

# The Jewish Weekly

## Exposing the Young Genius

By Rabbi Yaakov Kaidener

When the Alter Rebbe [Rabbi Shneur Zalman] made his first journey to Mezritch, he was a young and recently married man, just 16 years of age, but his phenomenal accomplishments in the study of Torah were already famed throughout White Russia. Aside from his brilliance and erudition in the study of nigleh [the "revealed" Torah: Scripture, Talmud, Halacha], he served the Creator with the deep felt devotion and awe of a man far more advanced in years.

He was also proficient in the writings of the holy Shelah [Rabbi Isaiah Horowitz 1560-1630] by heart, from beginning to end, and it was from the Shelah that he had adopted his mode of Divine service. And yet, despite this, his broad mind was still not at ease, until he came to hear intriguing reports of our holy Rebbe, the Maggid of Mezritch, successor to the Baal Shem Tov.

The journey to Mezritch was long, so it was necessary to stop on the way for Shabbat, which he did in the city of Minsk. He arrived there on a Friday, Erev Shabbat. He was wearing the clothes of a pauper so that no one would recognize him. The gabbai [manager] of the shul (synagogue) arranged for him to stay for Shabbat in the home of a wealthy member of the community.

It happened that this wealthy householder had a son-in-law who was an exceptional Torah scholar, whose name had already become known far and wide, and would yet become even more acclaimed as a Torah genius. His name was Rabbi Shmuel Modils. However, he did not speak a word to the Alter Rebbe that entire Shabbat, thinking the ill-dressed young man to be one of the many itinerant beggars who passed by such homes.

After Shabbat and Havdala [the ceremony marking the end of Shabbat], Reb Shmuel and a colleague of his retreated to their quarters in order to study together in partnership. The young Rabbi Shneur Zalman asked if he could come as well, so that he could warm himself by the fireplace in their room. They agreed and he followed.

The two prodigies were studying in depth the volume of Talmud named Shabbat, and they fell into a furious debate, centered around a powerful question on the words of Rashi's commentary. It seemed as though grasping the true intent behind Rashi's words was beyond them.

Meanwhile, the young guest could not hold himself back. "My brothers," he said to them, "At this point, you won't be able to understand Rashi's meaning."

The two scholars thought his statement amusing. "And why is that?" they chuckled.

"Because you made a mistake interpreting Rashi several pages ago. If you'll understand the proper meaning of his words back there, then Rashi's intention over here will reveal itself to you as a matter of course, and without any special effort."

He showed them the place he was referring to, and told them the interpretation of Rashi they had given on their previous reading of the passage.

"Yes, that's right," they said, for that was how they had learned it.

He then raised a question on their interpretation that was so incredibly and profoundly incisive that they were stunned by the depth of his comprehension. Both men were at a loss for reply.

"Extraordinary! But please, now tell us what the proper interpretation is," they requested.

Eventually, they saw that it was just as he had said; the Rashi whose meaning had originally been problematic for them was now straightforward and simple, with no cause for question whatsoever. "This little one is as fully versed in the Talmud as any of the great scholars of the generation" they exclaimed. "Indeed, it could be he is already the greatest of the great!"

Hearing that, the Alter Rebbe quickly exited the room, and took off as though he was fleeing for his life. His hosts dispatched people throughout the city in search for him, but they did not find him.

Only later on, after investigating and inquiring into who he was and from where he had come, did they hear that he was the son-in-law of a prominent Vitebsk businessman, and that he was highly esteemed as a prodigy even in comparison to the great scholars and to other prodigies.

Reb Shmuel longed to meet with R. Shneur Zalman again, since with time he had heard of his fine reputation, and how he was a tzaddik (righteous person) in his generation. But Minsk was a long way away from Liozhna where the Alter Rebbe lived, and he was unable to make such an endeavor.

After some years had gone by, there was a gathering in Minsk, a rabbinic conference attended by all of the greatest leaders and scholars of the region; from Lithuania, the great genius Reb Shaul of Vilna was at their head; and from White Russia, the Alter Rebbe.

When the brilliant Reb Shmuel Modils caught wind of the Alter Rebbe's attendance, he was filled with joy and delight; now, after what seemed like a lifetime, he would finally fulfill his long-awaited wish. He happily went to greet the holy Alter Rebbe, and brought along a great number of seforim (books), all carried by his attendant who followed closely behind. He intended to ask him all of his questions and scholarly doubts from across the Talmud Bavli and Yerushalmi, the Rishonim, and the Achronim.

Reb Shmuel went to the upper floor of the building in which the gathering was taking place, where the Alter Rebbe had set up his chambers. There, in the presence of nearly all of the superior Torah scholars in attendance at the conference, Reb Shmuel sat for nearly an hour and a half and asked the Alter Rebbe all of his questions. The Rebbe answered each one in turn, as all the brilliant scholars gathered at the assembly listened in astonished silence.

The Alter Rebbe's great disciple, the famous philanthropist Reb Pinchas Reizes of Shklov, was also present at that gathering, and I personally heard from him how after all these questions, Reb Shmuel then asked about a certain Mishna.

The Rebbe told his disciple, "Pinchas! You say the meaning of the Mishna." Reb Pinchas said his understanding of the Mishna, whereupon the Rebbe challenged him on this interpretation with such profundity that he had nothing to answer. None of the other scholars present opened their mouths either.

## It Once Happened..

Later, the brilliant Reb Shmuel Modils recited the blessing "Chacham Harazim" - "He Who is wise in secrets," on the occasion of seeing such a towering sage. He then took leave and departed.

As he descended the stairs leading from the upper floor, a great number of people stood on either side of the staircase, waiting to ask R. Shmuel about the Alter Rebbe. They excitedly quizzed him about the nature of the Rebbe, and he replied with great emotion, "There are several opinions in the Talmud, Bavli and Yerushalmi, regarding the characteristics of a talmid chacham, a true Torah scholar. And I, Rabbi Shmuel Modils, say that according to all of those opinions, the holy Rebbe is a leading talmid chacham [Torah scholar - lit. "student of the wise"] of our time!"

Those are the precise words I heard from a prominent member of our town who was also in Minsk at that time. He was present at that scene on the stairs and heard those words from the genius Reb Shmuel.

We also heard how, at that same gathering, the Rebbe posed a question on a certain law as ruled by the Rambam, and he proceeded to answer the question with a deep and intricate discussion on the subject that greatly pleased the learned scholars there.

The great genius Rabbi Shaul of Vilna, who was known to be proficient in the both Talmud Bavli and Talmud Yerushalmi, as well as the writings of all the 'Rishonim and Achronim' (Earlier and Later [Torah Authorities]), almost entirely by heart, rose from his seat. He addressed the Rebbe:


"It is true that G-D's Torah is in your mouth - for the question you pointed out is particularly powerful, and the answer you offered is also true Torah. However, there is something I would like to ask: You could have asked that same question on previous ruling, several pages earlier in the Rambam?!"

"I am also aware of that law written earlier," replied the Rebbe, citing the page and paragraph.

"Yes, that's right," said R. Shaul, "that was the ruling I was referring too."

The Rebbe then proposed an answer, demonstrating that there were no grounds at all to ask his question on that previous law in the Rambam. This answer involved such a profound pilpul (complex analysis) that none of the great scholars present at that rarefied assembly managed to plumb the depths of his thought, except for Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin [the main disciple of the Vilna Gaon and the patriarch of the Soloveitchik line of rabbinical scholars] and the genius Reb Shaul, who understood it perfectly well.

*Reprinted from a translation of Sipurim Nora'im.*



**Shabbat Times - Parshat Nitzavim**

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	6:04	7:15	7:55
Tel Aviv	6:19	7:17	7:53
Haifa	6:10	7:16	7:54
Be'er Sheva	6:21	7:17	7:55



## The Mormon Jews

By Rabbi David Bibi

I want to share a remarkable true story I heard this week from Rabbi Benzion Klatzko - a story that weaves together the themes of estrangement and reunion, of exile and return, and of the slow and sacred journey home.

As many of you know, I travel regularly to Salt Lake City and have longstanding ties with the Mormon community. I've had the privilege of building respectful and warm relationships with Mormon leaders, including lunch years ago in Washington, D.C. with Senator Mike Lee - a true friend of Israel. So, when I heard this story, which unfolds partly in Utah and partly in Israel, it struck a deeply personal chord. This is truly one for the books.

Once, there was a young Jewish couple who moved to a small town with a handful of Jews and even fewer synagogues, none of which made them feel welcome. They eventually made friends with neighbors who invited them to join their religious services.

"Which synagogue do you attend?" they asked.

"We're Mormon," the neighbors replied. "Come with us to the Mormon temple."

Feeling alienated and alone, and warmly welcomed by the Mormons, the couple began attending regularly. They were embraced, celebrated, and drawn in. Eventually, they converted to Mormonism and raised their children as Mormons.

Their Jewish identity faded into silence.

But one of their children, a young man named Aaron, began to wonder about his roots.

"My parents and more specifically, my mother was born Jewish," he thought. "That makes me Jewish too."

Curiosity led to learning. He found an Olami rabbi and began to explore Judaism. He started keeping Shabbat. His neshamah awakened. Eventually, he made Aliyah, married a wonderful Israeli woman, and together they began a new life in Israel.

Their first child was born, followed by a tragedy - a stillbirth. But then came a brachah: not one child, not twins, not triplets - quadruplets.

As anyone who has raised even one newborn can imagine, four at once is a nearly impossible challenge. Feedings, changings, sleepless nights - it was relentless. Aaron and his wife needed help. That's when Jasmine entered the story. But to understand her, we must take another step back.

Aaron's sister - daughter of the same Jewish mother - married a Mormon missionary. Their household was a center of proselytizing. They raised five children, including the youngest, Jasmine.

Then something unexpected happened. Aaron's sister - the Mormon missionary and mother of five - heard about Birthright, the free trip to Israel for young Jews. Still young enough to qualify, she decided to go. She



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left her husband and children and went alone to Eretz Yisrael. She walked the streets of Yerushalayim. She experienced Shabbat. Something stirred.

When she returned, she told her husband, "I'm interested in Judaism." He was horrified. "No. You're a Mormon. A missionary's wife. This can't happen."

But it did. And the marriage fell apart. They divorced. Around that time, Jasmine - just 12 years old - received a call from Uncle Aaron in Israel.

"I'm sorry about your parents. I know it's a hard time. We just had quadruplets. Would you be willing to come help us out?"

Jasmine agreed. She flew to Israel and helped for six months. She returned home, but something in her had shifted.

The following year, Aaron and his wife had triplets - now seven children under two years old. Jasmine returned. The next year, twins - nine children in five years. Jasmine returned again.

Now 17 years old, Jasmine had spent significant time in Israel. She had seen Torah, tefillah, Shabbat, chesed - not preached, but lived. Back in Utah, she walked into a Mormon temple and sat for an hour. And she thought to herself, "I feel nothing."

Then came the whisper: "But in Israel, I felt something."

Rabbi Klatzko, who had been organizing Israel trips for young Jews, heard about Jasmine and her sisters and invited them to join one of his programs. Jasmine and her sister Esther joined for the full trip; Jessie came for Shabbat.

That Friday night, as they sang and shared, Esther turned to Rabbi Klatzko and said, "You should know - our involvement in Judaism is no small thing."

She explained that on their father's side, they were direct descendants of Brigham Young, the founder of Mormonism after Joseph Smith. And on their mother's side, their great-uncle was Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan.

Yes - Brigham Young and Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan. Two spiritual giants from opposite universes. And their great-nieces were now standing in Eretz Yisrael, asking for a Jewish name.

Esther chose to be called Yehudit Esther - "because my Judaism was hidden. Jessie chose the name Yiskah, a name associated with spiritual clarity. And then Jasmine stood up. With tears in her eyes, she said, "I want to be called - Sarah Emunah - Princess of Faith. The group lifted her on a chair, danced, and sang. The vineyards of Tu B'Av were alive again.

Jasmine stayed in Israel. She enrolled in seminary. She learned, she grew, she reconnected to the soul that had been buried but never erased. And then came the news: she got engaged. The first of the sisters to do so.

To whom? To Rabbi Klatzko's son. Jasmine - Sarah Emunah - is now marrying Rabbi Benzion Klatzko's son, Azaria. She will become his daughter-in-law.

The wedding will take place in the backyard of Uncle Aaron - the same uncle who opened the door again and again. The one who had quadruplets. The one who unknowingly became the bridge home.

*Transcribed from an email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace.*



What is not over the heavens, not over the seas but in our mouths and our hearts to do?

This is how Parshat Nitzavim describes the mitzvah of תשובה, of penitence. It is so apt that we read this portion on the Shabbat immediately preceding our new year, Rosh Hashanah.

Rav Meir Twersky asks: Why in our mouths and in our hearts? Why these particular parts of the human form? He explains as follows. There are two great barriers to teshuva.

First of all, I might say that I haven't done anything wrong; that I'm perfect and everything is fine with me. Alternatively, I might say, yes I've done something wrong but other people are to blame so Hashem will forgive me. I'm alright because there are extenuating circumstances. Many of us explain away our errors in this fashion. So in order to correct that, 'בפיך' - we have to express 'with our mouth' what we have done wrong. We need to acknowledge with ידי, with our confession, that actually there's a lot that needs repairing.

Then there is the second hurdle. Perhaps we acknowledge that we've done wrong. However, we feel that we can't correct the situation. Perhaps we're already too old, or maybe the sin is too great and we feel that Hashem is not going to forgive us, or we've been repeating it so often, or perhaps other people aren't available in order to assist us. That's why the Torah says 'בפיך ובלבבך' - 'in our mouth and in our heart'. Within our hearts we need to have the right feeling, the right recognition of our errors in order to guarantee that we will change our ways for the better.

Just before the Torah tells us that it is with our mouths and our hearts to perform we are told 'כי קרוב אליך הדבר' - this matter is close to you'.

It is achievable.

Let us not shirk our responsibility and let's guarantee that this year we will utilize the forthcoming High Holy Days to correct everything that is wrong and to guarantee that we will receive the full blessing of Hashem in the following year.

So let's pray together with all our hearts, for all those suffering, as well as for the return of our hostages, for all those who are sick and injured, for peace and calm as well as praying for our soldiers and emergency service personnel who risk their lives to defend and help us, as well as those who need healing, shidduchim, children or parnassah and may we be blessed to have just continuous joy and to only go from one simcha through to the next, the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, happy, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, sweet Shabbat, שנה טובה ומתוקה and כתיבה וחתימה טובה.

Yossi

## The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: None

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 40  
NUMBER OF WORDS: 657  
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 2575

HAFTORA:  
Yeshayahu 61:10 - 63:9 (שש אשתי) (this is the last of the seven Haftorot, [the Seven Haftorot of Consolation] that precede Rosh Hashanah).

This week we study Chapter 5 and 6 of Pirkei Avot.

Rosh HaShana is Tuesday and Wednesday, September. 23 & 24.  
Tzom Gedaliah is Thursday, Sept. 25.



The Jewish

Weekly

ב"ה

# Tishrei

## Guide for the year 5786 / 2025

Stories, Divrei Torah for Chag, Halachot and Minhagim

According to Shulchan Aruch Harav, Mishna Berurah and Nittei Gavriel

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in memory of his grandparents

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וחיה ברכה בת ר' נפתלי משה ע"ה רבינוביץ

ר' יוסף בן ר' אורי ע"ה

ומלכה בת ר' יצחק צבי הלוי ע"ה פרנקל

ר' ברוך שמחה בן ר' אליהו דוב הכהן ע"ה כהן

and In memory of his close friend and mentor,

ר' מנחם משה בן ר' נפתלי הירצקא ז"ל

דבורה חנה ע"ה בת מנחם מענדל שליט"א

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## FOREWORD

In honor of the month of Tishrei, The Jewish Weekly is proud to present our very own Tishrei Guide, filled with halachot, stories, and inspiration to help enrich this most meaningful season of the Jewish year.

The Jewish Weekly is a publication that reaches far beyond Jerusalem. Our issues can be found on our website, [www.thejweekly.org](http://www.thejweekly.org), as well as through popular platforms including ladaat.info, dirshu.co.il, yiddishevinkel.com, torahtable.com, and parshasheets.com. Thousands of readers also receive it through our ever-growing email list and countless WhatsApp groups, allowing our words of Torah and chizuk to reach homes and hearts across the world.

On a personal note, I wish to extend my deepest gratitude to my beloved parents, Gershon and Rivka Fraenkel. Their countless hours of research, proofreading, distribution, sponsorships, and emotional support have been the backbone of this publication. What began as a dream, with just 100 printed copies, has blossomed into one of the most widely read Torah publications in central Jerusalem — and well beyond.

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As we stand at the threshold of 5786, we cannot help but reflect on the challenges of the past year. It has been a time of deep pain for Klal Yisrael. We carry the weight of that day which changed Jewish history forever — a day of tragedy, loss, and heartbreak, when so many were taken from us, injured, or held captive, some of whom still remain captive.

This has been a year of hardship, especially in Eretz Yisrael. Every one of us knows a soldier who was killed, injured, or forever changed in body and spirit while defending our homeland. Our hearts and prayers remain with them and their families. And yet, alongside the pain, we recognize the countless miracles Hashem performs for us daily — miracles that sustain and protect Am Yisrael through the most trying of times.

Let us enter this new year united in tefillah and gratitude. May we pray with all our hearts for the safe return of our hostages, for the healing of the sick and injured, for peace and calm in our land, and for strength and protection for our soldiers and emergency personnel. May Hashem bless us with health, parnassah, shidduchim, children, and above all, with the gift of joy — so that in the coming year we know only smachot, one after the other, without interruption and may we be blessed with the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, happy, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual and sweet year ahead.

May 5786 be a year of sweetness, beauty, serenity, growth, and peace for all of Klal Yisrael.

Chag Sameach and Shana Tova,  
Yossi Fraenkel  
Editor, The Jewish Weekly

# Laws & Customs: Rosh Hashanah & Aseret Y'mei Teshuvah

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## 🕊 EREV ROSH HASHANAH MORNING (MONDAY)

Selichot is longer than usual and one should plan his morning accordingly.

During Selichot, Ashamnu is recited even after daybreak, unless a Chattan is present. After Selichot, Tachnun is not recited for the remainder of the day.

An Avel during the week of Shiva can go to Shul for Selichot, and can stay for Shacharit.

The Shofar is not sounded.

## 🕊 HATARAT NEDARIM

Hatarat Nedarim, the verbal annulment of vows made in the past, can be performed any time from Erev Rosh Hashanah until Erev Yom Kippur, by all males over the age of Bar Mitzvah, in the presence of a court of three men, (some, including Chabad have the custom to say it in front of a court of ten men).

Hatarat Nedarim can be done any day of the Aseret Yemei Teshuvah and some wait especially until Erev Yom Kippur.

One should stand when reciting Hatarat Nedarim, whereas everyone else sits.

One must understand the text of Hatarat Nedarim. If he doesn't understand the Hebrew, he should say it in English or any other language that he understands.

The text of Hatarat Nedarim is effective only for those vows or positive practices that one no longer remembers. Any vow or positive practice that one remembers must be presented (not necessarily on

Erev Rosh Hashanah) before a Beit Din of three, of whom at least one is well-versed in the laws of Nedarim.

A "positive practice" requires Hatarat Nedarim if it was observed:

- One time or more, with the intention of continuing to do so indefinitely.
- Three times or more, even in the absence of any such intention, unless he specifically stipulated (whether verbally or in thought) that he was doing so "Bli Neder" (without a vow).

## 🕊 ROSH HASHANAH PREPARATIONS

Some have the custom to go to graves of Tzadikim to ask from Hashem to have mercy on them in the Zechut of the Tzadikim lying there.

One should remember to prepare: sweet apples, honey, new fruits, pomegranates, head of a ram or fish, meat, sweet foods, drinks and for those who have the custom, round Challot.

On Rosh Hashanah, it is customary not to eat any foods that are bitter, sour, overly sharp, or that contain nuts or vinegar.

One should ensure that the pages of a newly purchased Machzor aren't attached to each other (due to being uncut), as it is prohibited to separate them on Rosh Hashanah.

In honor of Rosh Hashanah, one should take a haircut, bathe and cut one's nails, as necessary.

On Erev Rosh Hashanah, one should not donate blood or undergo any procedures or tests involving blood loss. [This does not apply in cases of great need, and certainly not when it is Pikuach Nefesh.]

Prior to every Chag, one has to make sure that the Chag requirements of the needy be met.

Chag is also an especially appropriate time to host guests.

Some have the custom to fast until midday.

### **EREV ROSH HASHANAH AFTERNOON**

On Erev Rosh Hashanah, one should reflect and take stock of the entire year, making all necessary corrections and utilizing the opportunity for Teshuvah.

It is a universal custom to immerse in a Mikvah on Erev Rosh Hashanah after midday.

Some including Chabad hold that one should utilize all his spare time on Erev Rosh Hashanah to be busy with Torah and Mitzvot and not to be distracted the whole day with Teshuva.

Some including Chabad have the custom to recite Tehillim, especially from one hour before Mincha and onwards.

Some have the custom to buy a new knife on Erev Rosh Hashanah as a Segulah for Parnassah. Some however just sharpen their existing knives.

It is customary to accept upon oneself a Hiddur Mitzvah. This should be done on Erev Rosh Hashanah, or on Rosh Hashanah. [One should state that his acceptance is Bli Neder.]

