Can you tell me, perhaps, what this is?” he asks the old man, with imploring eyes.

The old man took the bag in trembling fingers and opened the string. Inside is a child’s *tallit*, a tiny set of *tefillin* and small book of Hebrew prayers. “Where did you get this?”

“I have always had it...I don’t remember since when...”

The old man opened the prayer book and read the inscription, his eyes filling with tears:

“To our son, Yossel, taken from us as a boy, should you ever see your Bar Mitzvah, know that your mama and tata always love you.”

Mussaf Amidah prayer can be found on p.486 in the ArtScroll Machzor, on p.215 in the Chabad Machzor or on p.445 in the Birnbaum Machzor

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## SPOTLIGHT ON PRAYERS

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**Untaneh Tokef:** *See 1st Day Rosh Hashanah*

### AVODAH – THE HIGH PRIEST’S YOM KIPPUR TEMPLE SERVICE

#### ■ MEANING:

When the Temple stood in Jerusalem, the centrepiece of Yom Kippur was the service performed by the High Priest. Many of its components, such as entering the Holy of Holies, were unique in that they were not performed on any other day of the year.

The High Priest’s Yom Kippur service effected atonement for him and the entire nation. Throughout the day, the Jewish people would wait anxiously in the Temple courtyard for the High Priest to emerge. When he finally did, he was welcomed with great rejoicing—G-d had granted His people forgiveness, Father and child were now reunited.

In the absence of the Temple, the High Priest’s service is replaced by our recitation of its laws.

#### ■ STORY:

After describing the High Priest’s spectacular Yom Kippur Temple service, the Machzor reminds us of the sad reality of the Temple’s destruction and the exile in which we find ourselves.

The most famous section is a poem that recounts the episode of the Ten Martyrs—ten iconic Jewish sages who were brutally tortured and murdered by the Romans during the end of the second Temple period. Rabbi Akiva was one of these martyrs.

Rabbi Akiva publicly flouted the Roman decree against Torah study. He explained his actions with the now-famous fox and fish analogy: the fox tells the frantic fish that he can save them from the fishermen's nets by helping them out of the water. The fish respond: "out of the water, we will surely die; in the water, though we are in danger, at least we stand a chance". Similarly, Rabbi Akiva explained, "without the Torah, our spiritual life force, we are as good as dead".

Eventually, the Romans arrested Rabbi Akiva and tortured him by flaying his flesh with iron combs. Impervious to the pain, Rabbi Akiva recited the *Shema* with joy. “

Why do you smile?” his students asked with horror.

“For my entire life, I have anticipated the opportunity to sanctify G-d's name”, he responded.

As he pronounced the word *echad*, which signifies the unity of G-d, Rabbi Akiva's soul departed. Although his murder was a tragedy, Rabbi Akiva's sacrifice has served as an inspiration for countless Jewish martyrs throughout the centuries.

## BARUCH SHEM:

When the High Priest would proclaim G-d's ineffable name during the Yom Kippur service, the Jewish people would prostrate themselves and recite the *baruch shem* prayer. Today, we do the same.

### ■ HOW TO:

Lower yourself to the ground, kneel, then lean over until your head touches the floor. Then recite *baruch shem*.

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מַלְכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

*Blessed is His Name, His glorious Kingdom is forever and ever.*

### ■ MEANING:

Only the High Priest and other holy people were taught the proper pronunciation and understood the true spiritual significance of G-d's ineffable name. The very thought of G-d's name instilled awe. Upon hearing the High Priest proclaim it the Jews would fall on their faces.

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

By prostrating before G-d we express complete submission to Him. We place our head on the same level as the rest of our body, indicating that before G-d, human intelligence is mute; He is truly unknowable.

## Minchah

The minchah prayer can be found on p. 626 of the Artscroll Machzor, p.601 in the Birnbaum Machzor or p. 304 of the Chabad Machzor.

## TORAH READING:

During the minchah service, we read Chapter 18 of Leviticus which details the prohibitions against incest and other deviant sexual behaviours.

The haftorah reading tells the story of Jonah—the archetypal tale of Return. G-d sends Jonah to prophesize the destruction of the sinful city of Ninveh. Instead, he runs away from G-d. Swallowed by a giant fish, he learns the power of prayer and repentance to evoke G-d's mercy and annul the harshest decrees.

## Neilah

The neilah prayer can be found on p. 706 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.681 in the Birnbaum Machzor or p. 347 in the Chabad Machzor.

## ■ MEANING:

The *neilah* prayer is the fifth and final Yom Kippur prayer. *Neilah* means closing; in the prayer we describe the gates of heaven closing as the Yom Kippur sun sets. It is our last opportunity to seek G-d's forgiveness on this awesome day.

The Chasidic masters provide a refreshing interpretation of 'the closing of heaven's gates': they are closing, but with us on the inside.

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

Having fasted for twenty-four odd hours, our mouths are parched, our thinking clouded and our emotions irritable. We are in no state for elaborate meditations or lofty intentions. But this is the point: we now stand before G-d like a child in front of a parent, with simple, raw devotion.