Just like on a regular Erev Shabbat, it is preferable to refrain from eating a proper

meal once the tenth Halachic hour of the day begins (3:33pm), in order to properly enjoy the Shabbat and Rosh Hashanah meal at night. However, one may snack in small quantities.

Prior to candle-lighting, one should give Tzedakah for the two days of Chag.

One should arrange a pre-existing flame with which to light the candles on the second night of Rosh Hashanah.

Candle-lighting time is 5:59pm.

Most have the custom to say the Brachah, L'Hadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov, some, including Chabad say L'Hadlik Ner Shel Yom Hazikaron, all follow the Brachah with Shehecheyanu.

If eating out, one should ensure that practical benefit is derived from the candles after Chag begins.

Since it is Chag, if one neglected to light at the proper time, one may – and should – light candles on Chag itself, from a pre-existing flame.

When a man is required to light candles, he does not recite Shehecheyanu, as he will be doing so in Kiddush. Similarly, if a woman needs to recite her own Kiddush, she does not recite Shehecheyanu in Kiddush, as she already did so at candle-lighting.

Mincha is davened at greater length than usual, as it is the last Tefillah of the year.

### **ROSH HASHANAH**

The Avodah of Rosh Hashanah is Kabbalat Ol (accepting the yoke of Heaven). One should utilize every spare moment to say Tehillim. Throughout Rosh Hashanah, one should avoid all unnecessary idle chatter and minimize sleep during the day.

One should be especially careful not to be angered on Rosh Hashanah.

### **HAMELECH HAKADOSH ON ROSH HASHANAH**

On Rosh Hashanah, the third Brachah of the Amidah has a long addition beginning with the words L'Dor V'dor. If one omitted this addition, he may go back to recite it only if he realized before saying Hashem's name at the end of the third Brachah. Otherwise, he continues the Amidah without going back, as long as he is sure that he concluded the Brachah with the words Hamelech Hakadosh.

If one recited the unique Rosh Hashanah Nusach of the third Brachah, but is in doubt whether he concluded the Brachah with the words Hamelech Hakadosh, he may assume that he did so correctly.

One who did not say Hamelech Hakadosh: If he realized before he began the next Brachah and within the time frame it takes to say three words, he corrects his mistake. Otherwise, he must begin the Amidah again. [The same applies if this occurs in Chazarat Hashatz, in which case Kedushah is recited again.]

If one mistakenly omitted any of the other four additions (Zachreinu, Mi Chamocha, u'Chtov, u'Vsefer Chaim), he may recite it at the place he remembers if he has not yet said Hashem's name at the end of that Brachah. Otherwise, he continues the Amidah and does not go back.

During the Aseret Yemei Teshuva, most have the custom to say Oseh HaShalom at the end of the Amida and Kaddish, instead of Oseh Shalom.

During Chazarat Hashatz, the congregation recites the selections of

U'Chtov and u'Vsefer Chaim aloud before the Chazzan. Most also say Zachreinu Lechaim and Mi Chamocha aloud too.

Most have the custom to say Le'Eilah U'Leilah in Kaddish the whole Aseret Yemei Teshuvah, the Chabad custom is to say Le'Eilah U'Leilah only in Neilah on Yom Kippur

### **FIRST NIGHT OF ROSH HASHANAH (MONDAY)**

One should use the time between Mincha and Maariv to recite Tehillim.

Many times, the Lubavitcher Rebbe would begin the Niggun of Avinu Malkeinu, before Maariv.

L'David Mizmor: One's intention at this time creates a "vessel" in which to draw down Gashmiyut for the whole year. Many communities recite it verse by verse and some say it all together and there are some who don't say it at all.

Many have the custom to open the Aron Hakodesh, however this is not the Chabad custom.

L'David Mizmor is followed by Kaddish Titkabel.

After Davening on the first night, we greet each other L'Shana Tova Tikatev V'techatem. [The grammar is applicable for greeting a male. One may use gender-appropriate grammar when greeting a female; i.e. L'Shana Tova Tikatevee V'techatemee.]

Some have the custom to add L'Alter, Lechaim Tovim Uleshalom.

Some have the custom to bless their children Sheyizku L'Hikatev V'Lhichatem Lechaim Tovim Uleshalom.

After the first night of Rosh Hashanah, we greet each other Gmar Chatima Tova.



From Rosh Hashanah until Hoshana Rabba (inclusive), some have the custom to use round Challot, and we dip it (three times) in honey.

Apple and honey are eaten after the Challah, before the first course. The apple is sliced and dipped in honey. Borei Pri Ha'etz is recited while holding the apple in one's right hand, followed by the Yehi Ratzon, before eating the apple. [Some say the Yehi Ratzon after the first bite of the apple]. If the pomegranate is on the table already one makes the Borei Pri Ha'etz on the pomegranate first before the apple and honey are eaten. Therefore one should try to keep the pomegranate away from the table till after the apple and honey are eaten.

When one recites Borei Pri Ha'etz, he should clearly have in mind that the Brachah includes any fruit served during the meal and at dessert. He does not make a new Brachah at the time of dessert.

Pomegranate is also eaten on the first night. Most hold that it should not be present at the table when the Borei Pri Ha'etz is said on the apple, as it is one of the Seven Fruits of Israel. Some, including Chabad, hold that it should be present at the table when Borei Pri Ha'etz is said on the apple, and should be eaten after the apple. [On the second night, if the pomegranate is a new fruit, it should be present on the table during the Shehecheyanu of Kiddush, and one should have it in mind at that time.]

Some have the custom of eating Simanim (different foods which hint to good things).

It is customary to eat fish, the head of a ram (or fish), as well as Tzimmes [carrots cooked in sweet sauce].

On Rosh Hashanah, it is appropriate to consume meat, sweet food and drink. It is customary not to eat any foods that are bitter, sour, overly sharp, or that contain nuts or vinegar.

### **BIRCHAT HAMAZON**

If one forgets Ya'aleh Veyavo but remembers before saying Hashem's name at the end of Bonei Yerushalayim, he goes back. If one remembered after that, but before beginning the next Brachah, he recites the extra Brachah printed in some Birkonim. Some, including Chabad, hold that If one already began even the first word of the next Brachah, one must begin Birchat Hamazon again at night, but not during the daytime. Best to check with your Rabbi

Both the Harachamon of Chag and Rosh Hashanah are recited, in that order.

One does not add a Hey when saying Oseh Shalom in Birchat Hamazon.

Some have the custom after the meal not to sleep right away but to learn something small.

### **ROSH HASHANAH – BOTH MORNINGS**

Some have the custom to make Kiddush after Kriat Hatorah, before Tekiot.

According to Chabad, Ideally, men should not eat before Shofar. If this is difficult, or there is any concern that one will not be able to concentrate during davening, he may eat and drink (preferably not Mezonot). One should not be stringent if there are health concerns.

It is especially appropriate to go to Mikvah before davening.

The Chazanim should familiarize themselves in advance with the meaning of all of the Piyuttim and Tefillot – even if they already did so the previous year. Similarly, one should train his children regarding the order of davening beforehand, so as to minimize any distractions during davening.

Some have the custom to wear a kittel for Rosh Hashanah davening, some hold of just the Chazzan, the Ba'al Koreh, and the Ba'al Tokeah, however the Chabad custom is not to wear a Kittel at all on Rosh Hashanah.

Shir Hamaalot (after Yishtabach): Many have the custom to open the Aron Hakodesh, and to recite it verse by verse after the Chazzan. This is not the Chabad custom. However, one should say it with deep concentration and from the heart. When the Aron Hakadosh is opened during Chazarat Hashatz, it is not obligatory to stand, since the Sefer Torah is not being moved. Some have the custom to stand.

At Shacharit, the paragraph of Misod (at the beginning of Chazarat Hashatz) and the one that follows is recited by the Chazzan and not by the congregation.

Many stand for the Piyut beginning L'e-l Orech Din, recited in Shacharit on the first day and in Musaf on the second day.

*Avinu Malkeinu*: Some have the custom to recite part of it verse by verse after the Chazzan, however, it is not the Chabad custom to do so. The words *Roa Gzar* are recited without pausing in between.

It is customary to grant an Aliyah to the Ba'al Musaf, unless he is being paid.

A Brit performed at Shul is conducted before Tekiat Shofar. A Brit performed at home is held after davening.

### 🕊️ SHOFAR – BOTH DAYS

All men and boys over the age of *Bar Mitzvah* must hear the *Shofar*. Boys under *Bar Mitzvah* who are of the age of *Chinuch* (i.e. old enough to understand the concept of *Tekiat Shofar*) must also hear the *Shofar*. Women and girls over *Bat Mitzvah* are technically exempt, but the custom is for them to hear anyway.

It says that after *Kriat Hatorah* one must prepare for *Tekiat Shofar*. It does not specify how, and the Lubavitcher Rebbe explains that this is because everyone must make a personal soul-preparation that is inspiring on his level.

During the *Tekiot*, most place the Sifrei Torah on the Bimah and some, including Chabad hold the *Sifrei Torah* around the *Bimah*.

The *Makrie* does not necessarily have to be the Chazzan for *Shacharit*. In some communities the *Makrie* calls out the notes, however in Chabad, the *Makrie* points to the correct place, but does not say anything.

One should ensure that his children participate in *Tekiot* and *davening* as much as appropriate for their age.

One should ensure that children are quiet. Infants who may cry unexpectedly should be with their mothers. If an infant cries or makes noise, the mother should take the child out of *Shul*, and hear *Shofar* later.

One must stand during Tekiot, however someone who is weak or ill, may lean or sit if standing is difficult.

The *Yehi Ratzon* immediately before the *Brachot* is said only by the *Ba'al Tokeiah*. When the *Ba'al Tokeiah* says the *Brachot*, one should have in mind to be *Yotzeh* the *Brachot* from him. One should not say "*Baruch Hu u'Varuch Shmo*". [If one accidentally did so, he does not recite the *Brachot* again.]

When hearing the *Shofar*, one must have in mind to fulfil the *Mitzvah* of *Shofar*.

Between the *Brachot* and the very **first** *Shofar* sound, one should avoid speaking at all – even matters relevant to the *Tekiot*. If one did speak at this time, if it was a matter unrelated to the *Tekiot*, he needs to recite the *Brachot* again.

The *Brachot* recited on the *Shofar* are valid for all the blasts that will be sounded until the end of *Musaf*.

Therefore, from the time of the *Brachot* until after *Kaddish Titkabel* at the end of *Musaf*, one should try not speaking any matter irrelevant to the *Tekiot* or the *Tefillot*. If one did speak during this time, he does not repeat the *Brachot*, but should refrain from speaking unnecessarily again.

If one uses the facilities during this period of time, *Asher Yatzar* may be recited.

Some have the custom between the three *Sedarim* (sections) of the *Shofar* that "one confesses silently". This refers to one's intense longing to connect with his Father in Heaven, and to become a changed person

The *Yehi Ratzon* after the *Tekiot* is also said by the congregation. One should not

begin reciting it until the *Tekiah Gedolah* is completely finished.

According to *Kabballah*, after the *Sefer Torah* is returned to the *Aron Hakodesh*, the *Baal Tokeiah* faces the congregation in order that they may gaze at him. This was a regular custom performed by the Lubavitcher Rebbe.

### **MUSAF – BOTH DAYS**

Ideally, *Musaf* should be davened before the seventh hour of the day (1:45pm).

Since the Chazzan cannot move out of his place to bow at *Aleinu*, he should stand at a distance from the Shtender (podium), to allow him some space to bow.

In those communities where they blow *Tekiot* in the silent *Amidah*, the *Baal Tokeiah* knocks on the *Bimah* beforehand to signal that he is about to blow. One should pause to listen even if he is not yet up to the corresponding place in the *Amidah*.

A *Makrie* is not used during the *Musaf Amidah*.

The paragraph of *Misod* (beginning of Chazarat Hashatz) is recited by the Chazzan and not the congregation.

Some have the custom to stand for U'Netane Tokef.

The Chazzan recites the entire *Aleinu* – including the second half – out loud. The congregation quietly recites it word for word with him, bowing at V'Anachnu Korim, and continuing until Hu Elokenu Ein Od.

At that point according to some, they begin saying the *Pesukim* of *Atah Haraita*, as printed in the *Machzor*. The



subsequent paragraph (beginning Achilah) is recited by the Chazzan only.

When one bows, his head should reach all the way to the ground. One may not bow directly on a stone floor, but rather, should prepare mats or any other covering upon which to bow. Some do not bow directly on any surface without a covering.

The Chazzan must keep his feet together during the Amidah. He should therefore be helped up after bowing at Aleinu.

### **DAVENING WITHOUT A MINYAN**

For someone who davens without a minyan, there is no obligation to say Piyutim, but it is certainly appropriate to do so. Most Piyutim are said in entirety by both the Chazzan and congregation, and that is how the individual would recite them as well. [Although parts of Piyutim are often marked as “Chazzan” and “Kahal” in the Machzor, this is only in order to highlight which parts the Chazzan says aloud.]

Exceptions: A non-Chazan does not say the paragraph of Misod that appears at the beginning of the Chazans repetition, and in Shacharit he also does not say the paragraph that follows Misod.

When saying them alone, the piyutim should not be recited within the Amidah. Reading them after Shacharit and Musaf respectively, is fine. You may also repeat Aleinu as part of your personal reliving the Repetition of Musaf.

The paragraphs of Hayom Harat Olam may also be said alone, followed by the appropriate passage beginning Areshet Sefateinu. But don't recite the above paragraphs during the first series of

Shofar blowing (of 30 sounds; aka Tekiot diMeyushav).

When one davens alone, it is appropriate to read Kriat Hatorah and Haftorah in private between Shacharit and Musaf.

If someone is davening without a Minyan, he should not hear Shofar or recite Musaf during the first quarter of the day (after Sof Zman Kriat Shma), unless there is no other option.

When davening alone, the Shofar should be blown only before Musaf but not during the Amidah and the person blowing should consider the other Minyanim outdoors in earshot.

You may need for someone else to blow Shofar for you. Where possible, this should be done after the first quarter of the day (after Sof Zman Kriat Shma) has passed.

Some have the custom not to eat or drink before Shofar blowing, however if the Shofar blower cannot come until late in the day, those who do not eat prior to Shofar may eat.

After he concludes the Amidah, he may recite the Piyutim normally recited during the Chazzan's repetition, but there is no obligation for him to do so.

### **AFTERNOON – BOTH DAYS**

Any spare time should be utilized for reciting Tehillim.

It is customary not to sleep during the day. Idling away one's time is akin to sleeping.

Although it is a Mitzvah to eat and drink, one should not eat to the point that he is completely sated, in order that “the awe of Hashem be present on his face”.

## 🕎 FIRST DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH (TUESDAY)

*Tashlich* is recited after *Mincha*, before sunset (6:38pm). [If one is late, he may recite it until the stars emerge (7:10pm).]

After *Tashlich*, there is a custom to shake the edges of one's *Tzitzit*.

One should not throw food to the fish.

If possible, one avoids eating the meal after the beginning of the tenth Halachic hour (3:32pm), so that one has an appetite for the Rosh Hashanah meal of the second night.

One may not perform any preparations on the first day for the second night and day of Chag.

## 🕎 SECOND NIGHT OF ROSH HASHANA (TUESDAY)

One should use the time before Maariv to recite Tehillim.

Candles must not be waxed into place, nor may the wicks be twisted to facilitate their lighting.

When necessary, one may remove the wax from the previous night with a knife. It is best that one removes it in a way that it falls directly into the garbage.

On the second night, the candles should be kindled with a pre-existing flame, and not before *Tzeit Hakochavim* (7:10pm).

Most have the custom to say the Brachah, L'Hadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov, some, including Chabad say L'Hadlik Ner Shel Yom Hazikaron, all follow the Brachah with Shehecheyanu. Since there is an argument whether Shehecheyanu is recited on the second night of Rosh Hashana, the person lighting candles ideally wears a new garment and has in mind both the Chag and the new garment when reciting Shehecheyanu.

Alternatively, the new fruit that will be eaten after Kiddush should be placed on the table, and one should have it in mind when reciting Shehecheyanu. In the absence of this, one still recites Shehecheyanu.

Some do not smoke on Rosh Hashana, even those who smoke regularly on other Chagim. Some do not smoke publicly. [Of course, this is discouraged in general.]

Before making Kiddush, new fruit should be placed on the table.

When reciting Shehecheyanu, one should look at the new fruit, and have in mind both the Chag and the new fruit. If one doesn't have new fruit, he still recites Shehecheyanu.

One should minimize the time between Kiddush and Challah.

Before washing, a Brachah Acharona is said on the fruit, but not on the wine.

## 🕎 SECOND DAY OF ROSH HASHANAH (WEDNESDAY)

According to Chabad, ideally, men should not eat before Shofar. If this is difficult, or there is any concern that one will not be able to concentrate during davening, he may eat and drink (preferably not Mezonot). One should not be stringent if there are health concerns.

Avinu Malkeinu: Some have the custom to recite part of it verse by verse after the Chazzan, however, it is not the Chabad custom to do so. The words Roia Gzar are recited without pausing in between.

It is customary to grant an Aliyah to the Ba'al Tokeiah and the Ba'al Musaf, unless they are being paid.

The Lubavitcher Rebbeim would say Yizkor discreetly between Haftorah and

the Tekiot. Those without parents can choose whether to follow suit.

Some have the custom to make Kiddush after Kriat Hatorah, before Tekiot.

*Ya'aleh Veyavo* and both *Horachamon's* are recited during *Birchat Hamazon*, even if it is already after *Tzeit Hakochavim*.

*Havdalah* is recited without *Besamim* and candles.

### 🌀 ASERET Y'MEI TESHUVAH

Tachnun is recited until Erev Yom Kippur, together with the long Avinu Malkeinu.

One must use these days to correct his ways and do Teshuvah.

A doubtful Aveirah requires more Teshuvah than a definite one, as it is human nature to discount a doubtful Aveirah and assume that he didn't really do anything wrong.

One should increase in Torah, Tefillah and Tzedakah. One should be more meticulous in his observance of Mitzvot, even where he is ordinarily accustomed to following the lenient opinion.

The seven days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur encompass the seven days of the week. One should utilize each day to do Teshuvah for all the corresponding weekdays of the previous year.

If one did not do Hatarat Nedarim on Erev Rosh Hashanah, he should do so during the Aseret Y'mei Teshuvah, or on Erev Yom Kippur.

If one did not do Tashlich on Rosh Hashanah, he should try to do so during the Aseret Y'mei Teshuvah and if not he has until Hoshanah Raba.

According to Nussach Sefard, Kiddush Levanah is not recited until after Yom Kippur, according to Nussach Ashkenaz, Kiddush Levanah is recited from the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of the Molad.

### 🌀 HAMELECH HAKADOSH / HAMISHPAT

During *Aseret Y'mei Teshuvah*, one recites *Hamelech Hakadosh* at the end of the third *Brachah*, and *Hamelech Hamishpat* at the end of the eleventh *Brachah*.

One who did not say *Hamelech Hakadosh*: If he realized before he began the next *Brachah* **and** within the time frame it takes to say three words, he corrects his mistake. Otherwise, he must begin the *Amidah* again. [The same applies if this occurs in *Chazarat Hashatz*, in which case *Kedushah* is recited again.]

If one is in doubt whether he said *Hamelech Hakadosh*, he needs to repeat the *Amidah*.

One who did not say *Hamelech Hamishpat*: If he realized before he began the next *Brachah* **and** within the time frame it takes to say three words, he may correct his mistake. Otherwise, he should continue the *Amidah* without correcting his mistake.

If one mistakenly omitted any of the other four additions (*Zachreinu*, *Mi Chamocha*, *u'Chtov*, *u'Vsefer Chaim*), he may recite it at the place he remembers if he has not yet said *Hashem's* name at the end of that *Brachah*. Otherwise, he continues the *Amidah* and does not go back.

During *Chazarat Hashatz*, the congregation recites the selections of *U'Chtov* and *u'Vsefer Chaim* aloud before the *Chazzan*. Some also say *Zachreinu Lechaim* and *Mi Chamocha* aloud too.



## 🕯️ SHABBAT SHUVAH

In the *Brachah* after the *Amidah* of *Maariv*, we recite *Hamelech Hakadosh*.

*Maftir* is given to a learned and prominent person due to the special significance of this *Haftorah*.

One should try to attend a *Shabbat Shuvah Drashah*.

*Vihi Noam* and *V'atah Kaddosh* are not recited on *Motzei Shabbat*.

*May you and your family  
be blessed with a happy,  
healthy, safe, sweet,  
awesome and amazing  
New Year*

The Jewish  
Weekly



*[Handwritten signature]*



סימני ראש השנה | The Jewish Weekly

# Simanim

## for Rosh Hashanah

On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, it's traditional to eat certain foods at the festive meal to symbolize our wishes and hopes for the year ahead, and to help remind us of the meaning of the holiday during the meal.

Some are sweet foods, like the famous apple dipped in honey, and others are a play on words based on double meanings of the names of the foods in different languages.

A short prayer is recited as you partake of each of the simanim (symbolic foods); the text for each and a translation is provided below.

Wishing you a very sweet New Year from "The Jewish Weekly"

*The following blessing is said on both nights. On the second night, it is customary to eat a fruit that one has not yet eaten this season.*

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, שה' חינו והימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה.  
Blessed are You, our G-d, King of the universe, Who has kept us alive, sustained us, and brought us to this season.

### APPLE DIPPED IN HONEY

*Say a blessing on the fruit, then take a bite.*

ברוך אתה ה' אלקינו מלך העולם, בורא פרי העץ.

*Before you finish eating the apple, say the following prayer:*

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

May it be Your will, Hashem, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, that You renew for us a good and sweet new year.

### CARROT

יהי רצון מלפניך, ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שירבו זכיותינו.

May it be Your will, Hashem, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, that our merits increase.

### LEEK OR CABBAGE

יהי רצון מלפניך, ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שיכרתו שונאינו.

May it be Your will, Hashem, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, that our enemies be decimated.

### BEETS

יהי רצון מלפניך, ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שישתלקו אויבינו.

May it be Your will, Hashem, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, that our adversaries be removed.

### DATES

יהי רצון מלפניך, ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שיתמו שונאינו.

May it be Your will, Hashem, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, that our enemies be consumed.

### GOURD

יהי רצון מלפניך, ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שיקרע גזר דיננו ויקראו לפניך זכיותנו.

May it be Your will, Hashem, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, that the decree of our sentence be torn asunder; and may our merits be proclaimed before you.

### POMEGRANATE

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

May it be Your will, Hashem, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, that our merits increase as [the seeds of] a pomegranate.

### FISH

יהי רצון מלפניך, ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שנפרה ונרבה כדגים.

May it be Your will, Hashem, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, that we be fruitful and multiply like fish.

### HEAD OF SHEEP OR FISH

יהי רצון מלפניך, ה' אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, שנהיה לראש ולא לזנב.

May it be Your will, Hashem, our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, that we be as the head and not as the tail.

*For the head of a sheep, we add:*

ויהי רצון שיזכור לנו זכותא דיצחק אבינו.





**Rav Levi Yitzchak's  
Belated Shanah Tovah Greetings**  
**by Rabbi Yehuda Winzelberg**



It was late at night one New Year's Eve, December 31st, and the Beit Midrash of Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchov, zt"l, was still filled with his Chasidim who were sitting and learning. Close to midnight, the door to the private office of the Rav, which was adjacent to the Beit Midrash, opened, and the Rav shouted out to his

Chasidim: "L'Shana Tova Tikatev V'techatem", - 'May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year!'.

He then returned to his office and closed the door behind him. The Chasidim were mystified. Didn't the Rav know that this was the secular New Year and not the Jewish New Year? A short time later the same thing

happened and the Berditchover Rebbe came out to bench (bless) them. And then this happened again for a third time.

The Chasidim were totally baffled! As not just anyone could approach the Rav, the men asked an elderly Chasid to approach him and ask for an explanation. The Rav told the elderly man the following: The previous Rosh Hashanah, the Tefilot and Shofar blowing of the city of Berditchov were especially beautiful and heartfelt and went directly to Heaven. Hashem was so taken by these Tefilot that He immediately inscribed the entire city in the Book of Life and bestowed on each and every one of them a year of health and wealth.





**The burial place of Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchov**

When Yom Kippur came, Hashem was so taken by their fasting and crying. The people poured out their hearts into their prayers. Hashem was about to seal the inscription that He had written on Rosh Hashanah, when suddenly the Satan spoke up. "True, the people have been praying fervently, however, this is only one day! How can You inscribe them favorably for an entire year based on their actions of only one day?"

Hashem therefore held back and the inscription was not sealed. Immediately after Yom Kippur, the people started to build their Succot in preparation of the upcoming Chag. The defending angel spoke up, "Hashem, see how Your people are involved in doing the Mitzvah? Even the poor people are building their Succah to the best of their abilities!"

The Satan was not to be deterred. "Again, I object! True, they are building Succot for You. But, look at the houses they live in, permanent structures of brick, stone and glass. But for You, Hashem, they merely build temporary shacks that can barely last the week!" Again, Hashem held back from sealing the inscription.

Simchat Torah came and the Shuls were filled with dancing and joyful happiness. Again, the defending angel came to Hashem and spoke

up. "Hashem, don't You see how your children are rejoicing for Your Torah? Shouldn't the inscription be sealed?" Hashem was about to seal the inscription when again the Satan spoke up. "I object yet again! True, they are rejoicing with the Torah tonight. But, how can You inscribe them favorably based on their actions of one night? When Yom Tov is over, they will go back to their old ways! They are undeserving!"

Hashem once again held back from sealing the inscription. So it was that the inscription that was written on Rosh Hashanah remained unsealed through Yom Kippur, Succot, Hoshanah Rabbah, Shmini Atzeret and Simchat Torah.

Tonight, on New Year's Eve, however, the defending angel spoke up. "Hashem, King of the Universe, do You see how non-Jews celebrate the New Year? Shouting and drinking in the streets, and all manner of carrying on! Do you remember how your children celebrated their New Year? They did it with prayer, atonement and holiness." This time the Satan had no response.

Rav Levi Yitzchak concluded, "Therefore, after all this time the inscription was finally sealed! I felt it appropriate to bless everyone with "L'Shana Tova Tikatev V'techatem!"

# An “Unusual” Rosh Hashanah Concert in Spain

by **Rabbi David Bibi**

In Spain of August 1492, all Jews were ordered to leave the Spanish kingdom. King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella had recently conquered all of Spain and sought to make their new kingdom an entirely Christian nation. No Jews could remain. Thousands of Jews fled, and within days, the Jewish community of Spain, which had flourished for hundreds of years, had ended.

However, not all of Spain's Jews had fled. It was possible to remain in Spain, but every Jew had to publicly convert to Christianity and renounce all Jewish observance. Many Jews lived outwardly as goyim in public, but held on to their Jewish observance in secret.

On Friday nights, these secret Jews would shutter their windows so neighbors wouldn't see them light Shabbat candles. They would bake their challah in hiding, and would whisper the words of the Kiddush. They knew their lives were at stake if they were ever discovered. The Spanish Inquisition had begun years before, and Jews were frequently killed when their secret Jewish lifestyles became known.

Even though these Jews had apparently embraced Christianity, the secret Jews of Spain were never trusted by the Spaniards. They called these Jews “Marranos”, a disparaging term that means “pigs”, and many looked for any sign of Jewish practice in order to turn them over to the Inquisition.

There was a large group of these secret Jews in the city of Barcelona who clung to their ancient traditions. One person, a prominent Jew named Don Fernando Aguilar, was the conductor of the Royal Orchestra in that city, and he enjoyed great wealth and prestige. He privately kept all the mitzvot he could. When he would come home each night, he kissed a Mezuzah that he kept hidden in his floorboards. He was careful to eat only Kosher food and observe the Jewish holidays.

Some Mitzvot, however, were nearly impossible to observe, like hearing the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah.

Blowing a Shofar out loud would lead to an immediate arrest, and death. After five long years of living this secret life, Don Aguilar saw an opportunity. In 1497, he made a public announcement, that on Sunday, the 5th of September, he would personally lead the Royal Orchestra of Barcelona in a brand new concert of his own composition, and the piece he had written was unlike anything ever heard in Spain before.

He declared that it was going to be a musical celebration of different people and cultures from around the world, featuring every instrument ever invented from across the globe, no matter how far away. The only thing he didn't announce was that it was also the first day of Rosh Hashanah. He generated much excitement for his concert, and on the day of the performance, the orchestra hall was filled with an over-flow crowd.

Also, in attendance were those “Marranos”, but nobody seemed suspicious of them. As the concert began, Don Fernando Aguilar was true to his word, the audience heard interesting music from a wide range of instruments. There were bells and horns, stringed instruments and an array of different drums.

Then, in the middle of the concert, a musician with the orchestra who was rumored by many to be a secret Jew took the stage. He was holding an unusual instrument: a ram's horn. The musician put it to his lips, and began to blow. He blew a Tekiah, a Shevarim, and a Teruah. Each note of the Rosh Hashanah Shofar service rang out throughout the hall, one hundred notes in all.

Most of the audience appreciated it as a skillful performance of an unfamiliar instrument, but to the secret Jews in the audience, Don Aguilar's “music” gave them their first chance in years to fulfill the mitzvah of hearing the Shofar!

*Reprinted from an email of Shabbat Shalom from Cyberspace*

# A Near-Fatal Rosh Hashana Faint

By Dr. Les Rosenthal

I am a dentist; I have a practice in Encino, California. I also have a good singing voice and dabble in cantorial music. In 1981, I was asked to sing at a synagogue north of Los Angeles. The hall was full - probably 1,500 people were there - and I had a solo to sing, the prayer Unetaneh Tokef. One bar before the solo, a massive headache struck me and I fell to the floor - they had to carry me off the bimah (platform) in the middle of Rosh Hashanah.

I was taken to a room where I could lie down and rest for a while. But two hours later, the headache had not gone away, its intensity was unchanged, and it was clear this was not a good thing.

At that point I was taken to the hospital, where they took x-rays of my skull and neck, and came back with the diagnosis, "You have a tumor in the pituitary gland. It's destroying the bone, and the pressure is causing the headache."

A neurologist was called in, who ordered a tomograph in order to get a better picture of the bone destruction. After he got the results, he said, "There is no tumor. There is no destruction of the bone."

Relieved, I thought, "That's good - I'm going home!"

But he said, "Since we do not have a cause for your headache, we need to do further tests." He ordered a CAT scan.

The CAT scan revealed that behind my right eye, in the middle of the gray matter, I had an aneurysm - a blood vessel that had blown up like a balloon - and it was about ready to burst. If it burst, death would be instant.

When my wife heard that, she became hysterical. She was pregnant with our third child, and the idea of being alone with three

young kids without a husband scared her witless.

She began to push me to go the next step - an aortic angiogram - which the neurologist recommended. This involved putting a catheter into a major artery in my leg and feeding it up to the aorta, then releasing a dye. This test allowed the doctors to map where the blood vessels are, and see if it was possible to stop blood flow to that particular blood vessel with the aneurysm.

If so, then they could make a hole in my head or else remove the eye to get to the affected area, and then they could put metal clips there so that the aneurysm wouldn't burst. While that might sound good, the problem with such a procedure is that the particular blood vessel could be feeding some vital part of the brain, and once it is clipped off, a stroke could result. That did not sound like a risk I wanted to take.

There was another option, which unfortunately did not sound much better. This called for surgically exposing the aneurysm and coating it with glue to reinforce its walls. In this procedure the surgeons would have to destroy a lot of tissue to expose the aneurysm, and that could also cause a deficit in brain function.

Neither of these options sounded good to me, but my wife was very upset and pushing the doctors to do something. Finally, I told them, "Okay, we'll do this. But only on the condition that, if you're going to do the aortic angiogram, you must have an operating room ready, so you can move me and do the next procedure. If I ever wake up, I want it to be over."

Everyone agreed, and that's when Rabbi Joshua Gordon stepped in. He was the director of Chabad of the Valley, and we had taken advantage of his Shabbat hospitality a number of times. At his table, we heard about the



Lubavitcher Rebbe, and we attended classes where the Rebbe's teachings were discussed.

Rabbi Gordon said to me, "You have to write the Rebbe a detailed letter about what's going on here. You have to ask him for a blessing."

While I was moving toward Torah observance, I was still skeptical about the mystical aspects of Judaism, and I didn't know what good a blessing could do. I said to him, "Listen, it's not my thing! I mean, what does an old Jew, 3,500 miles away, know about what's going on in my head?"

I know that sounds pretty disrespectful, but that's where I was coming from at the time.

Rabbi Gordon's comment was, "Why not write the letter? What harm could it do for you to write it? You will be asking for a blessing from a very great man, who has given blessings to many, many people who - as a result of his blessings - have had wonderful things happen in their lives."

So I relented. I surprised myself by writing a three-page letter by hand and sent it off.

Four days later, the answer came in the form of a phone call to Rabbi Gordon. Essentially, the Rebbe's message to me was, "There is nothing wrong with you. If you have to take this last test for your own peace of mind, I give you a blessing that it should be successful. But there's nothing wrong with you."

Since I had already decided to do the aortic angiogram, I went through with it. When I woke up I saw, standing over me, the radiologist who

specializes in reading neurological films. His faced look very somber, almost miserable.

But I was happy. The very fact that I woke up made me happy. I could think! I could see! I could speak! I didn't care about anything else.

The radiologist stared at me for a few moments, and then he said, "I've never seen anything like this before - that something so clear on a CAT scan should turn out to be absolutely nonexistent in an aortic angiogram. You are fine. You have absolutely nothing wrong with you at all. I have no clue why you had that headache."

The bottom line is - I haven't had that headache since. Not since 1981, thirty years ago.

Afterwards, we threw a big party catered by one of the kosher restaurants in Los Angeles, since our house was not kosher enough as yet. My neighbors thought I had died and it was a wake, because they saw all these black-hatted rabbis coming over. But then they saw me dancing in the street, celebrating this miracle.

It didn't take more than that to make me Torah-observant and a chassid of the Rebbe and of Chabad, which I am to this day. My whole family was profoundly affected as well. All our kids attended yeshivahs and seminaries, and today, everyone in the family keeps Shabbat, keeps kosher. They all lead religious lives. And we are now expecting our fifteenth grandchild.

This whole level of nachas would not have been mine if it wasn't for the Rebbe. He sent me - whom he had never met, and who knew nothing about me - such a salvation blessing.

*Reprinted from an email of <http://myencounterblog.com>.*

## **We Never Made it to Synagogue on Rosh Hashanah Eve**

**By Sofya Sara Esther Tamarkin**

In early September of 1997, I landed in London as an exchange student from Philadelphia's Arcadia University. Unexpectedly, I found myself in the center of major world events as the country was mourning the death of Princess Diana, who had just died in a horrible car crash. The streets of London were covered with flowers, and I joined the overall somber mood, tapping into the awareness of my own mortality. Like never before, I wanted to find purpose and meaning in my life.

My college roommate and I were housed in a small dorm near City University with 30 other exchange students from the United States. After meeting our neighbors, I discovered that many of these residents were Jewish. This made me feel safe in an unfamiliar country. This semester abroad was my first experience away from my family, and it was comforting to know that other "members of the tribe" were sharing our living quarters.

As weeks went by, we became more familiar with each other and our surroundings. On the last day of September, my neighbor announced that the following night would be Rosh Hashanah. Though I knew little of its significance, when he proposed that we all walk together to a synagogue, I agreed to join the group. The next evening, we dressed up in our finest clothes and gathered outside.

This was before navigation apps, and our local "Moses" was not too familiar with the way to the synagogue. We walked for hours in different directions, and soon, the simple plan turned into a disaster. After hours of searching, we were exhausted and returned back to our dorm without ever stepping foot into a synagogue.

Disappointed and frustrated, our "leader" offered to conduct a Rosh Hashanah service in our communal living room. He grew up in a

somewhat traditional family and knew how to read prayers. While most of the others were no longer interested, I was even more enthusiastic about this plan.

It touched my heart to listen to a fellow student read from a Hebrew text in the dim light. It felt like my soul recognized the unfamiliar language and bonded to the prayers of my ancestors. It was a magical, innate pull. I was far from my family and yet I no longer felt alone; I was connected to my people. I covered my hair with a light blue scarf, as this was the only sign of reverence and modesty I could think of. I couldn't hold back tears and cried for all the missed Jewish milestones of my life. That evening, after searching for the synagogue on the narrow streets of London, I had finally found my path.

The Baal Shem Tov once instructed his disciple, Rabbi Ze'ev Kitzeles to blow the shofar for the entire congregation, and to prepare by studying Kabbalistic meditations. Taking this responsibility very seriously, Rabbi Ze'ev wrote down proper intentions to guide him during the blowing of the shofar.

Finally, the morning of Rosh Hashanah arrived, and Rabbi Ze'ev stood in the center of the Baal Shem Tov's synagogue. He reached into his pocket to discover that his notes were missing. With the entire community waiting, he composed himself enough to fulfill the basic requirements. When he finished blowing the shofar, tears of disappointment filled his eyes. Rabbi Ze'ev felt that he had disappointed his teacher, who had entrusted him with this sacred task.

Broken-hearted, he approached the Baal Shem Tov who reassured him, "There are many gates leading to the palace. Each door has its own unique code to unlock it. Yet, there is one

master key that fits all the locks, and that is a broken heart.”

I often feel like it is impossible to make up for all the missed opportunities of the years that I grew up in the former Soviet Union without any knowledge of Judaism. Yet the story reminds me that it is not the lack that defines me, but my yearning for connection and clarity.

I often remember listening to my fellow student reading those mysterious Hebrew prayers after our long search for a synagogue. There have

been many big decisions and commitments made along my complicated journey, but on that Rosh Hashanah evening in London, I realized that regardless of the physical address on the map, our inner compass can always bring us home to our Jewish heritage.

When I hear the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, I imagine the primal scream of my soul calling to me, as if to reassure me, “I am here; you are home.”

*Reprinted from an email from Chabad.org Magazine.*

## Who by Fire

### By Elissa (Galster) Davidson

It was 4 PM on the hottest day of the year in New Jersey. I had just fallen asleep on the couch after an enjoyable Shabbat meal with friends, exhausted from the 15-minute walk home in the heat.

I was in the middle of a vivid dream when suddenly a noise jolted me awake. I heard a loud alarm crying out. My thoughts raced but I didn't panic. This must be a false alarm.

I got increasingly nervous as I walked through the dining room, down the hallway and turned the corner. The ringing got louder and more intense as I made my way closer to my bedroom door. My roommates were away for Shabbat; I was all alone.

I turned the door handle and saw a thick black cloud of smoke encasing my bedroom. That's when panic set in. For a second I was paralyzed in a stream of thoughts: Am I still dreaming? How do I wake up? Is this real? Are all my possessions being consumed by fire? Should I try to rescue anything? What's worth trying to recover?

Life! Life is worth recovering! My “fight or flight” system kicked in to high gear as my heart raced and blood pumped quickly through my veins. I reached down to try to grab one item off the floor but the smoke choked my lungs.

Run! Get help. Save the rest of the house.

A short while later as I watched the firemen try to dampen the fire, my fears burned like the flames that continued for hours. The final flames were extinguished just as Shabbat ended, and so was my sense of security and stability.

My rabbi advised the day after the fire not to ask the questions right away. Why? What does this mean? Contemplation and reflection would come, he said.

I said a special blessing during the Shabbat after the fire thanking G-d for saving me from a dangerous situation. How was I able to thank G-d for something that caused me so much pain? How could I be grateful for being home-less and losing all of my possessions? How could I have gratitude for the trauma I suffered? How could I accept that going through so much suffering was “good” for me and coming from a loving Creator?

I could have been sleeping in the bedroom where the fire began instead of the couch in the living room (which I had contemplated doing before I grabbed a pillow from my room and landed instead on the couch). My roommate and I could have decided to continue to wait another week to borrow the ladder to reach up



to the smoke detector to replace the batteries that were dead. Others could have been in the building and been harmed. I could have tried to rescue my things and been trapped...

But apparently G-d had a bigger plan for me. I spent that Rosh Hashanah with my parents who drove to New York from Chicago to be with me. It was the first Rosh Hashanah in over six years that I prayed with my parents in the same synagogue. It was the first time since I had rediscovered my Jewish faith and spent close to a year in Jerusalem, three weeks at Aish HaTorah's Jewel program and then nine months in a seminary. In the aftermath of the fire, questions arose in me. How will I recover from this? What do I do now? Why did this happen to me? Will I ever regain my sense of security? What is really important in life?

The lessons and values I had gained through my study of Torah prepared me to tackle many of these questions. That Rosh Hashanah I sat in synagogue and I contemplated the events of my life, I reflected on the events of the fire, and I praised G-d for sparing my life.

My time in Israel put me on course towards a more purposeful life. The fire taught me how to be a receiver, something that I was never comfortable with. I learned to appreciate the support from friends, family and the Jewish community on a much greater magnitude. I learned that physical possessions, although they do hold importance and sentiment, can never share the same value as states of being: connection, love, happiness, fulfillment, gratitude, purpose. And I learned to be incredibly thankful to G-d.

Rosh Hashanah is a time to crown G-d and recognize His Kingship. On Rosh Hashanah our fate for the year is written and later sealed. We read in the machzor that it will be determined who will live and who will die – who by water and who by fire, who by sword and who by beast... As I read these words the magnitude struck me. I was overcome with emotion and

gratitude realizing that last year it was determined that I would be in a fire and endure great suffering, but my life would be spared. It could have been determined differently for me.

Months passed after the fire and thank G-d I slowly rebuilt, with significant help from the Jewish community at large who graciously offered their homes, food, clothes, supplies, money, and continued support. I will always be indebted for these significant acts of kindness and hope to one day pay them forward. At the end of January I returned to Israel on the Aish Destiny trip, a women's retreat to reconnect, rejuvenate and revitalize. It did just that and more.

While in Israel, I met my now husband. I had been searching and praying for many years to find my bashert (soulmate) and my prayers were finally answered. Could this have happened if I had not endured certain events and grown in specific ways earlier in the year? Would I be at this same place I am now if I had not been guided on a specific path in life and through my various trials and tribulations? Were my prayers that Rosh Hashanah heard?