The Kabbalists teach that Yom Kippur's five prayers respectively correspond to the soul's five levels: action, emotion, intelligence, desire and oneness. With each prayer we are able to access a deeper layer of the soul, culminating in the *neilah* prayer, when the very essence of the soul is manifest.

The soul's essence, oneness with G-d, is beyond rhyme and reason. It is simply how the soul defines itself. This is the intention of the *neilah* prayer.

## ■ STORY:

Once during the *neilah* prayer, the Baal Shem Tov cried more than usual. His students understood that there was a great prosecution in the heavenly courts and they also intensified their prayers. When the rest of the congregation saw this their hearts were shattered and they also joined the impassioned supplication.

There was a young peasant from a nearby village who had come to the Baal Shem Tov's synagogue for the High Holidays. He was completely uneducated; he stood the whole time looking at the face of the cantor without saying anything.



As a village boy, he knew the sounds made by all the different farm animals. He was especially fond of the rooster's crowing. When he heard the weeping and the outcries, his heart was also shattered and he cried out loudly, "Cock-a-doodle-do! G-d, have mercy!"

The worshippers in the synagogue were startled. A few of them scolded him to quiet down and would have thrown him out if he had not protested, "I am also a Jew."

The commotion was interrupted by the voice of the Baal Shem Tov, signalling the continuation of the services. At the prayer's conclusion, the Baal Shem Tov was radiant.

The Baal Shem Tov related to his disciples that there had been an accusation levelled in heaven, with the prosecution seeking to have a particular community sentenced to destruction.

As he aroused Divine mercy on the community, he saw that the situation was very grave.

However, suddenly the sound of the call of the village dweller was heard in heaven and its sincerity brought great pleasure above, nullifying all the prosecutions.

## ■ STORY:

Mordechai was a Chassidic Jew who would travel through the Pale of Settlement (a western region of Imperial Russia outside which Jews were forbidden to live), teaching Torah to simple Jews living in small, isolated villages.

One Yom Kippur he found himself in a village of retired Cantonists. Cantonists were Jews who, by Czar Nicholas I's decree, had been forcibly conscripted into the army as youth and were exposed to torturous pressures to undergo baptism; many remained faithful.

Honoured by the presence of a scholar, the villagers requested Mordechai to serve as cantor. They made one condition: a villager would serve as cantor for the *neilah* prayer.

A very special feeling overcame Reb Mordechai. He had never been in such a minyan; comprised of Jews each of whom had been through hell, things that he could never even dream of experiencing, only for the sake of G-d.

Although he was a scholar surrounded by illiterate villagers, he felt dwarfed by their greatness.

Finally, at the end of the day, it was time for the *neilah* prayer. One of the villagers rose from his chair, took a few steps forward and stood at the podium, his back to the crowd. Before he began to lead the prayers, he unbuttoned and removed his shirt, revealing hundreds of scars. Each scar was from a whipping received because he had refused to undergo baptism and forsake his Judaism.

He then raised his hands to G-d and demanded in a loud voice. “Redeem the Jewish people now!

“I’m not asking for the sake of our families, because we don’t have any families. I’m not asking for the sake of our futures, because we have no futures. I’m not asking for the sake of our livelihoods or our comfort, or our children, or our reputations, because we don’t have any of those things either.

“We’re just asking: Do it for Your sake!”

With that, he put on his shirt and began the *neilah* prayers.

## CONCLUSION OF NEILAH

### ■ HOW TO:

The *neilah* prayer concludes with a declaration of our complete faith in and dedication to G-d.

We say the following three verses aloud. The Kabbalists recommend that we visualise actually giving up our lives for G-d whilst saying the first verse, *shema*.

שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ יְיָ אֶחָד:

*Hear O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is One.*

*Say three times:*

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם כְּבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד:

*Blessed [is His] Name, Whose glorious KinG-dom is forever and ever.*

Say seven times:

יְהוָה הוּא הָאֱלֹהִים:

*The L-rd, only He is G-d.*

This is followed by a Shofar blast and the wish *Leshabah Habaah BiYerushalayim* – NEXT YEAR IN JERUSALEM!

## ■ MEANING:

Yom Kippur is ending and we have gained G-d's forgiveness. We now look toward the future and commit ourselves to G-d in the forthcoming year.

## ■ STORY

The common theme of these three verses is Judaism's fundamental belief in monotheism. The first two verses are famously said in the daily Shema; the third has a significant historical origin, as told in Kings 1 Chapter 18.

The Jews of the time were comprised of both devoted monotheists and idolatrous pagans. Eliyahu the Prophet summonsed the pagan priests to a showdown on Mt. Carmel. Each would offer a sacrifice; the party whose sacrifice would be consumed by a heavenly fire would be vindicated, for once and all.

Both parties offered sacrifices and a heavenly fire consumed Eliyahu's sacrifice. All the assembled Jews called out in unison, "The L-rd, only He is G-d".



## ■ HOW TO:

It is customary to blow one long blast of the Shofar before announcing *leshanah habaah BiYerushalayim*.