We don't always understand why bad or difficult things happen. There is so much confusion, suffering, and uncertainty. But we are not in full control. There is a greater power, a Source, a Creator that has painted a picture for every one of us. We do not always see the picture clearly, but sometimes we do get a glimmer of light illuminating it for a split second. It is hard to understand when we are left in the dark. But we should not lose sight of the fact that there is a plan and it is ultimately good, we just do not see the full tapestry yet.

This Rosh Hashanah take the time to reflect on your past, give thanks, pray for the upcoming year, and recognize the magnitude of the day and the power it can hold.

*Reprinted from an email from aish.com.*

## Laws & Customs: Tzom Gedalia

For the year 5786

According to Shulchan Aruch Harav, Mishna Berurah and Nittel Gavriel

All times listed are for Jerusalem only as per [www.myzmanim.com](http://www.myzmanim.com)

Based on Rabbi Shmuel Lescher's Halachah Sheets

Reviewed by Reb Elimelech Rabinowicz שליט"א, Rav of Tzeirei Kehal Chassidim, Shaarei Chessed

Compiled by Yossi Fraenkel in memory of his grandparents

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### 🕊️ WHO MUST FAST

All must fast, including a *Chattan* and *Kallah* during the week of *Sheva Brachot*.

If one inadvertently ate during the fast, one must immediately resume fasting.

Mothers who are either pregnant or nursing, or have difficulty fasting while tending to their young children, should consult with a *Rav*. [One shouldn't be unduly strict in this regard, so as not to harm the wellbeing of mother and baby.] The ill/elderly should also consult with a *Rav*.

Anyone below *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* need not fast. From the age of nine upwards, the custom is to train children to fast for several hours, as per the child's abilities.

An individual exempt from fasting should eat in private only, and avoid delicacies or excessive intake. Similarly, children old enough to understand the concept of a fast should avoid delicacies.

### 🕊️ EATING PRIOR TO THE FAST

One may eat and drink the entire evening until dawn (5:17am), provided that either of these conditions are met:

- One didn't go to sleep for the night. [Dozing off is not regarded as such.]
- One stipulated (preferably verbally) before going to sleep that he would eat upon waking. In this case, one washes his hands and recites the morning *Brachot* before eating.

### 🕊️ LAWS OF FASTING

One shouldn't brush one's teeth or rinse one's mouth. [If this will cause great aggravation, there is room to be lenient, provided that one leans forward to prevent

any liquid from flowing down one's throat; that one uses substances unfit for consumption (e.g. Listerine); and that one rinses with less than 86 ml.]

One may take non-chewable pills for medical purposes, without water. A *Rav* should be consulted regarding other medicines.

One may shower, bathe and apply ointments and creams.

When a *Brit* occurs on a fast, the *Seudah* takes place at night, after the fast.

One may not taste food to determine whether it requires salt/spices. However, when preparing food for a *Seudat Mitzvah* scheduled for the night following the fast, one may taste the food, provided that **all** these conditions are met:

- One expels it without swallowing.
- One tastes only an absolute minimum.
- One tastes less than 86 ml in total throughout the day.

### 🕊️ CONDUCT ON A FAST DAY

One should learn *Torah* connected to the topic of the fast.

One should give increased *Tzedakah*, especially before *davening*. It is proper to give the value of the forgone meals – especially if one is exempt from fasting.

The purpose of fasting is to arouse one to do *Teshuvah*. Idling away one's time, or partaking in joyous or entertaining activities, is not in the spirit of the fast.

One should be especially careful not to become angered.

### 🕊️ CHAZZAN'S RECITATION OF ANEINU

During *Shacharit*, only the *Chazzan* recites *Aneinu*. Therefore, one who won't be fasting shouldn't serve as *Chazzan*.

[In the unlikely event that the *Chazzan* is not fasting, or less than three congregants are fasting: Instead of reciting *Aneinu* between *Goal Yisrael* and *R'faeinu*, the *Chazzan* includes *Aneinu* in the *Brachah* of *Sh'ma Koleinu*, and concludes the *Brachah* regularly; i.e. *Shomea Tefillah*.]

A *Chazzan* who forgot to recite *Aneinu*:

- if he remembered before reciting *Hashem's* name at the conclusion of the *Brachah* of *R'faeinu*, he recites *Aneinu* immediately, and then repeats the *Brachah* of *R'faeinu*;
- if he already concluded the *Brachah* of *R'faeinu*, he recites *Aneinu* in the *Brachah* of *Sh'ma Koleinu*, and concludes the *Brachah* with a double conclusion; i.e. *Ha'one B'eit Tzara V'shamea Tefillah*;
- if he already concluded the *Brachah* of *Sh'ma Koleinu*, he recites *Aneinu* as a separate *Brachah* immediately after the *Brachah* of *Sim Shalom*.

#### 🌀 SELICHOT & AVINU MALKEINU

One who is not fasting must still recite *Selichot* and *Avinu Malkeinu*.

According to Chabad, *Selichot* is said during the *Aseret Y'mei Teshuvah* before davening on *Tzom Gedalya*, however, most say it during davening like any other fast day, and certain selections are omitted, as those are said only when *Selichot* is recited prior to davening.

One who davenes without a *Minyan* omits the *Yud-Gimel Midot-Harachamim*.

If *Tachnun* is not recited (e.g. when a *Chattan* is present), *Selichot* is still recited, whereas *Avinu Malkeinu* is not recited.

During *Avinu Malkeinu*, we recite the selections for *Aseret Y'mei Teshuvah*, and not the selections recited on a fast day.

#### 🌀 TORAH READING

The passage of *Vayechal* is read, provided that at least three congregants are fasting.

A non-fasting individual must still hear *Kriat Hatorah* of *Vayechal*, but should not be called up for an *Aliya*. [If he is the only *Kohen* or *Levi*,

he should absent himself.] If he is called up, and refusing the *Aliya* will pain him or minimize the honor of the *Torah*, he may accept the *Aliya*.

A non-fasting individual shouldn't serve as the *Ba'al Koreh*, unless there is no one else to serve as the *Ba'al Koreh*.

When the congregation recites the verses aloud, the *Ba'al Koreh* waits for silence before resuming. The one receiving the *Aliya* begins these verses with the congregation, but ends with the *Ba'al Koreh*.

#### 🌀 MINCHA

*Mincha* is longer than usual (due to *Kriat Hatorah* and *Haftorah*); care should be taken to conclude before sunset (6:35pm).

Ideally, *Kriat Hatorah* shouldn't start prior to *Mincha Gedolah* (1:00pm). The *Amidah* may certainly not begin before then.

There is a big *Machloket* amongst the *Poskim*, regarding doing *Birchat Cohanim* before *Mincha Ketanah* (4:04pm). However those who don't do *Birchat Cohanim* say the *Elokeinu V'Eilokei Avoteinu* as normal on a fast day.

After *Haftorah*, most communities return the *Torah* to the *Aron Kodesh* and then say *Kaddish*. The Chabad custom is that the *Chazzan* slowly recites *Kaddish* while the *Torah* is returned to the *Aron Kodesh*, similar to the Chabad custom at *Mincha on Shabbat*.

If an individual forgot to recite *Aneinu* in the *Brachah* of *Sh'ma Koleinu*, he may recite it in the passage *Elokai N'tzor*, before the second *Yih'yu L'ratzon*. If one didn't remember until he concluded the *Amidah*, he does not repeat it. [A non-fasting individual does not recite *Aneinu*.]

The *Chazzan* recites *Aneinu* between *Goal Yisrael* and *R'faeinu*, and also recites *Birchat Kohanim* toward the end of the *Amidah*.

The fast concludes at 6:59pm Some wait until the time for מוצאי שבת at 7:08pm.





## History of Gedaliah

by Rabbi Nissan Mindel

Nebuchadnezzar, king of Babylonia, had accomplished his purpose. He had completely subdued the Kingdom of Judah and destroyed its capital of Jerusalem, and its most sacred shrine, the Holy Temple. He had slain or captured most of the royal family and the nobility of the land. The upper classes of the Jewish people, including the leaders of the priesthood and the chief civil and military officers, were led as captives en masse to Babylon. Many of them were mercilessly put to death at Riblah. Judah was crushed and bereaved of its best sons.

However, Nebuchadnezzar did not wish to turn the land of Judah into a complete desert. He permitted the poorer classes to remain in Judah to till the soil and to tend their vineyards. Over them Nebuchadnezzar had appointed Gedaliah, the son of Ahikam, as governor.

The prophet Jeremiah had been allowed to choose between remaining in Judah and going to Babylon as an honored guest of the Babylonian royal house. He chose to remain with his brethren on the holy soil. Jeremiah went to Mizpah, a short way north of Jerusalem, where Gedaliah had established the seat of his governorship, and offered him his

fullest support. Gedaliah gratefully accepted, and Mizpah now became also the spiritual center of the people.

Gedaliah was a wise man, gentle and modest. He zealously began to encourage the people to cultivate the fields and vineyards, and thus lay the foundation of security. Under the wise administration of Gedaliah, the Jewish community began to prosper. Its fame began to spread abroad. Many Jews who had fled to places of safety in neighboring lands during the war of destruction, were attracted by the news of the revival of the Jewish community in Judah. They came to Gedaliah in Mizpah and were warmly welcomed by him.

The Jewish governor exhorted his brethren to remain loyal to the king of Babylonia, and promised them peace and security. His advice was well taken. The Babylonian garrison stationed in the land, did not molest them - on the contrary, it offered them protection against unfriendly neighbors. The young Jewish commonwealth was well on its way to recovery, when it was suddenly struck by a cowardly deed of treachery and bloodshed.

Among the refugees who had joined Gedaliah in Mizpah, was Ishmael, the

son of Nethaniah, a descendant of the royal house of Zedekiah, the last king of Judah. Ishmael was an ambitious man, who would stop at nothing to attain his goal. The honor and success that Gedaliah had won, filled him with cruel jealousy. Ishmael began to plot against Gedaliah. He found an ally in the king of Ammon, who had been following with apprehension the growth of the new Jewish colony.

The conspiracy became known to Johanan, the son of Kareah, a devoted officer of Gedaliah. Johanan warned the governor of the danger threatening his person. Gedaliah, however, being of a true and generous nature, shrank from believing such treachery. When Johanan offered to slay Ishmael secretly, before the latter could carry out his evil plans, Gedaliah indignantly rejected the proposal.

In the meantime, Ishmael bided his time. Before long the opportunity which he was waiting for presented itself. He was invited by the governor to a feast at Mizpah on Rosh Hashanah. Ishmael arrived at the banquet in the company of ten followers. During the feast, the ruthless band attacked and slew the governor. Having assassinated their host, they commenced a terrible massacre. Ishmael murdered many prominent followers of Gedaliah, and put to the sword the small Chaldean garrison stationed at Mizpah. His murderous deed accomplished, Ishmael left Mizpah with many captives, heading for Ammon.

Johanan and a few of his brave men had escaped the massacre, for they were not in Mizpah at that time. When Johanan learned of the terrible tragedy, he rallied additional help and pursued the assassin. Overtaking Ishmael near Gibeon in Benjamin, Johanan succeeded in freeing the captives, but Ishmael, with a few followers, managed to escape to the land of Ammon.

The plight of the Jews was now sad indeed. The assassination of Gedaliah and of the Babylonian garrison would draw the wrath of Nebuchadnezzar upon the remnants of the people in Judah. They were sorely afraid of his punishment. Yet where could they turn? The only haven of refuge seemed to be Egypt, where the hand of Nebuchadnezzar had not yet reached. But that country was hateful to them. Although some nine hundred years had passed, since their ancestors had been liberated from Egypt, after centuries of slavery, Egypt was still regarded with aversion. Their despair and fright was so great, however, that the poor people did decide to seek escape in Egypt, and set out on their way southward.

The hard-pressed Jews halted in Beit Lechem and turned to Jeremiah for advice. The faithful prophet, who had shared in all their trials and misfortunes and had clung to them with unwavering affection, was still among them. To him they now turned their anxious eyes, promising to abide by whatever counsel he might give them.

For ten days Jeremiah prayed to G-d, and finally he received a Divine message which he immediately told to the assembled people:

“Thus says the G-d of Israel . . . If you will still dwell in this land, I will build you, and not destroy you, and I will plant you, and not pluck you up . . . Fear not the king of Babylonia, of whom you are afraid . . . for I am with you to save you . . . But if you say, ‘We will not dwell in this land,’ disobeying the voice of your G-d, saying, ‘No, but we will go into the land of Egypt’ . . . then it shall come to pass that the sword which you feared shall overtake you there in the land of Egypt, and the famine whereof you were afraid, shall follow close after you in Egypt; and there you shall die . . . G-d hath spoken to you, O remnant of Judah, go not to Egypt; know you with certainty, for I have warned you this day!”

But Jeremiah’s words fell on deaf ears. The people had already formed their resolution, and had hoped only that the prophet would confirm it. In spite of their solemn pledge to Jeremiah that they would follow his advice, they accused the prophet of plotting together with his disciple Baruch, the son of Neriah, to deliver them into the hands of the Chaldeans. Then they all proceeded on their way to Egypt, forcing Jeremiah and Baruch to accompany them.

When the refugees reached the border of Egypt, they halted. Here Jeremiah once again warned his brethren that the safety they sought in Egypt would be short-lived. He predicted that before long, Egypt would be conquered by Nebuchadnezzar and destroyed. The prophet further warned them of the dangers besetting them in mixing with the idolatrous Egyptians. If they should return to idolatry, which had been the cause of all their misfortunes in the past, they would seal their fate beyond hope.

Unfortunately, the prophet’s warnings and entreaties were in vain. The Jewish refugees settled in Egypt, and before long, abandoned their faith in G-d. They sank to the level of the heathen practices of the Egyptians.

A few years later there was a political upheaval in Egypt, when Pharaoh Hophra was assassinated.

Nebuchadnezzar took advantage of the situation. He invaded and destroyed the land, and most of the Jewish refugees perished in this invasion and war. Thus Jeremiah’s dreadful prophecy came true again.

Where and when the aged prophet died is not known with certainty. It is believed that he and his faithful disciple Baruch spent their last years with their exiled brethren in Babylon.



## Laws & Customs: Yom Kippur

For the year 5786

According to Shulchan Aruch Harav, Mishna Berurah and Nittai Gavriel

All times listed are for Jerusalem only as per [www.myzmanim.com](http://www.myzmanim.com)

Based on Rabbi Shmuel Lesches's Halachah Sheets

Reviewed by Reb Elimelech Rabinowicz שליט"א, Rav of Tzeirei Kehal Chassidim, Shaarei Chesed

Compiled by Yossi Fraenkel in memory of his grandparents

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### 🕊 KAPPAROT

Kapparot is performed any time during the Aseret Y'mei Teshuvah, as close to Erev Yom Kippur as possible.

Kapparot is traditionally performed with white chickens. [Nevertheless, one should not noticeably go out of his way to obtain specifically white chickens.]

Kapparot should not be shared unless there is no other alternative. A male uses a male chicken and a female uses a female chicken. A pregnant woman uses one male and one female chicken (according to the Ari Z"l, a pregnant woman uses one male and two female chickens).

A pregnant woman within 40 days of conception does not need to take any extra chickens for the pregnancy.

A pregnant woman does not need to take two or three at the same time and can take one after the other.

It is preferable that one be present when his chicken is slaughtered. If the chicken was not slaughtered properly or died before slaughtering, Kapparot is performed again. If it was slaughtered properly but the chicken was found to be not Kosher, Kapparot need not be repeated.

One should cover the blood, but only with the Shochet's consent. The Brachah ends "Al Kissui Dam BeAfar" [אֶל כִּסּוּי דָּם בְּעָפָר]. The blood should be fully covered.

One should not think that the Kapparot itself atones for one's sins. Rather, one's intention should be that a sinner deserves what is being done to the chicken. These thoughts arouse one to Teshuvah.

The Kapparot chickens or their value should be donated to a Tzedakah cause.

Ma'aser money may not be used for one's own (or dependent's) Kapparot.

One who can't do Kapparot with a chicken may do so with a live fish or money, the money should be to the value of a chicken.

An Avel during Shiva may not go to a place where they slaughter chickens as is customary, rather someone should bring the chicken to the Shiva house and after Kapparot, they should send it to be slaughtered, or they should do it with money. If an Avel cannot do Kapparot before Yom Kippur, then they should do Kapparot on Hoshana Rabba.

### 🕊 EREV YOM KIPPUR MORNING (WEDNESDAY)

Those who have the custom to say *Selichot* on Erev Yom Kippur, only say *Viduy* once.

Some, including Chabad, have the custom to go to *Mikvah* three times throughout the day; once before *Shacharit*, once before *Mincha*, and once after the *Seudah Hamafseket*.

Some have the custom to just go once to *Mikvah* after *Chatzot* (12:28pm).

*Tachnun* is not said from the morning of *Erev Yom Kippur* until after *Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan*.

*Shacharit* is not *davened* at length.

*Mizmor Letodah* is generally not recited during *Shacharit*, however some people do say it.

Although *Avinu Malkeinu* is not recited during *Shacharit* and *Mincha* in *Ashkenazik communities*, *Sephardim* do have the custom to say it.

*Yom Kippur* does not atone for wrongs committed against others unless their forgiveness is obtained. Therefore, *Erev Yom Kippur* is an appropriate time for one to resolutely forgive all who wronged him in the past.

Some have the custom that the *Gabbai* of the *Shul* give out something sweet and some have the custom that their *Rabbi* does, *Chabad* have the custom that one should ask another person for *lekach* and eat it.

Some have the custom to go to graves of *Tzadikim* and many go a day or two before.

Many have the custom to go to the *Kotel* to ask from *Hashem* to have mercy on them and their families.

It is a *Mitzvah* to eat and drink on *Erev Yom Kippur*. Ideally, one eats an amount equivalent to two days. [Needless to say, it is forbidden to fast.] This applies even to one exempt from fasting on *Yom Kippur*.

A *Brit* should be conducted earlier in the morning, so that the *Seudah* will not interfere with the two meals that are eaten later in the day.

For both meals, it is customary to set the table and serve a meal on par with

*Shabbat* and *Chag*. The meals begin with round *Challot* (dipped in honey), but there is no need for *Lechem Mishneh*.

The first meal takes place sometime before *Mincha*. One only eats foods that are easily digested, such as chicken and fish, as opposed to meat. Garlic, eggs and sesame seeds are not eaten.

It is customary to eat *Kreplach* today.

### 🌀 MIKVAH AND MINCHA

*Malkut* is administered with a leather belt, however, some use a *gartel*. The one receiving *Malkut* leans in a kneeling position facing the north. Thirty-nine lashes are administered lightly, one on the right shoulder, one on the left shoulder, and one a bit lower between the shoulders, after which the sequence is repeated. Both the one giving and receiving *Malkut* say "*Vehu Rachum*" three times, one word per lash.

According to *Chabad*, *Malkut* is performed before *Mikvah* and *Mincha*. According to others *Malkut* is performed after *Mincha*.

Some have the custom to drop many coins into *Tzedakah* boxes as we make our way to *Mincha*. The *Baal Shem Tov* says that the clanging coins scatters the *Kelippot*.

Some have the custom to dress ready for *Chag* before *davening Mincha*.

*Mincha* is *davened* at length and with feelings of *Teshuvah*. It is scheduled early enough to leave sufficient time for the *Seudah Hamafseket*.

The full *Viduy* is recited right after the first *Yihyu L'ratzon* at the end of the *Amidah*. *Viduy* is not recited in the *Chazzan's* repetition of *Mincha*.

## 🕯️ HALACHOT OF VIDUY

During *Viduy*, one stands without leaning on anything and bows forward slightly (similar to *Modim*).

One beats his chest with his fist when he says each word of *Ashamnu*, at each *Al Cheit* on the word *Shechatanu* (and *Al Chataim* on the words *Sheanu Chayavim*), and at the words *Slach Lanu*, *Mechal Lanu*, *Kapper Lanu*.

[The word *אָשָׁמְנוּ* is enunciated with the ה' sounded after the last vowel, i.e. *Eloi-ah*.]

When reciting *Viduy* in the quiet *Amidah*, one responds as he normally would in *Elokai Netzor*. [I.e. If the *Chazzan* recites *Kedushah*, one responds *Kadosh*, *Baruch* and *Yimloch*. When the *Chazzan* says *Hamelech Hakadosh* and *Shomea Tefillah*, one answers *Amen*. When the *Chazzan* says *Modim*, one answers the three words *Modim Anachnu Lach*. When the *Chazzan* recites *Kaddish*, one answers *Amen Y'hei Shmei* etc, and *Amen* to *D'Amiran B'Almah*.]

If one forgot *Viduy* in the *Amidah*, he should recite it afterwards.

One who is not *davening* with a *Minyan*, or at all (due to illness), should still recite *Viduy* throughout *Yom Kippur* the same number of times as it is recited in *Shul*. This applies to women as well.

It is advised to repeat the Confession at each point, as if he was in *shul*.

## 🕯️ SEUDAH HAMAFSEKET

The meal begins with round *Challot* (dipped in honey). Aside from the food mentioned earlier, one avoids dairy foods.

Before *Birkat Hamazon*, one should verbally stipulate that he might still eat or drink again before the fast begins. [If one

neglected to do so, it is still permissible to eat and drink.]

Some have the custom to go to *Mikvah* after the *Seudah Hamafseket*, making sure to finish well before *Yom Kippur* begins.

One ensures that the house is prepared for *Yom Kippur* as before every *Shabbat* and *Chag*. The table should be covered with a tablecloth, the beds should be made, and the floor swept.

One wears *Shabbat* clothing. [Some are accustomed to change before *Mincha*, or already from the morning.] Women should minimize their jewelry.

One should not set up an urn of hot water (or put up any other hot foods in a pot or crockpot) for *Motzei Yom Kippur*.

## 🕯️ LATE AFTERNOON & CANDLE-LIGHTING (WED)

One dons his *Kittel* and *Tallit* before sunset (6:28pm). The *Brachah* on the *Tallit* is recited (unless the sun has already set).

Some say that a *Chattan* in the first year of his marriage does not wear a *Kittel* on *Yom Kippur* and some say they do.

The *Kittel* may not be worn in the bathroom besides for urination, similar to a *Tallit* and *Gartel*.

After donning the *Tallit* and *Kittel*, some perform *Birchat Habanim* while others do it before going to *Shul*. Many have the custom to perform *Birchat Habanim* every Friday Night when returning from *Shul*. One places his hands on the head of each child and recites the entire *Birchat Kohanim* some hold that one says from *Vayedaber* until *Va'ani Avarachem*. (One may add any *Brachah* of his own.)

Each married man lights a "*Lebbedige Licht*" that burns for 26 hours. A 26 hour "*Ner Neshama*" is also lit for one's



departed parents. [*Havdalah* requires a pre-existing flame, so at least one of these is lit at home to be used during *Havdalah*.]

Married couples should keep a light on or a candle burning in the bedroom.

Candle-lighting time is 5:48pm. The Brachot are “L’Hadlik Ner Shel Yom Hakippurim”, followed by *Shehecheyanu*.

The one who lights candles may no longer perform a *Melacha*. In a place where there is no *Eruv*, arrangements should be made for that person’s *Machzor* to be carried to *Shul*. [If a woman will need to drive to *Shul* after candle-lighting, she should consult a *Rav* for the most appropriate option in her circumstances.]

Both men and women should not eat after candle-lighting time (5:48pm). [One should take all medications beforehand.]

If one accepts *Yom Kippur* any time after *Plag Hamincha*, he may no longer eat or perform a *Melacha*, and all the other restrictions of *Yom Kippur* apply – the exception being that leather shoes may still be worn.

The *Shul* should be well lit in honor of *Yom Kippur*.

### 🕯 FASTING

All must fast, including *Baalei Habrit* (i.e. the *Mohel*, the *Sandak*, and the father of the baby). Pregnant and nursing mothers **are** required to fast.

Fasting is the most important aspect of *Yom Kippur* and takes precedence over going to *Shul* and reciting all the *Tefillot*. One who might not be able to complete the fast if they go to *Shul* should stay at home. [If necessary, a husband should facilitate his wife’s fasting by going home during the break to help out with the

children. If necessary, he should do so even during *davening*, or arrange help.]

The ill/elderly, a woman who recently gave birth, or a pregnant or nursing woman who feels excessive weakness, should consult a *Rav*. A *Rav* should also be consulted regarding medicines.

One exempt from fasting does not make *Kiddush* or eat *Lechem Mishneh*. [It is best to avoid bread, as there are many particulars regarding washing for bread and *Birchat Hamazon* on *Yom Kippur*.]

One may touch food, but may not engage in its preparation, lest he forgets and eats it. Therefore, one should not prepare food for children and those exempt from fasting, unless they cannot do so themselves. One who normally washes his hands before handling food may do so on *Yom Kippur*.

When a *Brit* occurs on *Yom Kippur*, the *Seudah* takes place at night, after the fast. [The actual *Brit* takes place before *Musaf*. Since no one can drink the wine, a drop is given to the baby who is having the *Brit*.]

### 🕯 OTHER RESTRICTIONS OF YOM KIPPUR

It is prohibited to:

- Wear leather footwear. It is appropriate to avoid wooden clogs. One may wear all non-leather footwear, including crocs. [Although not a requirement, it is ideal to avoid standing barefoot.]
- Go to *Mikvah*, bathe or wash – even in cold water. Similarly, one may not wipe himself with a cloth sufficiently damp to moisten what it touches. [One may rinse if necessary for medical or therapeutic purposes, or for pain-relief. One may also rinse soiled areas, but only as necessary. Similarly, one may

wash his hands up to the knuckles after exiting the restroom or touching an area of the body that is normally covered. One may also rinse one's hands as usual in the course of handling food. A *Kallah* who is married for less than thirty days may wash her face if necessary.]

- Apply makeup, ointment, lotions, deodorants, perfumes or creams. One may apply an ointment for medical or therapeutic purposes, or for pain-relief, but must be aware of the prohibition of smearing a thick lotion.
- Brush one's teeth or rinse one's mouth, even if the liquid is completely expelled.

All married couples must keep *Harchakot*.

#### 🕊 CHILDREN

Anyone below *Bar/Bat Mitzva* need not fast. However, they should not eat excessively.

From the age of nine (or ten if the child has a weak constitution), children are trained to fast at night and for several hours during the day, as per the child's abilities. A child below that age should not skip any meals.

All the other prohibitions of Yom Kippur (i.e. leather footwear, bathing and anointing) are applicable to children of all ages. Therefore, an adult may not encourage or assist a child in any of these activities, or make it accessible to them.

If a child performs any of these activities of his own volition, he or she may be left alone if younger than nine. If older than nine, the father is obligated to correct his child's behavior, and must also prevent the child from eating during the hours when he or she should be fasting.

#### 🕊 KOL NIDREI & MAARIV (WEDNESDAY)

Before *Kol Nidrei*, some have the custom to recite the entire *Viduy* individually. [Many recite nine chapters of *Tehillim* (115-122 inclusive) after *Viduy*. The Lubavitcher Rebbe would often start the *Nigun* of *Avinu Malkeinu* before *Kol Nidrei*.]

At least three *Sifrei-Torah* are taken out and held near the *Chazzan*. [If a Shul has only one *Sefer-Torah*, at least two people should still stand near the *Chazzan*.]

The *Chazzan* recites *Kol Nidrei* three times, each time raising his voice more than the previous time.

Each congregant stands and recites *Kol Nidrei* with the *Chazzan* word by word, quietly but audibly enough so that it may be heard by those closest to him or her.

Everyone needs to understand word for word the prayer of *Kol Nidrei*, therefore, it should be said audibly in the language most comfortable to the person.

The *Chazzan* recites *V'nislach* three times before the congregation does.

One should quietly begin *Shehecheyanu* with the *Chazzan*, but hasten to finish before him, in order to answer *Amen*. One who said *Shehecheyanu* when lighting candles does not repeat it now.

One does not kiss the *Tzitzit* of his *Tallit* during *Shma*.

#### 🕊 AMIDAH ON YOM KIPPUR

On Yom Kippur, the third *Brachah* of the *Amidah* has a long addition beginning with the words *L'Dor V'dor*. If one omitted this addition, he may go back to recite it only if he realized before saying *Hashem's* name at the end of the third *Brachah*.

Otherwise, he continues the *Amidah* without going back, as long as he is sure that he concluded the *Brachah* with the words *Hamelech Hakadosh*.

If one recited the unique *Yom Kippur Nusach* of the third *Brachah*, but is in doubt whether he concluded the *Brachah* with the words *Hamelech Hakadosh*, he may assume that he did so correctly.

One who did not say *Hamelech Hakadosh*: If he realized before he began the next *Brachah* **and** within the time frame it takes to say three words, he corrects his mistake. Otherwise, he must begin the *Amidah* again.

If one mistakenly omitted any of the other four additions (*Zachreinu, Mi Chamocha, u'Chtov, u'Vsefer Chaim*), he may recite it at the place he remembers if he has not yet said *Hashem's* name at the end of that *Brachah*. Otherwise, he continues the *Amidah* & does not go back.

During the repetition of *Amidah*, some hold the congregation recites the selections of *u'Ktov* and *u'Vsefer Chaim* aloud before the Chazzan.

#### 🌀 END OF MAARIV & KRIAT SHMA

*Avinu Malkeinu*: Some have the custom to recite part of it verse by verse after the Chazzan, however, it is not the Chabad custom to do so. The words *Roia Gzar* are recited without pausing in between.

*L'David Mizmor*: Many communities recite it verse by verse and some say it all together and there are some who don't say it at all.

Many have the custom to open the *Aron Hakodesh*, however this is not the Chabad custom.

It is the Chabad custom to recite the entire *Tehillim* with a *Minyan* after *Maariv*.

One should be sure to derive benefit from the candles at one point after *Yom Kippur* begins (e.g. when returning from *Shul*).

*Kriat Shma* before bed is recited as on *Shabbat* and *Chag*. *Baruch Shem* is recited aloud.

When going to bed, it is advisable that a man should not cover himself warmly. At the very least, he should leave his feet uncovered.

#### 🌀 YOM KIPPUR MORNING (THURSDAY)

One washes his hands in the morning only up to the knuckles. One should not derive enjoyment from washing his hands.

One wipes his eyes with the towel moistened by his hands. One who washes the flakes out of his eyes every morning may do so on *Yom Kippur* morning as well.

After getting dressed, one washes his hands again – with a *Brachah* – only up to the knuckles.

The *Brachah* of *Sheasa Li Kol Tzorki* is omitted according to the Gr"a until Motzei *Yom Kippur* and according to the Ba'al Hatanya until the following morning.

#### 🌀 SHACHARIT

Preferably, when putting on the *Tallit*, one should intend that the *Brachah* also applies to putting on the *Tallit* after the break, before *Mincha*.

The *Chazanim* should familiarize themselves in advance with the meaning of all of the *Piyuttim* and *Tefillot* – even if they already did so the previous year. Similarly, one should train his children regarding the correct order of *davening*



beforehand, so as to minimize any distractions during *davening*.

*Shir Hamaalot* (after *Yishtabach*): Some have the custom to open the *Aron Hakodesh*, as well as to recite it verse by verse after the *Chazzan*.

When the *Aron Hakodesh* is opened during *Chazarat Hashatz*, it is not obligatory to stand, since the *Sefer Torah* is not being moved. Some have the custom to stand.

At Shacharit, the paragraph of Misod (at the beginning of *Chazarat Hashatz*) and the one that follows, is recited by the *Chazzan* and not by the congregation.

During *Chazarat Hashatz*, the congregation recites the selections of *U'Chtov* and *u'Vsefer Chaim* aloud before the *Chazzan*. Most congregations also say *Zachreinu Lechaim* and *Mi Chamocha* aloud too.

One may not speak when the congregation recites *Viduy* during *Chazarat Hashatz*.

*Kohanim* wash their hands up to the wrist before *Birchat kohanim*.

One must complete the daily quota of 100 *Brachot*. As we can't eat or drink on *Yom Kippur*, one must find other ways to meet this quota, such as by concentrating on the *Brachot* that are recited during *Kriat Hatorah* and *Haftorah*, or by reciting *Besamim* over fragrant spices.

It is customary to grant an *Aliyah* to the *Ba'al Musaf* unless he is being paid.

## MUSAF

*Yizkor* is recited before *Musaf*. Those who leave the Shul for *Yizkor* may recite "*Av Harachamim*" after *Yizkor* if they wish to.

*Yizkor* does not need to be said with a minyan or with a *Sefer Torah*, and can therefore be recited at home too.

Ideally, *Musaf* should be *davened* before the earliest time for *Mincha* (12:58pm).

Since the *Chazzan* cannot move out of his place to bow at *Aleinu* and during the *Avodah*, he stands at a distance from the *Shtender*, to allow him space to bow unless someone moves the *Shtender*.

The paragraph of Misod (beginning of *Chazarat Hashatz*) is recited by the *Chazzan* and not the congregation.

One should stand for *u'Netane Tokef*.

According to the Chabad custom, the *Chazzan* recites the entire *Aleinu* – including the second half – out loud. The congregation quietly recites it word for word with him, bowing at *V'Anachnu Korim*, and continuing until *Hu Elokenu Ein Od*. At that point, they begin saying the *Pesukim* of *Atah Harayta*, as printed in the *Machzor*. The subsequent paragraph (beginning *Achilah*) is recited by the *Chazzan* only.

When one bows, his head should reach all the way to the ground. One may not bow directly on a stone floor, but rather, should prepare mats or any other covering upon which to bow. Some do not bow directly on any surface without a covering. The *Chazzan* needs to keep his feet together during the *Amidah*. He should therefore be helped up after bowing.

*Kohanim* wash their hands up to the wrist before *Birchat Kohanim*.

One stands for those recitations of *V'hakohanim* that require bowing.

Some have a break following *Musaf*, for those who do, the break should be of at least 45 minutes (if possible).

### 🌀 MINCHA & NEILAH

After the break, one does not make a *Brachah* when putting his *Tallit* on, unless the break lasted more than several hours. *Neilah* begins shortly before sunset (6:26pm).

One should pay attention to all the changes in *Neilah* (such as *Chatmeinu* instead of *Katveinu*).

At the end of *Neilah*, *Avinu Malkeinu* is recited. It is not the Chabad custom to recite it verse by verse after the Chazzan.

The words *Roia Gzar* in *Avinu Malkeinu* are recited without pausing in between.

In Chabad Shuls, the Napoleon's March is sung right before the *Shofar* is sounded.

The *Shofar* is sounded after the fast ends (6:59pm).

If you have a *Shofar*, you can blow it at the right time, once *Yom Kippur* is over. But there is no need to arrange for someone to come and blow *Shofar* for the housebound at the end of the fast.

### 🌀 MOTZEI YOM KIPPUR

One extends *Yom Kippur* at least several minutes. The time during which *Maariv* is *davened* suffices for this purpose. After that, all prohibitions of *Yom Kippur* cease. Even so, one may of course not eat until after *Havdallah*.

*Vihi Noam* and *V'atah Kaddosh* are not recited.

Everyone – even *Kohanim* who washed their hands before *Birchat Kohanim* – should wash *Netilat Yadayim* until the wrist and rinse their mouth. This should be

done as soon as possible after *Maariv*, and certainly before *Kiddush Levanah* or breaking the fast.

*Kiddush Levanah* is recited if the moon is visible. Ideally, one first changes into leather shoes and rinses his face, unless this will negate his participation in a *Minyan*.

Most greet each other “*Pitka Teva*” however Chabad greet each other, “*Chag Sameach*”.

For *Havdallah*, *Besamim* is not used. One uses a candle that was burning from before *Yom Kippur*, together with another candle which he lights from the first. [If one does not have a pre-existing flame from before *Yom Kippur*, the *Brachah* is omitted.]

Although we usually don't give out the leftover wine of the *Havdallah*, this may be done on *Motzei Yom Kippur*.

A man who heard *Havdallah* may recite it again for another man or for a boy over the age of *Chinuch* if they don't know how to recite it themselves. However, a man should not recite it again for a woman. Therefore, one should not be *yotze* with the *Havdallah* at *Shul* when there are women at home waiting to hear *Havdallah*.

A woman who is feeling weak or not feeling well, may drink before her husband returns from shul to make *Havdallah*.

If the “*Lebbedige Licht*” was extinguished during *Yom Kippur*, one should relight it on *Motzei Yom Kippur* and let it burn until the end. One should also resolve to ensure that the “*Lebbedige Licht*” burns until the end in all subsequent years.



The table is set, candles are lit, and a full meal for *Chag* is eaten, beginning with round *Challot* (dipped in honey). [The 5<sup>th</sup> Lubavitcher Rebbe states that an expansive meal draws down *Gashmiyut* for the whole year.]

On Motzei Yom Kippur, we start building the Sukkah, or at least speak about the Sukkah.

## 🕉️ B'SHEM HASHEM (G-D'S NAME)

The day after Yom Kippur is called "B'Shem Hashem" or "Gott's Nommen", and we go to Shul early in the morning for Shacharit.

*The days between Yom Kippur and Sukkot are days of joy, for the Mizbeach in the first Beit Hamikdash was inaugurated then.*

Aside from a Chattanooga and Kallah on their wedding day, one may not fast.





## Yom Kippur in Bergen Belsen

by *Gina Frankel*

For a little while, we forgot the straw, the supervisors and the prison.

Gina Frankel was born in Lodz to a close-knit religious family. She was 12 when the war broke out in Poland in 1939. She and her family endured terror and starvation. Her father died in the Lodz Ghetto. Gina, her mother and sisters were transported to Auschwitz where her mother and sisters were murdered. Gina and her surviving sister were then transported to several other concentration camps.

The following excerpt from Gina's manuscript takes place in 1944 in Bergen Belsen, during the High Holy Days when Gina was 17.

On the day of Rosh Hashanah, we sat together in the straw, trying to make a joint effort to create some semblance of the traditional services. Besides our other handicaps, we had to pray as inconspicuously as possible in order to hide our crime from the eyes of the supervisors. Of course we had no prayer books to refer to, but like a silent miracle as we looked into one another's eyes, the old words flooded back to us.

As I prayed, memories of past services and the spirit of communion that existed then washed over me. The others must have had similar thoughts, for as we prayed our spirits soared to a higher peak than they had reached for longer than I care to remember. I had a feeling of nostalgia and religious ecstasy combined.

Someone began to sing softly, and soon others of us joined in. As we sang an atmosphere of holiness and G-dliness enveloped us all, and

there was created in our souls a response from the very bottom of our existence. Our voices, though low, were strained with a prayer that cried to release us from the iron obstructions that gripped us, to try to find a way to freedom, perhaps even to reunite with our families. Most of all we prayed for a release from the everlasting torment of hunger.

Nothing was changed externally. But inside, our hearts were filled with a warm confidence that our prayers were heard.

When the prayers were ended at last, nothing was changed externally. We still sat huddled in the straw, and our bellies were still gripped by the powerful claws of hunger. But inside, our hearts were filled with a warm confidence that our prayers were heard, that our fervent please would be accepted by our glorious G-d.

I felt an utter exhaustion beginning to overtake me, and suddenly I was seized by the impossible desire to be alone with myself. I lay down upon the dirty straw and pulled my blanket around me, trying to create an illusion in my mind of physical isolation. I closed my eyes and saw as clearly as yesterday the image of our home as it was on the day of Rosh Hashanah. I couldn't cry, but I felt a lump growing and hardening in my throat, and the tears wanting to be shed but unable to let themselves loose.

After that the days progressed quietly and monotonously as usual, until the advent of Yom Kippur. This was the holy day of atonement and of twenty-four hour fast. Though it seemed almost a joke to fast any more completely than we already were, each of us attempted to



observe the traditional services as well as our memories would let us. On the eve of Yom Kippur, a candle glowed softly in the middle of our tent. We planned to perform the Kol Nidre service. Someone had found the old candle somewhere in the tent, and had carefully preserved it until such an occasion as this should arise. It was an old tin can in its honored position in the center of the tent. We all sat in the straw in our accustomed positions.

The prayers became a muted cry, an expression of tortured souls in hell.

We took the greatest precautions to conduct our meeting secretly, and to avoid the attention of the guards. The light flickering softly in the darkness, the light of the lone candle, impressed us profoundly. We remained in absolute silence and nothing moved. We could have been pieces of cracked statuary casting strange wavering shadows in the dim light. Songs began to swell from different parts of the tent, and some began to chant the prayers they remembered, the prayers of the evening service. The strain that encompassed us became almost unbearable.

Our hearts responded with such feeling that the prayers became a muted cry, an expression of tortured souls in hell, and we all sensed that there was such great might in our feelings that there would certainly be a breakthrough in the heavy strong gate that must be opened for our prayers to be heard. The Kol Nidre service lasted as long as the candle burned. When at last the flame shuddered and died, we all assumed our positions for sleep without an added word.

The next day at six o'clock, we were awakened for the regular morning checkup and the coffee. We did nothing to attract attention to our fasting, so we took the coffee and bread as usual. Later we soaked the ground with the coffee and cached the bread. We would dig it out later to be eaten when the fast ended.

At the first opportunity after they had checked us, we gathered again on the straw, sitting as

close to each other as we could. There was a great mixture of feelings provoked by the knowledge of what the holy day of Yom Kippur meant to us. Through our keeping of the prayers there pervaded the emptiness of what we had experienced, the longing for our missing families, and the sharp feeling of repugnance that resulted from the ugliness around us. Our environment could never become anything except the imprisonment of patched and dirty canvas walls and damp straw beneath us. We sat there like poor sheep whose shepherd had been swished away by a horrible fate.

Never, I am sure, had the Yizkor service been held with more warmth of heart than it was that day.

We girls who prayed in the tent had been educated to read and understand the Yom Kippur prayers in the book. Now we felt deeply the misfortune that was caused by our not being able to obtain even one precious copy of the prayer book. Without it we could not possibly carry on the services properly, and we could not help feeling more bitterness because of it. As the time for the Yizkor service approached later in the morning, we felt even more lost and desperate without a prayer book.

One of the girls at this point began to sing in a soft lilting voice. I found myself listening with a certain tingling of the spine to her melodious tones. As if a signal had been given, all of us joined her and together we sang the "Yiddusheh Mameh." Never, I am sure, had the Yizkor service been held with more warmth of heart than it was that day. We were sure that the G-d of Israel saw our feelings and felt their depth, and accepted this makeshift Yizkor. We felt a visible reward in the form of a wonderful warmth which overflowed our hearts. For a little while, we forgot the tent and the straw and the supervisors and the prison. But soon, all too soon, the glow became another memory and the days melted once more into uninterrupted lethargy.