## ■ STORY:

Rabbi Moshe Segal (1904-1985) described blowing the Shofar by the Western Wall at the conclusion of Yom Kippur, in British ruled Palestine:

In those years, the area in front of the Kotel did not look as it does today. Only a narrow alley separated the Kotel and the Arab houses on

its other side. The British Government forbade us to place an Ark, tables or benches in the alley; even a small stool could not be brought to the Kotel. The British also instituted the following ordinances, designed to humble the Jews at the holiest place of their faith: it is forbidden to pray out loud, lest one upset the Arab residents; it is forbidden to read from the Torah (those praying at the Kotel had to go to one of the synagogues in the Jewish quarter to conduct the Torah reading); it is forbidden to sound the shofar on Rosh Hashanah and the conclusion of Yom Kippur. The British Government placed policemen at the Kotel to enforce these rules.

On Yom Kippur of that year [1930] I was praying at the Kotel. During the brief intermission between the *musaf* and *minchah* prayers, I overheard people whispering to each other: "Where will we go to hear the shofar? It'll be impossible to blow here. There are as many policemen as people praying..." The Police Commander himself was there, to make sure that the Jews will not, G-d forbid, sound the single blast that closes the fast.

I listened to these whisperings and thought to myself: Can we possibly forgo the sounding of the shofar that accompanies our proclamation of the sovereignty of G-d? Can we possibly forgo the sounding of the shofar, which symbolises the redemption of Israel? True, the sounding of the shofar at the close of Yom Kippur is only a custom, but "A Jewish custom is Torah"! I approached Rabbi Yitzchak Horenstein, who served as the Rabbi of our "congregation," and said to him: "Give me a shofar." "What for?" "I'll blow." "What are you talking about? Don't you see the police?" "I'll blow."

The Rabbi abruptly turned away from me, but not before he cast a glance at the prayer stand at the left end of the alley. I understood: the shofar was in the stand. When the hour of the blowing approached, I walked over to the stand and leaned against it.

I opened the drawer and slipped the shofar into my shirt. I had the shofar, but what if they saw me before I had a chance to blow it? I was still unmarried at the time and following the Ashkenazic custom, did not wear a tallit. I turned to person praying at my side and asked him for his tallit. My request must have seemed strange to him, but the Jews are a kind people, especially at the holiest moments of the holiest day and he handed me his tallit without a word.

I wrapped myself in the tallit. At that moment, I felt that I had created my own private domain. All around me, a foreign government prevails, ruling over the people of Israel even on their holiest day and at their holiest

place and we are not free to serve our G-d; but under this tallit is another domain. Here I am under no dominion save that of my Father in Heaven; here I shall do as He commands me and no force on earth will stop me.

When the closing verses of the *neilah* prayer – "Hear O Israel," "Blessed be the name" and "The L-rd is G-d" – were proclaimed, I took the shofar and blew a long, resounding blast. Everything happened very quickly. Many hands grabbed me. I removed the tallit from over my head and before me stood the Police Commander, who ordered my arrest.

I was taken to the *kishla*, the prison in the Old City and an Arab policeman was appointed to watch over me. Many hours passed; I was given no food or water to break my fast. At midnight, the policeman received an order to release me and he let me out without a word.

I then learned that when the chief rabbi of the Holy Land, Rabbi Avraham Yitzchak Kook, heard of my arrest, he immediately contacted the secretary of High Commissioner of Palestine and asked that I be released. When his request was refused, he stated that he would not break his fast until I was freed. The High Commissioner resisted for many hours, but finally, out of respect for the Rabbi, he had no choice but to set me free.



For the next eighteen years, until the Arab conquest of the Old City in 1948, the shofar was sounded at the Kotel every Yom Kippur. The British well understood the significance of this blast; they knew that it would ultimately demolish their reign over our land as the walls of Jericho crumbled before the shofar of Joshua and they did everything in their power to prevent it. But every Yom Kippur, the shofar was sounded by men who know they would be arrested for their part in staking our claim on the holiest of our possessions.

## LESHANAH HABAH

לְשָׁנָה הַבָּאָה בִּירוּשָׁלַיִם:

*Next year in Jerusalem!*

### ■ MEANING:

The redemption from our past sins is only a partial salvation, for we continue to live in a state of exile. We therefore express our longing and hope for the complete redemption of Mashiach, when our nation will be reunited in Jerusalem.

## Maariv

The maariv prayer can be found on p. 766 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.743 in the Birnbaum Machzor or p. 390 in the Chabad Machzor.

## Havdalah

The havdalah service can be found on p. 800 in the Artscroll Machzor, p.765 in the Birnbaum Machzor or p. 403 in the Chabad Machzor.

### ■ HOW TO:

Tonight's *havdalah* candle must be lit from a flame that has burned throughout Yom Kippur. Otherwise, do not make a blessing on the candle.

As tonight is not Saturday night, the blessing on spices is not said.



# Sukkot Preparations

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**17-20 SEPTEMBER**

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## ■ HOW TO:

It is a wonderful idea to get your own set of the four species this Sukkot and to build your own Sukkah.

Are you handy? Want to do-it-yourself? Contact your Rabbi to learn how to build your own Sukkah.

Thanks to a range of local vendors, purchasing a four-species set and ready-to-build Sukkah's have never been easier.

# 4 Species Sets &/or Ready to build Sukkot

 **www.esrogim.com.au,**

39 Wilgah Street. St Kilda East.  
Pinchas Ash - 0430 770 116  
pinash@optusnet.com.au

  **www.sukkah.com.au**

27 Empress Rd. Balaclava  
S.Gurevitch -0408 952 583  
samuelg1@optusnet.com.au

  **www.sukkot.com.au**

D.Szmerling 0401 921 812 or B. Fogelgarn 0403 516 959  
shuksukkos@gmail.com

 **Nosson Strasser** 0419 885 585

15 Fuller Rd. Ripponlea  
nathan@glostra.com.au

 **www.golds.com.au**

3 - 13 William Street, Balaclava | 9527 8775.

  **www.sukkahboys.com**

0426 839 587

  **www.sukkahmart.com.au**

sales@sukkahmart.com.au

 **www.lulav.bneiakiva.com.au**

Reuel Pizmony 0432460134  
melb.gizbar@bneiakiva.com.au

## ■ MEANING:

The Mitzvah of waving the four species—citron, myrtle, willow and palm frond—is associated with the two agricultural themes of Sukkot: gathering in the fruit after the summer harvest (in Israel) and the beginning of the rainy season (in Israel).

The Torah describes Sukkot as “the festival of gathering”. It was the time when farmers would, after a long summer, bring in the dried fruit from the field and take them to market, marking the culmination of the agricultural year.

Additionally, Sukkot marks the beginning of the rainy season in Israel. The Talmud teaches that it is the time when G-d judges the world for rain. This is indeed reflected in many Sukkot customs and prayers, such as *hoshanot* and the prayer for rain on *shemini atzeret*.

Waving the four species in all six directions indicates that G-d, who is omnipresent, is the source of agricultural blessing. Additionally, the four species are all grown through rainwater—we hold them before G-d, demonstrating our request that He grant us a year of agriculturally beneficial climate.

## ■ MEANING:

The Mitzvah of eating in a Sukkah is associated with the historical significance of Sukkot:

When the Jewish people left Egypt to the desert, G-d sheltered them, the Torah says, in huts. The Sages offered two interpretations as to the nature of these huts: they were either human-made structures, or G-d’s miraculous cloud-like protection. According to both opinions, the Jews lived as nomads in the desert, relying on G-d’s protection, from the elements as well as enemies.

By sitting in the Sukkah, a makeshift hut under the stars, we remind ourselves of G-d’s great kindness to our ancestors and of our ultimate reliance on Him, despite the comfort of our modern lives.



# Sukkot

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20-27 SEPTEMBER

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## Eating in the Sukkah

### ■ HOW TO:

Throughout the week of Sukkot, it is a Mitzvah to eat our meals in the Sukkah. This is particularly so on the first night of Sukkot, Monday, 20th September.

Before eating a meal in the Sukkah, say the following blessing:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם  
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לִישֵׁב בַּסֻּכָּה.

*Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us to dwell in the sukkah.*

## ■ MEANING:

The Sukkah is the only Mitzvah that we can physically ‘enter’. This is a physical manifestation of the Divine energy that the Sukkah embodies: G-d’s transcendence.

Another feature of the Sukkah is that it can simultaneously hold multiple people, reflecting the theme of peace and harmony.

It is the transcendent consciousness that we take from the Sukkah that enables us to overcome differences between us and others.



## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

The Talmud requires that the Sukkah be built as a “temporary dwelling”. If the words “temporary” and “dwelling” sound contradictory, they are.

The Torah wants us to take an essentially transient structure and make it our permanent home. Or perhaps, it wants us to look at our permanent home and understand that it is, essentially, a transient structure.

## ■ STORY:

A traveller once visited the home of the Chassidic master Rabbi DovBer of Mezritch (d. 1772). He could not believe the poverty in which Rabbi Dovber lived. His home was bare of all furnishing, save for an assortment of rough wooden planks and blocks that served as benches for his students during the day and as beds for his family at night. “How can you live like this?” demanded the visitor. “I myself am far from wealthy, but at least in my home you will find, thank G-d, the basic necessities: some chairs, a table, beds...”

“Indeed?” said Rabbi DovBer. “But I don’t see any of your furnishings. How do you manage without them?”

“What do you mean? Do you think that I schlep all my possessions along with me wherever I go? When I travel, I make do with what’s available. But at home – a person’s home is a different matter altogether!”

“Ah, yes,” said Rabbi DovBer. “At home, it is a different matter altogether...”

# Lulav and Etrog

## ■ HOW TO:

On each day of Sukkot (except Shabbat), hold the lulav in your right hand and say the blessing.

Ashkenaz custom is to hold the *etrog* too, in your left hand, while saying the blessing, with the *pitam* (stigma) facing down. Chabad custom is to not hold the *etrog* at all during the blessing.

ברוך אתה יי אלהינו מלך העולם  
אשר קדשנו במצותיו וצונו על נטילת לולב

*Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments and commanded us regarding taking the lulav.*

Ashkenaz custom is to now turn the *etrog* 180 degrees, so that the *pitam* (stigma) is facing upward. Chabad Custom is to now pick up the *etrog* in your right hand.