# Begging for Honey Cake

by Blumie Abend

Growing up, Erev Yom Kippur was a busy day.

I remember waking up and feeling that there was a solemnity to the day, even though the actual holy day had yet to begin. Words were measured more than usual, actions were thought about. The house smelled of chicken soup, salmon, potatoes and the kreplach that my Bubba used to make and send over to our house.

But as the day wore on and the rush began, there were two very important things to do - and they were done every single year, no matter what.

We would go to my father's parents, Bobba and Zeide, and bet lekach and be blessed by my grandfather. Soon after that, we would head over to my mother's parents, Bubba and Zeide, bet lekach and be blessed by my grandfather.

The concept of bet lekach is really quite simple. Bet means to "beg" in Yiddish. As my mother explained to us, we were begging for honey cake from our grandparents in the hopes that this would be the only "begging" that we would do in the coming year. Let us not have to beg for money, let us not have to beg for health, let us not have to beg for food. Here we are already begging for something sweet. May that be the end to our begging!

It was a custom that my very Chabad and very Russian grandparents held onto from yesteryear, fast and dear. And so my mother didn't need to bake a honey cake; we were going to bet it twice that day!

It is amazing how the mind remembers facts, but it is the senses, smell, taste and touch that bring life to those memories.

Bobba loved to bake. Our favorite cake was her cheesecake. No one made a cheesecake quite like Bobba. It didn't look particularly fancy, now that I think of it, but the taste was just incredible.

Bubba, my mother's mother, may she live and be well, is a fantastic baker, and quite honestly could have sold her creations. I don't even know the names of all the cakes and cookies she made, but there was always something on her table when we came to visit. It was always homemade, and it always tasted divine.

On Erev Yom Kippur, there was only honey cake on the table at my grandparents' houses. Bobba's honey cake was high and fluffy, light-colored and more dry than wet. Bubba's honey cake was lower, very moist and dark in color.

We had a certain awe of my father's parents - a respect for them and a tendency to be quiet in their presence.

There was a moment of trepidation, nervousness, before we went up to Bobba after the small talk was over.

"Bobba ... Ich bet lekach."

It was the one Yiddish sentence I could complete, and I was always relieved when it came out right. Bobba's eyes would literally light up, and she would bring the plate over to us. "Lekach? Of course! Of course!" And she would hand out the honey cake with a

string of blessings, usually given over in Yiddish, and a kiss on our cheek or forehead.

Bubba and Zeide lived up the street from us, and we were very familiar with their house, visiting them at least once a week, often twice. When we went to bet lekach, we often met other cousins leaving or coming at the same time.

“Bubba, Ich bet lekach!” we would state proudly, and she would dole out the honey cake with pleasure, saying “Nem, nem (‘take, take’).”

We ate the honey cake, chatted and played, and then it was time for Zeide to bentch us.

Zeide was a Holocaust survivor, and there was a part of him that got lost in the war years that never quite found its way back. He was quiet, often pensive, and kept to himself. Bubba would send us into the morning room - a little room off the kitchen where the sunlight streams in through a large window and pretty flowered curtains.

I remember Zeide’s hands trembling as he placed his hands over my head and intoned the blessing: Yevorechecha Hashem ... k’Sarah, Rivkah, Rochel v’Leah, blessing me to be like our matriarchs.

My heart would pound being in such close proximity to him, and my mind would whirl with questions. What is he thinking about when he blesses us, his grandchildren, who don’t know the world he came from and what he left behind? What nightmares does he have of the horrors he experienced?

Does he ever have peace of mind and serenity?

Every year, without fail, Zeide would lower his hands and plant a kiss on our foreheads. I can almost feel the coarseness of his beard, bumping against my face as he leaned closer to me. His kiss always felt like something I should treasure and never forget, and indeed, I will never forget it.

As Yom Kippur approaches this year and these memories come flooding back to me, I am struck by the stark differences in my own children’s lives. For a while, it caused me to feel a fundamental sadness. I live across a vast ocean from my own parents. My Bubba, who currently resides in London, will receive a phone call from me over the phone to replace the visit I used to make. My father’s parents left this world within the last few years, and I am suddenly feeling that void that family traditions and customs bring into our lives, especially around holiday time.

Tomorrow, we will go eat the meals at my dear in-laws. There will be store-bought honey cake, and I will teach my girls to bet lekach. My older one will probably laugh at the words and my second one, who can’t quite talk coherently, will stare me down and make a run with her cake. My father will bless me and my girls over the phone, and my father-in-law, Sabba, will encircle my children with his warmth and love and give them blessings.

Maybe, just maybe, I will bake a honey cake.

It’s time, perhaps, to start my own family traditions.

*Reprinted from an email of Chabad.org Magazine.*

# Prison + Yom Kippur + Talmud = Freedom

by Rabbi Yitzchok Meyer Lipszyc

During my seven years of shlichut in Alabama, I was the official Contract Rabbi of Maxwell Federal Prison Camp, a large minimum security facility, primarily for 'white-collar' convicts, in Montgomery. On the High Holy Days [two days of Rosh Hashanah and one more on Yom Kippur], my whole family would drive the 90 miles from our home in Birmingham, and spend the entire holidays on prison grounds.

For the duration of the holidays, the fifteen or so prisoners were left under our jurisdiction. We prayed together, learned together, rapped together, walked together and ate together. The effect was three days of pure holiness, felt by prisoners and visitors alike.

I always had to lead all the services, including the long Rosh Hashana Musaf prayers and all five prayer services on Yom Kippur. After all, I was the only one who could read Hebrew, never mind actually lead the prayers.

Towards the end of Yom Kippur of 1988, as we were about to begin the Ne'ilah (closing) services, I turned around to face the worshippers and said: "We are now about to begin the closing prayers of Yom Kippur. This is our last ditch effort to ask G-d to forgive our past sins, before the gates of mercy close. But, with what justification are we requesting G-d to forgive our past?"

"Well, I have a proposal. before we begin Ne'ilah, let us all take just two minutes and choose one mitzvah (of the 613 commandments in the Torah) that each one of us will undertake to keep for the coming

year. Then that mitzvah will be our defense argument, so that G-d forgives our past and seals the verdict for a good year."

I could see on their faces that my proposal was accepted. So I turned back to my siddur, spent the next two minutes thinking about my personal commitment, and then, without further hesitation, began Ne'ilah.

After services were over, as everyone broke their fast, one inmate, a newcomer, approached me and asked if he could speak to me. When I answered in the affirmative, he told me his name is Carl and requested my help in fulfilling the commitment he undertook before Ne'ilah.

"Which mitzvah did you undertake," I asked? "To keep the Sabbath," he replied.

"Wow!" I thought to myself. "I don't think he could have picked a more difficult one." "If you don't mind my asking," I decided to question him further, "What made you choose that particular Mitzvah?"

"To be quite honest," he explained, "I didn't know any other of the Commandments and I remembered once hearing that G-d set up the Sabbath as a day of rest."

I explained that Shabbat was quite a difficult mitzvah to begin with, and that if he wished I could list for him other mitzvot which would be much easier to do.

His response was, "No thanks, Rabbi. I committed myself to Shabbat and I plan to stick with it."



Far be it for me to discourage a Jew from keeping Shabbat, so I simply asked, "and how can I help?"

"Well you see," he explained "I don't know the laws of Shabbat and I can't read Hebrew, so I need a list of the do's and the don'ts of Shabbat, in English. I don't need to hear the philosophy of it, just instructions." I told him that if he will come the next Tuesday to my weekly class, I would bring him the necessary books.

Those days there was only one book that set out all the laws in detail. The next Tuesday I brought him the two volume set titled "The Laws of Shabbat" by Rabbi Shimon Eider, a Lakewood NJ rabbinical scholar. Every Tuesday thereafter he came to my class and would tell me of his progress in regards to his Shabbat observance.

About six weeks later, I noticed that he was absent from the Tuesday class, so I asked one of the other inmates, "why didn't he come?"

"Rabbi, you are not going to believe this," he answered excitedly. "You know those two books you gave him to study? Well he read in one of them that if the Jews keep just two consecutive Shabbats, G-d would immediately set them free from exile. You also taught us that everything that applies to all Jews, surely applies to each one of us as

individuals as well. "'So' this fellow deduced, 'If I will be careful to keep all the laws of Shabbat for just two weeks, then G-d will send me home!'"

With this thought in mind, Carl stayed up four full nights and finished learning the rest of the two books, memorizing everything, in order for him to know what to do, and throughout the next two Shabbats he was very careful to follow the laws of Shabbat to a tee.

That very week after the second Shabbat, the federal prisons initiated a new program allowing people who have committed white collar crimes to be released under house arrest. Carl was the first one the prison authorities let out under that program.

"When we had our little minyan last Friday night we all danced and sang with him in celebration. And just the other day he actually left!"

As soon as Carl got out of jail he called us in Alabama. He asked us a number of questions, including a few about Shabbat.

I kept in touch with him for several years. He is married and has children. He keeps Shabbat and kosher, and puts on tefillin daily. Every year on Yom Kippur he takes upon himself an additional mitzvah.

*Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.*

# Blessing for a Falsified Medical Document

*by Rabbi Mordechai Kamenetzky*

Yom Kippur, the ultimate day of repentance, has the Jewish nation simultaneously praying, fasting and asking for forgiveness. It begins with the somber, quiet, and melodious intonation of Kol Nidrei and ends with the entire congregation shouting "Hashem hu HaElokim" ("G-d is the Almighty") seven times after various requests of forgiveness.

It seems that at the time when our strength is waning, our greatest and loudest pleas are spent. Shouldn't we begin the day with the strong requests for forgiveness and save the subdued prayers for when our bodies are weak from hunger and our lips parched from lack of water?

Rabbi Eichenstein, the Zidichover Rebbe, tells the following story:

One Friday, a man entered the study of the Chortkover Rebbe, Rabbi David Moshe Friedman, with a request that was very common in those days.

"My son was drafted into the army," the man began. "However, we have a way out. On Sunday, we are going to a doctor who will falsely declare him unfit for service. This way he will be spared certain misery, perhaps even death in that terrible army. Rebbe," he asked, "I need your blessing that he evade the draft."

The Rebbe quietly told him that Shabbat was nearing and he could not concentrate on blessings. The man should return to him on Friday evening after his tisch (a rebbe's festive table, which the Chasidim would attend after their own meals).

The man did so. After most of the chasidim had left, the man repeated his request, almost verbatim. Again the Rebbe was non-committal. "Return to me after the morning service." Unperturbed, the man noted that he would really like to resolve this matter before Sunday morning.

Shabbat morning, after services, the man approached the Rebbe again. Calmly he repeated

the predicament. "Sunday morning I am going to a doctor who will falsely declare my son unfit for military service. Please pray that we will evade conscription." The Rebbe was not moved. Again, he deferred until the afternoon.

At the third Shabbat meal, the scene repeated again, precisely the way it had the previous three times. "I understand that you are leaving Sunday morning. Come back to me late Saturday night," said the Rebbe. "By then I will have an answer for you."

By this time, his chasidim's curiosity was piqued. They had never seen their Rebbe so reluctant to grant a blessing, especially when it was one that would save a Jewish soul from the frightful Polish army.

Saturday night a large crowd gathered as the man approached with his request. Frustrated and disgruntled, the man, once again, repeated his story, almost verbatim, for the fifth time.

Immediately, the Chortkover sprung from his chair and began to shout. "What are you asking me? Why would one even try to evade the service of our wonderful country? How dare you ask me for a blessing of that sort? Your son would make a fine soldier for our country. I wish him the best of luck in the army!"

The man quickly scurried from the room and left town. The chasidim stood shocked and bewildered. Never had they heard such an uncharacteristic outcry from the Rebbe.

"I will explain," said the Rebbe. "The man was a fraud. He had no son, and if he did, he wanted him in the army. He was sent by the government to test our loyalty. Thank G-d we passed the test."

"But, Rebbe!" cried out an elder chasid, "how did you know?"

"Simple," explained the Rebbe. "I paid attention to his level of intensity. From the moment he met

me until tonight there was no increase in intensity nor feeling of desperation with each subsequent request. The moment I heard his request tonight and it contained no more passion or desperation than his first request on Friday night, I knew he was a fraud."

We stand a whole entire day in prayer, and end with a Neilah (closing) prayer, after nearly 25 hours of pleading. The litmus test of our sincerity comes as the Heavenly gates are being closed. As the sun begins to set, our pleas should intensify. That crescendo assures our sincerity. It also should assure us a Happy & Healthy Sweet New Year.

*Reprinted from an email of Shabbat Stories for the Parsha.*

## The Psalm-Sayer and the Medal of Courage

*by Rabbi Tuvia Bolton*

Moshe Levy was one of the few soldiers that received the 'Ot Gevura' ['Medal of Courage'] - the highest Israeli combat award for bravery. In his case it was for his service in the Yom Kippur war (in October 1973).

The Yom Kippur war was won solely by Divine intervention. As is already well known, the Israeli Government at that time made a deadly mistake. They knew that the Arabs were planning to attack Israel, but thought that if we let them attack first the world would see who the real aggressor is and come to our help.

The result was disastrous. No one came to our aid. Our troops were totally unprepared, undermanned and under-armed, thousands of young Israelis needlessly lost their lives and, if it weren't for a series of clear miracles proving that G-D Al-mighty is protecting us, the Arabs would (Heaven forbid) have easily overrun the country!

Moshe Levy tells his story.

He was in a battalion of seventy-five soldiers guarding the southern Israeli border when suddenly they received orders from head command that a full battalion of Egyptian tanks backed up by foot soldiers were heading toward their position, and they were the only thing standing between the Arabs and Tel Aviv!

They requested reinforcements and ammunition but there were none. War had been declared and Israel was being attacked from all sides! The Syrians were attacking from the north and the Egyptians from the south, and all our forces were in confusion!

The desert night was silent. Only in the far distance could be heard a faint rumbling through the wind that became louder and louder. Was it the Egyptians?

Suddenly they appeared - over a hundred tanks. They couldn't possibly destroy so many tanks; they didn't even have that many anti-tank missiles! And who knows how many hundreds, or perhaps thousands, of enemy soldiers were behind the tanks?

The horrible truth was too obvious; they didn't stand a chance. None of them would get out alive. One of the soldiers mumbled dejectedly, "We're all dead! How can we possibly defeat 120 tanks?"

Suddenly one of the soldiers, a Yemenite Jew by the name of Zandani, jumped to his feet, took out a small book of Psalms from his pocket, held it up and declared, "I'll tell you how we'll defeat them. With this! Because the G-d of Israel is with us."

Most of the other soldiers were Israeli-style total atheists and almost totally ignorant about Judaism. Nevertheless, after the first few words the Yemenite read they all yelled out a hearty 'Amen!' (although, of course, 'Amen' is said only after blessings).

He began to read aloud, each holy word ringing out in the desert night. Moshe Levy stood, put his hand on his heart, and swore to G-d that if he got out alive he would put on tefillin every weekday for the rest of his life.

The battle began. The Egyptian tanks all opened fire with everything they had. The Israelis spread

out and fired their bazookas and mortars, while Zandani stood and yelled the holy words of Psalms through the smoke and explosions.

Moshe Levy related: "We fired and fired while the Yemenite read aloud and it was miraculous. Every shot we fired was a direct hit! Their tanks were exploding all over the place. Perhaps the biggest miracle was that just as we were running out of ammunition and it looked like we were done for, suddenly, amazingly, the Egyptians retreated! They just turned around and left.

"The greatest miracle of all was that although a lot of us were wounded none of us got killed! That is, all except for one soldier...Zandani, the Yemenite that yelled out the Psalms, the only religious one in the group. The one that saved us. He was the only one killed.

"Something else too. My left arm got blown off!

"It took me nine months in the hospital to recover and during that period I had a lot of time to think. It really bothered me what that happened. If anyone should have been protected by G-d, it was Zandani. Why? And since my arm that I vowed to put Tefillin on got blown off, how was I supposed to keep my oath?

"The two questions began to drive me crazy. During the time I was in the hospital I was visited by a lot of rabbis, and I asked each one both questions but none of them had an explanation for me.

"Three or four years later," Moshe continued, "I went to the United States to have an artificial arm constructed and fitted. While I was there a good friend called me and told me that he spoke to the Lubavitcher Rebbe and that the Rebbe told him he was interested in seeing me.

"At first I couldn't figure what he was talking about. I was a totally non-religious person and had no connection with this rabbi or any rabbis, so why would he want to see me? How did he even know about me? So I refused.

"But my friend told me I was crazy. He said that people come from all over the world and wait months to see this Rebbe, and now I'm refusing?

"So I figured, what do I have to lose? The meeting was set for twelve midnight the next night. As soon as I entered the Rebbe's room and looked at him I knew he was someone special. In fact, the entire time I was there I tried several times to look him in the eyes but I wasn't able to. He was just too holy. It's difficult to explain.

"He asked me to sit down and tell him about my experiences. We talked about the war and he was simply amazing. He knew each and every detail of each and every battle! He also had very strong opinions. For example, he was very disappointed with the Israeli government that they didn't allow the army to take Damascus and Cairo, even if for just one day, just to show them who is boss.

"He also said that although we should have been better prepared, it was a big miracle that the enemy decided to attack on Yom Kippur. The holiness of the day protected us, and also because the streets were empty and most of the reserve soldiers were in synagogues, so it was easy to mobilize the troops.

"We spoke for an hour and forty-five minutes, yet to me it seemed like five minutes. This was a novel experience that had never happened to me in my life and never happened again..

At some point in the middle of our meeting I asked him my question about Zandani and my arm. The Rebbe said that the answer was simple.

"Simple! I had asked this question to dozens of Rabbis who couldn't answer and he says it is simple?

"He explained that in fact our entire company should have died, but Zandani made himself close to G-d, so G-d took only him instead. And the same with my arm: I was supposed to die even after Zandani's sacrifice, but because I devoted my arm to G-d, so G-d took only it instead of my life.

"So you see, what had been bothering me for years the Rebbe answered in one minute."



## 🕊 BUILDING THE SUKKAH

It is a *Mitzvah* to build the *Sukkah* on the day after *Yom Kippur*.

Some have the custom to be particular about building the *Sukkah* personally, others do not.

The *Sukkah* should preferably be comprised of four proper and complete walls. If this is not possible, the *Sukkah* should be made of three complete walls. If any of the three walls are incomplete – whether vertically or horizontally – its *Kashrut* should be approved by someone knowledgeable in the relevant *Halachot*.

A roof at the edge of the *Sukkah* does not disqualify it, provided it is less than four *Amot* (192cm) wide, and the wall of the *Sukkah* extends at least to the height of the *Schach*. The same applies when there is an eave or roof overhanging the *Sukkah*, but with the additional requirement that the *Schach* (or some other material at the same height as the *Schach*) continues all the way to the wall of the *Sukkah*. Of course, one does not fulfil the *Mitzvah* of *Sukkah* under these areas (unless they are less than three *Tefachim* – 24cm – wide).

The *Sukkah* must be sturdy enough to remain stationary when an ordinary gust of wind blows. [Canvas or fabric walls are not ideal, as they flap in the wind. Even if “*Lavud* straps” are used, they may loosen without anyone noticing. If such walls are used, one should constantly ensure that the “*Lavud* straps” are tight, and that they

surround the *Sukkah* on all four sides, (apart from the doorway) and not just three.]

“*Lavud* straps” are a series of straps wrapped tightly around the *Sukkah* at intervals of 3 *Tefachim* (23cm or 9 inches) to a minimum height of 10 *Tefachim* (102cm or 40 inches), which is considered a Halachically acceptable wall.

If the *Sukkah* is detached from the house, it is ideal to set up a washing station near the *Sukkah* in order to minimize any interruption between *Kiddush* and the *Seudah*. [The water should not drain onto earth or grass.]

It is proper not to build the *Sukkah* over earth or grass without floorboards. Otherwise, on *Shabbat* and *Chag*, great care must be taken that liquids do not spill onto the grass, that pips or seeds do not fall to the ground, and that the ground is not swept or levelled in any way.

One may not use *Maaser* funds for his own *Sukkah*, but may use it to provide a *Sukkah* for others or for the *Shul's Sukkah*.

## 🕊 LOCATION OF THE SUKKAH

One should ensure that there are no tree branches hanging over the site of the *Sukkah*. If necessary, one may even cut the branches of a fruit-bearing tree, but it is best to engage a *Non-Jew* to do so.

According to *Halacha*, if a tree on another property prevents you from building a *Sukkah* on your property, you may cut the

neighbor's overhanging branches as required. [Of course, in the interest of neighborly relations, it is wise to discuss it with him beforehand.] However, the neighbor cannot be forced to pay the costs without prior agreement. The branches (and their disposal) belong to the neighbor.

If anything remains suspended above the *Schach* – e.g. tree branches, clotheslines, cables, wires, crossbeams or pergolas – its *Kashrut* should be approved by someone knowledgeable in the relevant *Halachot*.

The *Sukkah* is invalid if it was built in a place which is insect-infested, foul-smelling, unsafe or otherwise uncomfortable from the outset.

One should avoid building a *Sukkah* on public property, someone else's property, or commonly owned property, without the appropriate permissions. Similarly, a *Sukkah* should not directly block the neighbor's windows without permission.

### THE SCHACH

The *Schach* is comprised of detached inedible plant matter which was never susceptible to *Tumah*.