*On the first time you wave the four species on Sukkot, add the shehechyanu blessing:*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַחַיִּינוּ וְקִיַּמְנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה

*Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the Universe, who has granted us life, sustained us and enabled us to reach this occasion.*

Then bring the lulav and etrog together in your hands and wave them in all six directions: right, left, forward, up, down and backward.

## ■ MEANING:

The Midrash explains the symbolism of the four species:

The *etrog* has both a taste and an aroma; so too do the people of Israel include individuals who have both Torah learning and good deeds. The date (the fruit of the *lulav*) has a taste but does not have an aroma; this represents those individuals who learn Torah but do not perform good deeds. The *hadas* has a beautiful aroma but has no taste; similarly there are people spend their lives helping others and doing good but neglect the Torah. The *aravah* has no taste and no aroma; so too do the people of Israel include individuals who do not have Torah and do not have good deeds. Says G-d: "Let them all bond together in one bundle and atone for each other."

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

The *etrog* says: "I am perfect. I balance learning and doing in flawless equilibrium. In my life, knowledge and action do not overwhelm or displace one the other, but rather fulfil and complement each other."

The *lulav* says: "I am utterly devoted to the pursuit of wisdom, awareness and self-knowledge. Doing is also important, but *my* first priority is to know G-d and (thereby) my truest self, even if this means withdrawing from involvement with the world."

The *hadas* says: "What our world needs is action. Knowledge of G-d and self-awareness are worthy goals, but I have a job to do. I need to build a better world – enlightenment may have to wait."

The *aravah* says: "I have nothing. I am nothing."

To a degree, all of these attitudes are valid. The trick is to strike the right balance.

## ■ STORY:

Each Sukkot morning, after performing the mitzvah of waving the four species, the previous Lubavitcher Rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneersohn, would allow all who wished to do so to use his lulav and etrog. Many people availed themselves of the opportunity, regarding it as a great privilege to perform the mitzvah with their Rebbe's set.

One day, after the Rebbe's *etrog* was returned to him bruised and stained from being handled by hundreds of hands, one of his chassidim said to him: "Why do you allow so many people to use your etrog? Look at what has happened to it! It has lost its beauty!"

"Why," replied Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak, "hundreds of Jews have performed the Mitzvah with this etrog; what greater beauty could there be?"

## ■ STORY:

Reb Aryeh Levin of blessed memory was renowned as the "Tzaddik of Jerusalem." He was known for his punctilious observance of each of the ritual commandments and his overwhelming compassion for every human being.

Two days before the advent of Sukkot, he went to the Geulah district of Jerusalem to choose his four species.

Immediately, word spread and a large crowd gathered around him. After all, the *etrog* is referred to in the Bible as a beautiful fruit, and since we are enjoined to "beautify the commandments," observant Jews are especially careful in purchasing a most beautiful and outstanding etrog.

Everyone was interested in observing which criteria the great tzaddik would use in choosing his etrog. To the amazement of the crowd, however, Reb Aryeh looked at one etrog and put it down, picked up a second, examined it, and then went back to the first and purchased it together with

his three other species. The entire transaction took less than five minutes. The crowd, rather disappointed, rapidly dispersed, imagining that perhaps the great rabbi had a very pressing appointment.

One person decided to follow Reb Aryeh to see exactly where he was going. What could be more important than choosing an etrog the day before Sukkot, the Jerusalemite wondered? Reb Aryeh walked into an old age home. The individual following him waited outside and 90 minutes later the great sage exited.

The Jerusalemite approached him, and said, “Revered rabbi, please don’t think me impudent, but I’m anxious to learn a point of Torah, and therefore I’m asking the question. The great mitzvot of Sukkot include the waving of a beautiful etrog. I am certain that visiting the elderly individual or individuals in the old age home is also an important mitzva, but they will be in the old-age home during Sukkot as well as after it. The purchase of the etrog is a once-a-year opportunity. I would have expected the revered rabbi to have spent a little more time in choosing the etrog.”

Reb Aryeh took the man’s hand in his and smiled lovingly.

“My dear friend,” he said, “There are two mitzvot regarding which the Torah employs the adjective “beauty”; one is the mitzva of a beautiful etrog [Leviticus 23:40] and the second is beautifully honouring the face of the aged [Leviticus 19:32]. However, the etrog is an object and the aged individual is a subject, a human being and not a fruit.

Hence, I believe one must spend much more time in beautifying the commandment relating to the human being than beautifying the commandment relating to a fruit.”



## Prayers

The Sukkot prayers can be found in the Artscroll Sukkot Machzor or the regular Chabad Siddur.

# Hoshana Rabbah

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**27 SEPTEMBER**

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*Hoshana Rabah*—meaning the great *hoshana*—is the seventh and final day of Sukkot. It is the day on which G-d places His final seal of judgement regarding the upcoming year. Additionally, G-d decides the upcoming year's rainfall throughout Sukkot. *Hoshanah Rabah*, the last day of Sukkot, is when that decision is finalised. The day is therefore marked with special customs.

## ■ MEANING:

Each day of Sukkot in the Temple, the people would circle the altar with the four species in their hands. During the procession, they would pray for G-d's blessing, punctuating each phrase of the prayer with the word *hoshanah*—please save. On the final day of Sukkot, the people would circle the alter seven times. This is why the day came to be called *Hoshana Rabbah*, the great *hoshana*.

## NIGHT LEARNING:

In preparation for *Hoshana Rabbah*, many have the custom to spend time learning Torah the evening before. Some read the book of Deuteronomy and Psalms.



## MORNING PRAYERS:

Due to the spiritual potency of the day, many prayers are added in the *shacharit* prayer, as indicated in the prayer-book.



## BEATING THE WILLOW:

It is customary to beat a bundle of willow twigs on the ground 5 times. This ancient custom is associated with the rain theme of Sukkot; willows typically grow by the water. Contact your Rabbi or Shule to purchase a bundle.

## FESTIVE MEAL:

As the day is a semi-holiday, as well as the last day of Sukkot, it is customary to have a festive meal with bread in the Sukkah. Some have the custom to eat *kreplach*—dough filled with ground beef or chicken.

### ■ STORY:

Refael Nachman Kahn, a Russian Jew incarcerated by the Communist government, related:

During the holiday of Sukkot, I was sent to a labour camp deep in Russia. I was part of a group of prisoners that was being transported under heavy guard, and thus they led us on foot from city to city and village to village.

While we were walking, I saw willows growing by the side of the road. The day was *Hoshanah Rabbah*, and while walking I plucked five willow branches and struck them on the ground. My siddur was in the baggage on a wagon being driven behind us and I did not know the long *Yehi Ratzon* - *May it be Your will* prayer by heart.

I raised my eyes to heaven and said, “Master of the world, may it be Your will that it is as if I have said ‘May it be Your will!’”



# Shemini Atseret

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**27-28 SEPTEMBER**

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*Shemini Atseret* is the culmination of the entire High Holiday season and is celebrated with great joy.

The *Shemini Atseret* prayers feature special prayers for rain, officially marking the start of Israel's rain season.

It is also customary to say the Yizkor prayer on *Shemini Atseret*. The Yizkor prayer can be found on p. 77 of this booklet.

## ■ MEANING:

The Midrash describes *Shemini Atseret* as G-d's farewell party with the Jewish people:

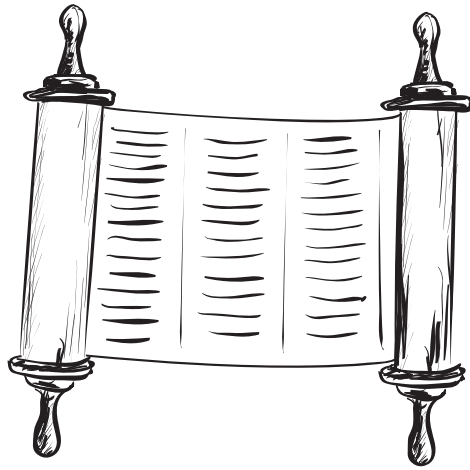
“A king invited his children to a feast for a number of days. When the time came for them to leave, he said: My children! Please, stay one more day; it is difficult for me to part with you!”

## ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

The sporadic nature of rainfall represents the Divine attribute of Justice, which responds to us according to what we deserve. The mystical reason that rain is more plentiful at certain times is that the world goes through periods of being more and less deserving.

Dew, in contrast, represents the Divine attributes of Kindness and Generosity, giving with no consideration of worthiness. From G-d's perspective the worthy and the unworthy are equally valued. Thus, He gives at all times to all people, deserving or not.

Sukkot, which comes immediately after Yom Kippur, when all our sins were atoned, is a perfect time to pray for rain. At this time, when we are busy celebrating the holidays, we are free of sin and carry lots of merit. And so, this is the right time to ask for rain, the blessing given on the basis of worthiness.



# Simchat Torah

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**28-29 SEPTEMBER**

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*Simchat Torah* is the day on which we conclude studying the five books of Moses, and begin again from the beginning of Genesis; both causes for celebration.

## ■ HOW TO:

Traditionally, *Simchat Torah* is celebrated with joyous community meals and dancing while rejoicing with the Torah in synagogues as well as celebrating the holiday at home.

# Complete and Begin the Torah

Read Deuteronomy 34 (the last chapter of the Torah) and Genesis 1 (the first chapter). Deuteronomy 34 is a moving description of Moses' last moments. Genesis 1 tells the famous story of creation.

Some questions to discuss while you read:

- › Why does the Torah closely associate Moses' passing with the Land of Israel?
- › What is the significance of Moses' burial place being unknown?
- › Moses is described as 'the greatest prophet of all times'. Why?
- › What might be the message that the Torah intends to impart by discussing the creation of planets, vegetation, animals, fish and humans in detail?
- › In the Friday night *Kiddush*, we say the final verses of Genesis 1. How does Shabbat help us connect with the story of creation?