The *Schach* should not be prone to excessive shrinkage or leaf shedding, to the degree that insufficient *Schach* will remain by the end of *Sukkot*. [If one did not adhere to this, the *Sukkah* is disqualified from the outset.]

The *Schach* should not cause discomfort to the *Sukkah*'s inhabitants, e.g. if it is foul-smelling or sheds leaves constantly. [If one did not adhere to this and the *Sukkah* is already built, it may be used.]

One should purchase *Schach* only from a reliable vendor who ensures that there is no concern of *Gezel* (theft).

It is customary that timber ordinarily used in construction is not used for *Schach*.

A mat may be used as *Schach* only if it has been manufactured for shade or fencing, and not for sitting or lying down on.

### LAYING THE SCHACH

The *Sukkah* walls should be assembled before the *Schach* is put on.

The *Schach* should be detached from their place of growth prior to being laid out over the *Sukkah*. *Schach* bundles containing more than 25 pieces should be unbundled prior to being laid out over the *Sukkah*. [If this was not adhered to, the validity of the *Schach* is subject to a number of detailed variables.]

If the *Sukkah* has a rain cover, one should ensure that the *Sukkah* is uncovered when the *Schach* is laid out. Similarly, when placing (or replacing) the *Schach* on a mobile *Sukkah*, one should do so in a place which is not covered by a roof or tree.

If necessary, one may lay the *Schach* beneath overhanging tree branches before cutting those branches.

The *Schach* must either be laid within thirty days of *Sukkot*, or must be laid expressly for the sake of the *Mitzvah* of *Sukkot*. [If these criteria were not met, one may correct it in retrospect by either lifting and replacing all of the *Schach*, or by adding new *Schach* over an area at least 8cm x 8cm, or by adding any amount of *Schach* that extends across the entire width or breadth of the *Sukkah*.]

It is preferable that the *Schach* should be laid on the *Sukkah* by a Jewish male over *Bar Mitzvah* who is obligated to eat in the *Sukkah*. If it was laid out by anyone else, a Jewish male over *Bar Mitzvah* some have the custom to pick up and place down at least one of the pieces.

It is a *Chabad* custom to use lots of *Schach*, but not to the point that it is watertight. A small hole is left somewhere in the *Schach* for the stars to be seen. At the very least, the *Schach* should create more shade than sunlight.

There should be no gap of airspace in the *Schach* exceeding 24cmx24cm. [A larger gap is sometimes acceptable, but that depends on many factors. Furthermore, the *Mitzvah* of *Sukkah* is in any case not fulfilled beneath it, so it is best avoided.]

The *Schach* must be sturdy enough to remain intact when an ordinary gust of wind blows. [If in an enclosed place, the *Schach* must still be sturdy enough to withstand the wind were it an exposed place.] Otherwise, they must be secured in an acceptable manner (see section “Supporting the *Schach*”). This is of special concern when using mats.

If *Schach* blows out of place on *Chag*, one may not fix it, since the *Schach* is *Muktzah*. However, if the *Sukkah* is no longer *Kosher* (or its status is questionable), one should consult with a *Rabbi* as to whether a *Non-Jew* can fix it.

#### 🌀 SUPPORTING THE SCHACH

The *Schach* should not be directly secured or supported by any object which is unfit to be used as *Schach*. [Examples: Metal rods or cables, nails, plastic cable ties, nylon thread, nearby trees, processed

fiber thread or ropes.] However, these materials may be used to secure or support the *Schach* indirectly. [e.g. to secure or support the beams supporting the *Schach*.]

The *Schach* may be tied down with reeds or unprocessed fiber threads, and may also be directly supported by the *Sukkah* walls (or any adjacent walls or roofs).

Although construction timber is not used for *Schach*, it may nevertheless be used to directly support or secure the *Schach*.

A *Schach* mat may be used when strung together with unprocessed fiber threads. If strung together with processed fibers or with metal threads, it may still be used if the mats are laid out in a way that the individual reeds will remain in place even without the threads. [e.g. they should be laid out perpendicular to the supporting beams, and several beams should be placed on top to hold them down.]

If one did not adhere to any of the requirements listed in this section and the *Sukkah* is already built, it may be used and there is no obligation to fix it.

#### 🌀 LAWS OF MAKING AN OHEL

On *Chag* or *Shabbat*, it is forbidden to fully create or remove a temporary “roof” whose purpose is to provide any sort of shelter. However, this restriction only applies when there is at least one *Tefach* (8cm) of airspace in height beneath this *Ohel*. Therefore, one may use a rain cover without restriction if it lies directly on top of the *Schach*.

If one wishes to use a rain cover which will be raised at least one *Tefach* higher than the *Schach*, or which will be spread below the *Schach*, one must ensure that it is

extended at least one *Tefach* across the width of the entire *Sukkah* (in addition to any space taken up by the actual roll) before *Chag*. This minimal amount must remain open for the entire duration of *Chag* and *Shabbat*.

A rain-cover which is designed like a hinged door may be used on *Shabbat* and *Chag* without restriction.

When removing the rain cover on *Shabbat* or *Chag*, one should ensure that any water remaining on it does not pour onto grass or earth (unless they are still absolutely saturated from the rain).

When using a rain cover of any type, one must ensure that the *Schach* is uncovered when it is laid out, as well as at the onset of *Chag* (i.e. from sunset until the emergence of three stars). One should also remember to open the cover whenever the *Sukkah* is being used.

On *Chag* or *Shabbat*, one may set up a temporary partition for shelter or privacy. One may not do so if it is required to validate the *Sukkah*, but one may ask a *Non-Jew* to do so. [This is most frequently an issue when the primary walls of the *Sukkah* are hinged or foldable.]

### 🌀 THE SUKKAH & DECORATIONS

Unless absolutely unavoidable, the *Sukkah* should not be dismantled or made unusable until after *Shmini Atzeret / Simchat Torah*.

Some have the custom for the *Sukkah* to be decorated. If decorations are hung from the *Schach*, they should hang no lower than 4 *Tefachim* (32cm or 12.5 inches) from the *Schach*. Similarly, decorative chains should droop no lower than 4 *Tefachim*.

*Sukkah* decorations are *Muktzah* on *Shabbat* and *Chag*, and no personal benefit may be derived from them until after *Shmini Atzeret / Simchat Torah*, even if they fall off. However, these prohibitions may be avoided by verbalizing the following stipulation before the onset of *Sukkot*: "I do not separate myself from using the decorations any time I desire."

Similarly, the *Sukkah* walls and *Schach* are *Muktzah* on *Shabbat* and *Chag*, until after *Shabbat Bereishit*. One may not derive personal benefit from them in a manner which disrupts their primary use, such as snapping off a sliver of wood to use as a toothpick. [However, one may rest items on, or in, the walls of the *Sukkah*, since doing so does not disturb their function.] These restrictions apply even if the *Sukkah* was dismantled during *Sukkot* (e.g. a *Sukkah* at work).

A verbal stipulation is ineffective in permitting the *Schach*. A verbal stipulation also does not help with regards to the walls of a *Sukkah* built prior to *Chag*. However, if a *Sukkah* is built during *Chol Hamoed* and will be dismantled before the last day of *Chag* (e.g. a *Sukkah* at work), its walls remain permissible, if one verbalized the following stipulation before first sitting in the *Sukkah*: "I do not separate myself from using the walls any time I desire."

All the prohibitions in this section only apply after at least one male over *Bar Mitzvah* (who is obligated in the *Mitzvah* of *Sukkah*) sat in the *Sukkah* at least once for the sake of the *Mitzvah*.



## 🌿 CHOOSING THE DALED MINIM

One should only buy the *Daled Minim* from a reliable vendor who ensures that they are not grafted, and that there is no concern of *Gezel*, *Shemitah*, *Tevel* and *Orlah*. One should not buy the *Daled Minim* from a child under *Bar Mitzvah*, as he does not have the *Halachic* ability to allow others to acquire from him.

One should endeavour to purchase a *Daled Minim* set which is *Mehudar* (beautiful). It is not appropriate to boast about the beauty of one's set.

Chabad have the custom to use an *Etrog* of the *Calabria* ("Yanove") variety that actually grew in *Calabria*. The next best option is to obtain an *Etrog* of that progeny even if it grew elsewhere.

The *Etrog* is preferably yellow like beeswax and not green.

An *Etrog* is acceptable if the *Pittam* fell off due to natural causes whilst still on the tree. [An indentation in the place of the *Pittam* indicates that it fell off whilst the *Etrog* was still growing.]

If the *Pittam* fell off after the *Etrog* was detached from the tree, it is acceptable only if the base of the *Pittam* is still intact and protrudes above the tip of the *Etrog*.

Greater emphasis is placed on the actual beauty of the *Etrog* than on whether it is missing a *Pittam* (in a *Halachically* acceptable manner).

White, black or deep red/brown discoloration that can be seen at first glance when the *Etrog* is held at hand's length: If located on the upper side of the *Etrog*, from the area where the *Etrog* begins to slope inwards, it is *Passul*. If

located on the underside of the *Etrog* in the area of the stem, it is *Kosher*. If located anywhere else, it is *Kosher* – unless the discoloration spans the majority, or there are two such spots (or more).

Preferably, the *Lulav* is:

- Not rounded at the top ("*Knepplach*").
- Some are not particular and some even prefer *Knepplach*.
- Some including Chabad have the custom to make sure the *Lulav* has "*Korah*" (bark).
- Is tall and straight (according to Chabad).
- Has a straight and well-centred spine (according to Chabad).
- Is not thin (according to Chabad).

One must purchase a *Lulav* whose central leaf is completely closed. Nevertheless, one's *Lulav* may still be used if a minority of the central leaf split. On *Chol Hamoed*, it may be used even if the central leaf completely split, as long as the actual spine is intact.

The *Lulav* is acceptable if its tip is sunburnt, but not if it is snapped.

It is best to select *Hadassim* and *Aravot* whose leaves are all intact and fresh.

Some have the custom to add at least three extra *Hadassim* to the basic minimum of 3, The Lubavitcher Rebbe would have 36.

There are many other *Halachot* pertaining to the *Kashrut* of the *Daled Minim*. If in doubt, approval should be sought from someone well-versed in the relevant *Halachot*.

It is best that a separate *Daled Minim* set be purchased for a boy under *Bar Mitzvah*

if he is old enough to perform the *Na'anuim*.

One may not use *Maaser* funds for his own (or dependent's) *Daled Minim*, but may use it to provide others with a set.

### 🌀 BINDING THE DALED MINIM

Ideally, one personally binds the *Daled Minim* in the *Sukkah* after midday on *Erev Sukkot*.

Most have the custom of using *Lulav* baskets, the Chabad custom is not to.

According to the Chabad custom, five rings are used when binding the *Lulav*. These are all prepared before binding the *Lulav*.

Two rings are placed on the *Lulav* itself. These are positioned so that the *Hadassim* and *Aravot* will obscure them (at least partially).

According to Chabad, three rings are used to bind the lower end of the *Lulav* with the *Hadassim* and *Aravot*. These three rings span no more than a *Tefach* (8cm). With the *Lulav* lying horizontally and the spine facing upward, the *Hadassim* are positioned, one to the right, one to the left, and one on the actual spine, inclined slightly to the right. [The same pattern is followed for any additional *Hadassim*.] One *Aravah* is positioned to the right of the *Lulav*, and the other is positioned to the left. The *Aravot* should be obscured by the *Hadassim*.

It is preferable that the bottom of the *Hadassim* and *Aravot* should be flush with the bottom of the *Lulav*.

When binding, one must ensure that the *Lulav* spine extends at least another *Tefach* above the *Hadassim* and *Aravot*.

[The *Lulav* spine ends at the point where leaves no longer branch out of the middle leaf.] If necessary, the *Hadassim* and *Aravot* may be shortened, ensuring that they remain at least three *Tefachim* (24cm) in length, as measured from the top of the stem to the bottom leaf.

Shortening the *Hadassim* and *Aravot* must be done from the bottom of the stem. If it is shortened at the top, the *Aravot* are *Passul*, and the *Hadassim* should not be used unless there are no other *Hadassim* available.

If the *Lulav* was not bound on *Erev Chag*, or became undone, one may not make rings on *Chag*. However, one may wrap a *Lulav* leaf around and around, and insert the tip into the makeshift "ring", without tying or making a knot.

### 🌀 EREV SUKKOT (MONDAY)

On *Erev Sukkot*, one should not donate blood or undergo any procedures or tests involving blood loss. [This does not apply in cases of great need, and certainly not when it is *Pikuach Nefesh*.]

On *Erev Sukkot*, one should not eat (a meal) in the *Sukkah*.

The *Mitzvah* of *V'Samachta B'Chagecha* entails eating meat, wine and delicacies; providing new clothing or jewelry for one's wife according to his means; and giving sweets to the children. These should be arranged in advance.

One may not launder on *Chol Hamoed*. Therefore, any laundry should be tended to before *Sukkot*.

When necessary, one should take a haircut in honor of *Sukkot*.

Nails should be trimmed in honor of *Chag*. [Another reason to tend to them on *Erev Sukkot* is because they otherwise cannot be trimmed on *Chol Hamoed*.]

Some immerse in a *Mikvah* after *Chatzot* (12:26pm).

*Chag* is an especially appropriate time for guests. This is emphasized on *Sukkot*, because the function of a *Sukkah* is to unite all of *Klal Yisrael*. Additionally, hosting guests is especially connected to the *Ushpizin*.

It is forbidden to eat a proper meal of bread once the tenth *Halachic* hour of the day begins (3:22pm), in order to properly enjoy the meal of the first night. However, one may snack in small quantities.

Even though all meals will be eaten in the *Sukkah*, some have the custom to place a tablecloth on the table in the house, in honor of *Chag* and others specifically do not, to remind them to eat in the *Sukkah*.

One should give *Tzedakah* on *Erev Sukkot* for the *Chag*. We all have the obligation to make sure that the *Chag* requirements of the needy be met, including a set of *Daled Minim* and a *Sukkah*.

Candle-lighting (Monday night) is at 5:41pm. The Brachot are *L'Hadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov* and *Shehecheyanu*.

The candles are lit in the *Sukkah* and kept there until the end of the meal. At the very least, they should be lit in the *Sukkah* and moved only after some time has elapsed and some benefit has been derived. If even this is not feasible or safe, the candles may be lit indoors, preferably in a place where they can be seen from the *Sukkah*, and one should ensure that practical benefit is derived from the

candles after *Chag* begins. If possible, the candles should be brought back to the *Sukkah* for the *Chag* meal.

If eating out, one should ensure that practical benefit is derived from the candles after *Chag* begins.

Since it is *Chag*, if one neglected to light at the proper time, one may – and should – light candles on *Chag* itself, from a pre-existing flame.

When a man is required to light candles, he does not recite *Shehecheyanu*, as he will be doing so in *Kiddush*. [Therefore, it is best that he lights candles right before *Kiddush*, so that his *Shehecheyanu* is linked to both.]

### 🕯️ FIRST NIGHT OF SUKKOT DAVENING (MONDAY)

Many say the verse of *Vayedaber Moshe* before the *Amidah*. The Sephardic custom is to say *Eileh Moadei* and some, Chabad and those who follow the Gra, have the custom not to say any *Passuk*.

### 🕯️ YA'ALEH VEYAVO IN DAVENING

If one forgets *Ya'aleh Veyavo* in davening, but remembers before saying *Hashem's* name at the end of *Hamachazir Shechinato L'Tziyon*, he goes back. If he remembered between the conclusion of that *Brachah* and *Modim*, he recites it at that point, without going back. If he remembers any time after that point, but before taking three steps back, he returns to the beginning of *Retzei*. If he remembers after taking three steps back, the *Amidah* is repeated.

If one is unsure whether he recited *Ya'aleh Veyavo*, the *Amidah* is repeated.

If one forgot *Ya'aleh Veyavo* during *Shacharit*, and only realised after *Mussaf*, he does not repeat the *Shacharit Amidah*.

If one forgot *Ya'aleh Veyavo* during *Mincha* or *Maariv*, and only realized after the *Zman Tefillah* has passed, he must recite an additional *Amidah* in the next *Tefillah*, as compensation. Between the two *Tefillot*, he should wait the span of time to walk four *Amot* (approx. two metres), and preferably, he should recite words of supplication between them.

### 🕯️ SUKKOT NIGHT

Throughout *Sukkot*, there is no *Torah* obligation to eat in the *Sukkah*, if one can avoid eating the things which will require him to do so. The exception to this is the first night of *Sukkot*. Therefore, the night meal must begin after the emergence of three stars (6:54pm).

During Kiddush on the first night, *Leshev Basukkah* is recited before *Shehecheyanu*, as the *Shehecheyanu* pertains to the *Mitzvah* of eating in the *Sukkah* as well. One should have this in mind when reciting *Shehecheyanu*, in addition to having the Kiddush of *Chag* in mind.

Women who hear Kiddush in the *Sukkah* but choose to eat in the house should first eat a *kezayit* of bread or *Mezonot* in the *Sukkah*, or drink a *revi't* (86ml) of grape juice or wine. This is because Kiddush must be heard in the same place where the meal begins. Alternatively, they should stand in the place where they will eat and hear Kiddush from there. [Although this is only an absolute requirement when the *Sukkah* is detached from the house, it is still preferable to act

accordingly when the *Sukkah* is attached to the house.]

A woman who needs to recite *Kiddush* should not say *Shehecheyanu*, as she already did so at candle-lighting.

At least a *kezayit* of bread must be eaten before midnight (12:26am). [A *kezayit* is a measurement of volume equal to the displacement of 26ml of water. In practice, anything less dense than water weighing 26 grams is most certainly more than a *kezayit*.] This *kezayit* is eaten in the shortest time frame possible, and at the very least, within nine minutes.

While eating the *kezayit*, one has in mind that he is fulfilling the special obligation of eating in the *Sukkah* on the first night. This is in addition to the intention that this *Mitzvah* commemorates our exodus from Egypt (see living in the *sukkah* [page 56](#)).

During each *Chag* meal of *Sukkot*, the *Challah* is dipped (three times) in honey. [A total of at least a *K'beitzah* must be eaten, as per every *Chag* and *Shabbat*.]

One drinks at least a *Revi't* (Chaim Naeh is 86ml, Chazon Ish is 150ml) of wine every day of *Sukkot*.

*Simchat Beit Hashoeva* celebrations are conducted throughout *Sukkot*, beginning on the first night, with singing, clapping and dancing.

In Benching, *Ya'Alah Ve'Yavo* is recited.

### 🕯️ YA'ALEH VEYAVO IN BENTCHING

If one forgets *Ya'aleh Veyavo* in *bentching*, but remembers before saying *Hashem's* name at *Bonei Yerushalayim*, he goes back to say *Ya'aleh Veyavo*. If one remembered after that, but before beginning the next *Brachah*, he recites the extra *Brachah* as



printed in some *Birkonim*. If one already began even the first word (*Baruch*) of the next *Brachah*, one must begin *bentching* again if it is *Chag*, but not if it is *Chol Hamoed*.

On the first day of Sukkot, the *Harachaman* for *Chag* **and** Sukkot are recited, in that order.

On *Chol Hamoed*, only the *Harachaman* for Sukkot is recited.

### 🕊️ BRACHAH OF LESHEV BASUKKAH

The *Brachah* of *Leshev Basukkah* is recited only when eating more than a *K'beitzah* of *Hamotzie* or *Mezonot*. [A *K'beitzah* is a measurement of volume equal to the displacement of 57ml of water.] One will be able to consume a *K'beitzah* more expediently with cake than with cookies or biscuits, since cake is more dense.

One first recites *Hamotzie* or *Mezonot*, followed by *Leshev Basukkah*, whilst seated. If one forgets, he recites *Leshev Basukkah* as soon as he remembers. Even if he has already finished eating, he still recites the *Brachah* as long as he is still in the *Sukkah*.

Some, including Chabad have the custom to look at the *Schach* before reciting the *Brachah* of *Leshev Basukkah*.

When one drinks wine or grape juice, or any other beverage that is normally sipped at length or enjoyed when sharing company (such as tea, coffee and other alcoholic beverages), one does not recite *Leshev Basukkah*. However, it is best to drink such beverages after reciting *Leshev Basukkah* on *Hamotzie* or *Mezonot*.

If one already recited *Leshev Basukkah*, he needs to recite it again when either:

- He left the *Sukkah* for an hour or two – even if he didn't intend to stay out for that long.
- He intended to leave the *Sukkah* for an hour or two – even if he returned earlier than planned.
- When visiting another *Sukkah*. Even if he began eating a meal in the first *Sukkah* with the intention of finishing in the second *Sukkah*, in which case he does not need to recite a new *Brachah* on the bread, he still needs to recite *Leshev Basukkah*. [In many instances, *Leshev Basukkah* is recited when visiting another *Sukkah* even if one isn't eating there. To avoid confusion, it is customary to always eat more than a *K'beitzah* of *Mezonot* when visiting another *Sukkah*.]

Although women are not obligated to sit in the *Sukkah*, they may make the *Brachah* of *Leshev Basukkah* nonetheless.

Boys are trained to eat in the *Sukkah* from around the age of five or six, as per the child's maturity. Therefore, they must recite the *Brachah*. [A father must ensure that his child eats in the *Sukkah*. Anyone other than the father is not obligated to do so, and may give the child food even if the child will eat it outside the *Sukkah*. Nevertheless, one may not feed the child directly or actively encourage him to eat outside the *Sukkah*.]