## DANCE

In the Temple during Sukkot, the Jews would circle the altar—where the sacrifices that would earn G-d's goodwill were offered—celebrating G-d's blessings. So too, on Simchat Torah we circle the Torah reading platform, to commemorate the inspiration we gain from reading our treasured Torah.

# *Preparations for Simchat Torah*

## MAKE A SONG LIST

Simchat Torah is an opportunity for your children to pick, practice, sing and dance to their favourite Jewish songs. Make a fun song list (and practice!) before the holiday and sing and dance your hearts out.

## BAKE HEBREW-LETTERS COOKIES

Don't just study the Torah, eat it too! Bake the Hebrew-letter biscuits before the holiday—before Shabbat—and enjoy them as a simchat torah snack. Visit the link for a simple recipe [www.chabad.org/361526/](http://www.chabad.org/361526/).

### ■ MEANING:

Moses himself established the custom of reading a section of the Torah each week. Later, in the Second Temple period, Ezra the Scribe formalised this tradition, setting up the annual cycle of Torah readings that we follow today. According to this cycle, each year on *Simchat Torah*, we finish reading the Torah and begin reading it again.

### ■ POINTS TO PONDER:

The *Simchat Torah* celebrations—marking our completion of studying the five books of Moses—are for scholar and layman, young and old alike. Though we may all appreciate the Torah differently, through studying it we all connect with the same G-d and common Jewish tradition.

That's why we dance; an activity that enables us to overlook our differences and sense the ultimate truth in which we can all celebrate, as equals.

## ■ POINT TO PONDER

In synagogues on *Simchat Torah*, the concluding paragraphs of the Torah—describing Moses's passing—are read, followed by its opening paragraphs—the story of creation.

The message: when you reach the top, keep climbing; you will discover a whole new world.

## ■ STORY:

Until World War II, the Polish city of Czestochowa had been a bustling centre of Jewish life. Then came the bitter day when the Nazis invaded Poland. In the fall of 1939, before Rosh Hashanah, the Nazis entered Czestochowa and began persecuting the Jewish population.

The ghetto, one of the largest in Poland, was established in April of 1941, and the first deportation started in September of 1942, on the day after Yom Kippur. The Nazis had just dispatched over a quarter million Jews from the Warsaw Ghetto to Treblinka. To them, the Czestochowa Ghetto, with just 50,000 Jews, was small potatoes. During the course of that year, the Nazis and their willing lackeys arranged several “aktions,” in which they rounded up the Jews for deportation and extermination. But most of the Jews were deported in that first “Great Aktion,” when they were brutally taken in cattle cars to the Treblinka extermination camp.

The Germans left several thousand Jews in the ghetto. They had to work from morning to night in the factories near Czestochowa. One factory produced metal and another made bullets. Merciless SS officers stood over the workers and did not allow them to stop working for a moment.

Unique among the Jewish workers was a shoemaker. An expert at his craft, he was assigned to repair the shoes and boots of the Nazi soldiers and officers. In order to fulfil his duties, he was granted special freedoms, and was allowed to walk between the nearly empty ghetto and the labour camp, where the surviving Jews were now confined.

His name was Aryeh Szajnert, and he was more than just a shoemaker. A native of the city, he had excellent connections and frequently used them

to better the lot of the poor prisoners. It was not uncommon for him to enter the camp with packages of food and other goods.

One day, during the holiday of Sukkot, rumours began to swirl. “The shoemaker is late. He has not yet returned from the ghetto. Who knows if he is OK?” It was usual for the shoemaker to return late, after the inmates had been given their meagre rations. He would go directly to the camp kitchen, where a modest meal had been reserved for him. But this time, when he finally arrived, he did not go to the kitchen. Instead, he went to his workroom, where he was seen doing something behind a large wooden plank.

Word soon spread that the shoemaker had managed to smuggle a small Torah scroll into the camp! “When Simchat Torah comes, we get to dance with an actual Torah scroll,” said the shoemaker, his eyes ablaze. Despite the badgering and questioning, the shoemaker refused to say how he got the Torah scroll. But word soon leaked out.



The Nazis had appropriated a large warehouse on the outskirts of the ghetto, where they collected Jewish sacred objects. The warehouse was heavily guarded, making it almost impossible to take anything out of it. Placing his life on the line, the shoemaker was able to bribe the officer in charge. In order to get the Torah scroll, he promised the officer that he would make a pair of fancy boots for him, just like he had made for the most senior commanders. The officer let him take a Torah scroll.

Where to hide it? Someone had an idea, and the group set to work. They plied a plank off of one of the wooden bunks and made a space in which to put the small Torah scroll. The plank was then returned to its place.

The night of Simchat Torah arrived, and the sense of excitement rose. The inmates silently made their way to the place where the Torah scroll was hidden. They feared that the guards would find the Torah, and that their lives were in jeopardy. As a precaution, it was decided not to remove the Torah from its place. Instead, the plank was moved to the side, revealing the sacred parchment.

A survivor later testified: “On that Simchat Torah we held the traditional *hakafot* dances in our barracks. But they were not done in the usual way. The Torah lay in hiding, and we danced around it humming the joyous Simchat Torah tunes under our breaths. We entered in small groups, and mutedly circled the bunk. One by one, we then bent over to kiss it before exiting.”

Miraculously, the Torah survived the war as well and was brought to Israel. It is now housed in the holy ark of the Gur synagogue in Bnei Brak, Israel.

## ■ STORY:

The synagogue was packed to the rafters. The whole town had gathered as one for the annual Simchat Torah celebration. Only moments to go, and the stirring sounds of the ancient “Atah Hareisa” prayer would ring forth throughout the synagogue. People looked at each other in nervous anticipation; from among all those assembled, who would be chosen to lead the community in prayer?

Years before he had won worldwide fame as the rabbi of Berditchev, the young Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was widely respected for his erudition and unique path to spirituality. He was treasured for his dedication to others

and his commitment to G-dliness. Unfortunately, one of the only people not fully enamoured of the youthful prodigy was his own father-in-law.

Undeterred by convention, and determined to follow his own path in Judaism, Levi Yitzchak had only just returned to town after months spent exploring the nascent chassidic movement, meeting its leaders and committing to the chassidic way of life. His father-in-law was livid; he mistrusted these revolutionary ideas and new-fangled methods of serving G-d, and worried about his son-in-law's prospects. Was this the end of all his hopes for his beloved daughter?

The other townsfolk were more forgiving of Levi Yitzchak's impetuosities and fervour. As proof of their regard, they selected him to recite the "Atah Hareisa" prayer leading off the Simchat Torah service. Levi Yitzchak approached the central podium in a state of constrained ecstasy, and picked up the tallit (prayer shawl) preparatory to commencing the ritual. However, to the bemusement of the assembled crowd, he paused for a moment of contemplation, and then placed the tallit back in its place.

After a short while he again picked up the prayer shawl, only to once again replace it on the lectern.

When he picked up the tallit for the third time, an uneasy murmur filled the synagogue. The young rabbi seemed to be fighting a silent battle with an unseen opponent. Finally, in a dramatic denouement, Levi Yitzchak placed the tallit firmly back in its place, and announced: "If you're a chassid and a scholar, then you lead the prayers!" and stalked back to his seat near the side wall of the synagogue.

His father-in-law was mortified. Bad enough that the young man insisted on adopting the chassidic lifestyle with its attendant new customs, but did he have to disgrace himself with public exhibitionism as well?

When asked for a justification of his unusual behaviour, Levi Yitzchak explained that as he had approached the podium, he had suddenly realized that he was not alone; his yetzer hara (evil inclination) wished to accompany him in prayer.

"You don't belong here," he challenged the tempter. "I have been selected to represent the community because I am a scholar. What legitimacy do you have?"

“If you are a scholar, then I’m a scholar too,” the evil one replied.  
“Wherever you studied, whichever yeshivahs you attended, I was right there with you.”

“But I am a chassid,” Levi Yitzchak counterclaimed. “I have just returned from the rebbe’s court, where I learned to pray as a Jew should and devote myself to G-dliness.”

“I too am a chassid. When you travelled to the rebbe, I accompanied you. When you were initiated in the ways of faith, I came along for the ride. I have every right to join you in prayer tonight and keep you company under that tallit.”

“I could not win,” Levi Yitzchak confessed. “He was right. I admitted to myself that I had been living a lie. He and I were partners in crime. The ties that bound me to evil were as strong as they were when I first began my journey of faith. I was almost ready to concede in despair, when I was seized by one last inspiration. With my remaining strength, I turned on my tormentor and cried, ‘If you are a chassid and a scholar as you claim, then you lead the prayers, and leave me out of your foul plots,’ and I ran from the stage.”

I first heard this story as a child, and have always been fascinated by it, yet it occurred to me recently that I had no real understanding of the deeper meaning behind the whole bizarre episode.

Upon reflection, I would suggest that Rabbi Levi Yitzchak was making a fundamental argument about man’s attempt at self-improvement.

We go through the motions, we try to change ourselves for the better, yet how many can claim to have truly reformed? The sad reality is that we bring all our peccadilloes and character flaws along with us on our journey through life.

It is not enough to meander along the sterile pathways of aseptic existence, waiting and hoping to spontaneously combust. We’ve got to practice shock therapy, either bodily throwing away our ego and evil, or fleeing in a totally new direction, leaving the old us behind.

Rosh Hashanah has come and gone; Yom Kippur is now just a memory. We gathered in synagogues and cried and prayed to G-d. I promised to change, to become a new person inspired by new purpose, but I’m still the same facile fraud that I always was.

Simchat Torah is my hope for self-transformation. The High Holidays were all about prayer and performance; Simchat Torah is our chance for passion and purpose. We may have spent the hours of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur praying, but are we sure that our inclination towards evil wasn't with us all along, under the tallit?

On Simchat Torah, we close our minds and open up our hearts. We dance till we drop, and allow the spirit of the day to permeate our souls. We refuse to allow even a thin veneer of sham spirituality to distract us from our journey towards G-d.

Unconcerned by public opinion, dedicated to nothing but the truth, on Simchat Torah we let our inner Jew hang out and proudly proclaim that nothing in our life exists other than our union with G-d.





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