### 🕊️ LIVING IN THE SUKKAH

The *Sukkah* commemorates the Clouds of Glory that protected *Bnei Yisrael* from the sun and heat of the desert. Therefore, whenever in the *Sukkah*, one's intention is that this *Mitzvah* commemorates our Exodus from Egypt.

If the *Sukkah* contains a section of *Schach* which is *Passul* (such as when the edge of the *Sukkah* lies under the overhanging roof of the house or under the edge of a rain cover), one must ensure not only that he is sitting under an area of the *Schach* that is Kosher, but also, that the part of the table that he is eating at, is situated there as well.

Most do not eat or drink in the *Sukkah* if it is raining, however the *Chabad* custom is to continue eating and drinking in the *Sukkah* even in the rain or inclement weather, and a *Leshev Basukkah* is still recited when eating the *Shiur* of *Hamotzie* or *Mezonot*. [As mentioned earlier, it is forbidden on *Chag* or *Shabbat* to create a temporary roof whose purpose is to provide any sort of shelter. Therefore, one should not place a box or bag over his food to shelter it from the rain, unless there is less than one *Tefach* (8cm) of airspace in height.]

It is a *Chabad* custom to refrain from eating or drinking anything – even minute amounts – outside the *Sukkah*. The fifth Lubavitcher Rebber, the *Rebbe Rashab* would even take medicine only in the *Sukkah*.

When eating in the *Sukkah* on *Chag* or *Shabbat*, one should be mindful about the prohibitions of trapping or killing insects. [Although it is forbidden to trap an insect, one is not required to inspect a container before closing it to ensure that there are no insects inside.]

One must treat the *Sukkah* respectfully. One may not wash dishes in the *Sukkah*, keep dirty dishes there, store tools or bikes, cook, or hang laundry. Similarly,

one should not bring the rubbish bin into the *Sukkah*, but rather, carry waste to a rubbish bin stationed outside.

Throughout *Sukkot*, one spends as much time in the *Sukkah* as practical. One learns in the *Sukkah*, unless he finds it hard to focus there, or he needs constant access to his *Seforim* library, or he wishes to learn in a *Beit Hamedrash*.

One should *daven* with a *Minyan* in Shul. However, if circumstances require him to *daven* at home, he should do so in the *Sukkah*, unless he cannot focus there.

Many have the practice to sleep in the *Sukkah*, Chabad do not.

One mentions the daily *Ushpizin* (and Chabad add the *Chassidishe Ushpizin*) by sharing a *Dvar Torah* or story pertaining to them. There are many *Torahs* which focus on the common denominator between that day's *Ushpizin*, as well as the contrasts between them.

The order of the *Ushpizin/Chabad Ushpizin*:

1. Avraham / Baal Shem Tov.
2. Yitzchok / Mezritcher Maggid.
3. Yaakov / Alter Rebbe.
4. Moshe / Mittele Rebbe.
5. Aharon / Tzemach Tzeddek.
6. Yosef / Rebbe Maharash.
7. David / Rebbe Rashab.

One may use someone else's *Sukkah* assuming that his friend consents to his *Sukkah* being used for the sake of the *Mitzvah*, but only if the *Sukkah* is otherwise vacant during that time, and it will be left in exactly the same condition.

## 🌀 BENTCHING LULAV

All men and boys over the age of *Bar Mitzvah* must *bentch Lulav*. Boys under *Bar Mitzvah* must also do so if they are of the age of *Chinuch*

Women and girls are technically exempt, but some have the custom to *bentch Lulav* anyway.

Men in good health should not eat anything before *bentching Lulav*. [One should not be stringent if there are any health concerns, or if he will obtain the *Daled Minim* only after midday.] Similarly, one should not learn or perform work before *bentching Lulav*.

Before *bentching Lulav*, one first fulfils the *Mitzvah* of *Kriat Shma*, since it is more frequent.

Some have the custom to *bentch Lulav* in the *Succah* before davening. It is preferable to eat *Mezonot* right after *bentching Lulav* in the *Succah*, in order to recite the *Brachah* of *Leshev BaSukkah* on the *Mitzvah* of *Daled Minim* as well. Others have the custom to *bentch Lulav* just before reciting *Hallel* during *Shacharit*.

It is best to *bentch Lulav* as soon as possible after sunrise (6:37 – 6:41am). Nevertheless, one may *bentch Lulav* any time after sunrise until sunset (6:20 – 6:13pm). In extenuating circumstances, or after the fact, it is acceptable if performed after dawn (5:24 – 5:28am) with a *Brachah*, or before three stars emerge (6:52 – 6:45pm) without a *Brachah*.

When *benching Lulav*, one stands facing *Mizrach* and holds the *Lulav* in the right hand, with the *Lulav* spine facing the person. After reciting the *Brachah* of *Al*

*Netilat Lulav*, one picks the *Etrog* up with the left hand. A left-handed person holds the *Lulav* in his left hand, and the *Etrog* in his right hand. Some hold the *Etrog* upside down when reciting the *Brachah*, *Al Netilat Lulav*.

On the first day of *Sukkot*, the *Etrog* is picked up before *Shehecheyanu* is recited. However, it is not joined to the *Lulav* until the conclusion of the *Brachah*.

One ensures that there is no *Chatzitzah* (barrier) between his hands and the *Daled Minim*. Therefore, one should remove any rings.

*Na'anuim* (shaking the *Lulav*): According to some, the *Daled Minim* are extended in all directions, three times per direction. One does not himself change direction, but merely moves the *Daled Minim* in each direction.

There are various customs regarding the *Na'anuim*.

The order of the *Na'anuim* according to Chabad:

- South (i.e. south-east).
- North (i.e. north-east).
- East (i.e. centre east).
- Up. [The *Daled Minim* are returned in a downward motion to around the height of the chest before being brought back to the chest.]
- Down. [The *Daled Minim* are returned in an upward motion to around the height of the chest before being brought back to the chest.]
- West (i.e. twice south-west and the third time centre-west).

The *Daled Minim* are extended forth from the chest and returned back to the chest, physically touching the place where one beats his fist when reciting *Ashamnu*. Each time the *Lulav* is extended forth, it is given a slight shake before being returned to the chest.

During the *Na'anuim*, the *Daled Minim* themselves remain perfectly upright and should not be inclined in any direction. One ensures that the tip of the *Lulav* does not come into contact with the wall, ceiling or *Schach*.

Women are not meticulous about waving the *Lulav* in all six directions.

Throughout *Sukkot* one should not smell the *Hadassim* or the *Eitrog*.

#### 🕊️ OWNERSHIP OF DALED MINIM

On the first day of *Sukkot*, one must own the set of *Daled Minim* he uses to perform the *Mitzvah*. [However, one may use a borrowed set for *Hallel* and *Hosha'anot*.]

When giving the *Daled Minim* to someone over the age of *Bar Mitzvah*, one should expressly state that it is a "*Matanah Al M'nat Lehachzir*"; i.e. a gift conditional on its return. This is especially important on the first day of *Sukkot*. [If one neglected to say this, it is still the presumed intention – provided that the giver and recipient are both aware that one must own the set of *Daled Minim*.]

It is not the custom of Sefardi women to perform the *mitzvah* of *Daled Minim*.

As mentioned earlier, a boy of the age of *Chinuch* is required to *bentch Lulav*. According to many *Rishonim*, the *Mitzvah* of *Chinuch* requires him to own the set he uses. At the same time, a boy under *Bar*

*Mitzvah* has the ability to acquire, but not to give back. Therefore, one should **not** give the *Daled Minim* to a child as a "*Matanah Al M'nat Lehachzir*". Rather, the father should purchase a set of *Daled Minim* for him.

If this is impractical or beyond one's means, one may rely on the *Rishonim* who do not require a boy under *Bar Mitzvah* to own the set he uses.

[Technically, another solution is to give the *Daled Minim* to the boy only after the adults have *bentched Lulav*. However, this is not a practical solution if one has several boys.]

#### 🕊️ HALLEL

Full *Hallel* is recited. When reciting *Hallel*, one may not interrupt it – other than for those things that one may respond to during the *Brachot* of *Kriat Shema*. [i.e. if the *Chazzan* recites *Kedushah*, one responds *Kadosh*, *Baruch* and *Yimloch*. When the *Chazzan* says *HaE-l Hakadosh*, one answers *Amen*. When the *Chazzan* says *Modim*, one answers the three words *Modim Anachnu Lach*. When the *Chazzan* recites *Kaddish*, one answers *Amen Yehei Shmei* etc, and *Amen* to *D'Amiran B'Almah*. One also answers *Barchu* and *Amen* when the *Brachot* are recited before and after an *Aliyah* or *Haftarah*.]

It is preferable to recite *Hallel* with the *Minyan*. If one is not up to the *Minyan*, this creates a dilemma; on the one hand it is appropriate to recite *Hallel* with the congregation, and on the other hand, it is appropriate that one *davens* in the correct order. For this reason, the *Chabad Rebbeim* were always punctilious about



being up to *Hallel* when the *Minyan* recited it on *Chag*.

If one forgot to recite *Hallel*, he should recite it with a *Brachah* as soon as he remembers, as long as it is not yet sunset.

If one mistakenly recited half-*Hallel*, he must repeat the entire *Hallel* (without a *Brachah*).

### 🌀 HOSHA'ANOT

For *Hosha'anot*, a *Torah* is held at the *Bimah* (preferably by someone who does not have a set of *Daled Minim* or someone in the year of *Aveilut* who doesn't circle the *Bimah*). The *Aron Hakodesh* remains open throughout *Hosha'anot*.

When reciting the *Hosha'anot* unique to that day, most communities recite the phrases aloud after the *Chazzan*. The Chabad custom is that the initial phrases are recited quietly at one's place, each phrase being preceded with the word *Hosha'anah*. According to Chabad, the phrases from the letter "Samech" or "Ayin" onwards are recited aloud after the *Chazzan*, with each phrase preceded **and** followed with the word *Hosha'anah*. According to all, these phrases are timed to coincide with one complete circuit around the *Bimah*.

During *Hosha'anot*, the *Lulav* is held with the right hand and the *Etrog* with the left. The Rebbe would generally hold them joined together and touching his chest.

One without *Daled Minim* does not circle the *Bimah*. [It is best to borrow a set in order to participate.]

The last *Pasuk* (i.e. *L'Maan Da'at*) is said aloud when the *Sefer Torah* is returned to

the *Aron Hakodesh*. One holds the *Daled Minim* until this time.

On *Chag*, one may return the *Lulav* to the moist towel or water that it was already in. One may also place it in another moist towel or other water, as long as they were prepared before *Chag*. One may add water to either of these, but may not completely change the water.

### 🌀 FIRST DAY OF SUKKOT (TUESDAY)

The *Mitzvah* of *V'Samachta B'Chagecha* requires one to celebrate *Chag* with his family. As such, one should not overly prolong the time he spends at any communal *Kiddush*.

### 🌀 CHOL HAMOED

During *Chol Hamoed*, one should take part in *Simchat Beit Hashoeva* celebrations. These should be enhanced with music.

During *Chol Hamoed*, one replaces the *Hadassim* and *Aravot* as necessary.

One should be aware of the state of his *Aravot*. If most leaves fall off the top three *Tefachim* (24cm), the *Aravah* needs to be replaced. [It often happens that the leaves have already fallen off and are just being held in place by the *Lulav* rings.] A leaf is considered intact even if only its majority is intact.

The *Aravot* are still acceptable if the leaves have turned a darker color.

When new *Aravot* are necessary, they should not be inserted into the *Lulav* without loosening the rings first, as this will likely cause the *Aravah* leaves to become detached.

On *Chol Hamoed*:

- One wears *Shabbat* clothing.

- One washes for bread, eats meat and drinks a cup of wine every day.
- One allocates more time for learning.

Many activities are prohibited during *Chol Hamoed*, including (but not limited to) business activity, trade, moving homes, gardening, sewing, laundering (unless for children who soil their clothing frequently, but only as required), preparing food for after *Chag*, cutting nails (unless it was done on *Erev Sukkot* as well) and taking haircuts and shaving. One may not instruct a non-Jew to perform these activities either.

For the sake of *Chol Hamoed*, one may professionally repair any item which is directly involved in food preparation (e.g. oven or fridge), or which provides direct benefit to the body (e.g. the plumbing, electricity or air-conditioning), provided that it wasn't practical to fix prior to *Chag* (e.g. it broke on *Chag*).

One should avoid writing. If it cannot be deferred until after *Chol Hamoed*, one should write with a *Shinui*. However, calligraphy and artistic drawing or painting is prohibited.

If an employee's job involves activities that are not performed on *Chol Hamoed*, he should arrange to take leave, unless his absence will jeopardize his employment.

Routine medical exams that can easily wait should not be scheduled for *Chol Hamoed*.

### 🌀 SHABBAT CHOL HAMOED

*Kabbalat Shabbat* begins with *Mizmor L'David*, and not with *L'chu Neranenah*. Some begin with *Mizmor Shir L'Yom*

*Hashabbat*. In *Lecha Dodi*, some say all the verses and some say only the first and last two. The *Amidah* is the usual *Shabbat* one, with the addition of *Ya'aleh Veyavo*.

According to most Chassidim, *Shalom Alechem* and *Eishet Chayil* (as well as all the other selections prior to *Kiddush*) are not recited. According to Chabad, *Shalom Alechem* and *Eishet Chayil* (as well as all the other selections prior to *Kiddush*) are recited in an undertone. And according to Minhag Ashkenaz, According to most Chassidim, *Shalom Alechem* and *Eishet Chayil* (as well as all the other selections prior to *Kiddush*) are recited as normal.

*Kiddush* is recited as on a regular *Shabbat*, with *Leshev Basukkah* added at the end.

In *bentching*, both *Retzei* and *Ya'aleh Veyavo* are recited, as well as both the *Harachaman* for *Shabbat* and *Sukkot*.

Most have the custom to say *Hosha'anot* on *Shabbat* and some, including Chabad, don't.

Since it is *Shabbat*, all the additional *Shabbat* selections are mentioned in the *Mussaf* for *Shalosh Regalim*. If one did not make **any** mention of *Shabbat* in the middle *Brachah*, or if he mistakenly *davened* the regular *Mussaf* of *Shabbat*: If he did not yet finish reciting the second *Yih'yu L'ratzon* (at the end of the passage of *Elokai N'tzor*), he should return to the beginning of the middle *Brachah* (i.e. *Atah Vechartanu*). Otherwise, he must repeat *Mussaf*.

For the daytime *Kiddush*, everything prior to *Kiddush* is recited in an undertone, and *Leshev Basukkah* is recited before drinking the wine.



*Vihi Noam* and *V'atah Kaddosh* are not recited on *Motzei Shabbat*.

*Havdallah* is recited as on every *Motzei Shabbat*, followed by *Leshev Basukkah*. *V'Yiten Lecha* is recited in an undertone.

For those who don't say *Hosha'anot* on Shabbat, on Sunday Chol Hamoed, one says the *Hosha'anot* one missed on Shabbat together with the one for Sunday, but one only makes one circuit around the Bimah.





## Lulava

**by Rabbi Paysach Krohn**

During the Yom Kippur War in 1973, when the Israelis were caught by surprise and attacked by Arabs on all fronts. One of the critical points of battle was near the Suez Canal. For days after Yom Kippur and throughout Sukkot, Rabbi Shammai Parnes and his assistants traveled throughout the Sinai desert, where they cautiously and caringly gathered the bodies of those who had fallen in battle.

Throughout Sukkot, Rabbi Shammai traveled in his jeep, taking with him his Siddur, Tehillim, tallis, and lulav and Etrog. In every army camp where he stopped, soldiers approached him, asking for permission to use his lulav and Etrog. Infantrymen who were irreligious would pick up his siddur and say, "Rabbi Shammai, let us pray from your siddur or say Shema."

He would help as many as he could, and at times he was detained from his work for more than an hour. Much to his regret, though, he eventually had to say to the young men, "I cannot stay any longer. I have been summoned elsewhere." On Hoshana Rabbah, Rabbi Shammai and his assistants were near the Suez. As he drove towards a new army base in the wide-open desert, the thought occurred to him that because he had already used his lulav and Etrog for the last time this Yom Tov, he could leave them in the army base.

Shortly after Rabbi Shammai's arrival at the base, a long line of soldiers began to form, waiting to use his lulav and Etrog. As a crowd began to assemble, a young non-religious soldier, Arik Shuali, driving an ammunition truck, was making his way southward. Looking

through his powerful binoculars he noticed a large crowd of fellow servicemen gathered in one area. Curious, he got out of his truck and made his way on foot to where the soldiers had assembled.

As he came closer, he asked someone, "What is all the commotion about?" They explained to him that Rabbi Shammai had come, and people were waiting for an opportunity to use his lulav and Etrog. Arik was not interested in waiting around, but when one of his friends mentioned that it was the last day to do this mitzvah, he agreed to wait.

Eventually, Arik's turn arrived. Just as he received the lulav and Etrog, a bomb hit his truck. The vehicle exploded and set off multiple explosions of the ammunition on board. The blasts were so intense that a crater was formed in the ground where the truck had been parked. When they later examined the spot where the truck had been, the soldiers could not find even a shard of metal remaining from the shattered vehicle.

Three months later, Rabbi Shammai read a short notice in the Israeli army newspaper. It was an announcement stating that the wife of serviceman Arik Shuali had given birth to a little girl. The announcement included a statement by the new father: "I believe with every fiber of my being, that I am alive today and that I merited to see my new daughter only because of the Mitzvah that I was doing at the time my truck was bombed."



# The Floating Sukkah

by Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

In the year 1915, the governor of the Kiev district in Ukraine was General Dernatalin, a nasty anti-Semite of German origin.

As the festival of Sukkot was nearing the general sought ways to interfere with the preparation for the festival by the Jews living in his district.

He was familiar with the Jewish tradition of eating and spending time in the sukkah that they built in their gardens.

After deliberating and consultation with the circle of his acquaintances of like mind, he decided on a malevolent course of action.

Approximately a week before the start of the festival, he publicized a proclamation that it was forbidden to build sukkot in the district of Kiev. The sukkot constituted a fire hazard was the official reason provided. Severe punishment was threatened to those who would transgress the decree.

The farmers of the district received separate orders not to bring wood and branches into the city in the near future.

The city of Kiev was in upheaval; whoever heard of such a thing! To prevent the Jewish people from celebrating the festival of Sukkot according to halacha (Jewish law)?!

That same day a delegation was organized, among them one of the richest Jewish citizens, one successful business man and one well known and talented lawyer. They requested an urgent meeting with the governor. But General Dernatalin, realizing why the meeting was being called, refused to meet with them, giving a transparent excuse.

The overwhelming opinion among the greatly indignant Jewish people was not to give in to

the decree. But transgressing it was also impossible. One cannot build a sukkah inside or in other ways hide it from notice.

The police increased their surveillance. Anything at all that might be construed as a possible start to building a sukkah was immediately halted by them. The city's rich and its dignitaries called a meeting to find a solution. Abruptly the owner of the local shipping company spoke up. "Many ships sail on the Dnieper River," he said, "We will build a big sukkah on one of the ships, and the Jewish citizens of the city will be invited to eat their meals there."

After some thought the lawyer remarked that this idea wasn't a transgression of the governor's edict. After all, he forbade to build sukkot on the ground of his district, nothing was said about the water.

It also removed the reason for the decree: the danger of a fire hazard, since that was not a threat on the water as it was on land.

The participants of the meeting were delighted with this solution. They made the decision to go forward with the plan in total secrecy, so that not a whisper of it should reach the general. They had no doubt that he would do everything in his power to obstruct them.

Two days before the beginning of the festival a place was prepared on one of the ships, and two huge sukkot were built. One sukkah was built in the First-Class section which was meant for the rich of the town. Another sukkah was built in the Second-Class section for all the other Jewish persons.

The sukkot were built 100% in accordance with the letter of halacha. The staff of the ship made the kitchens kosher. Enormous amounts of food were prepared for the expected crowds of

people. The owner made it known that the meals were free of charge for anyone who wanted to observe the mitzvah of "leishev besukkah" ("dwelling in the sukkah.")

The subterfuge was kept a secret till the day before the beginning of the festival. Only then did a rumor start making the rounds about sukkot that had been built on a ship, that the Jewish people of Kiev were invited to observe the mitzvah of sitting in the sukkah.

Several hours before the beginning of the festival the police discovered the sukkot on the ship. They stared in astonishment at the sukkot, at a loss what to do. The orders they were given had no instructions about what happened on the Dnieper. Neither did they have a justification to order the dismantling of the sukkot on grounds of being a fire hazard.

The Chief of police ran to the governor to inform him of the unexpected turn of events. General Dernatalin, stunned, couldn't believe his ears. He demanded to go see for himself the sukkot built on the river.

The evening had begun and crowds of Jewish people were making their way to the river in order to observe the mitzvah of Sukkot according to the letter of the halacha.

The festive meal began with much joy till the whispers started "Dernatalin is here!"

The latter was beside himself with fury. He threatened to send everyone there to Siberia. At that point, the Rabbi of Kiev stood up to speak. "Sir, honorable Governor," he said, "you should be aware that there is nothing that can cause a Jew to betray his religion. There is no power in the world that is capable of uprooting from our hearts the mitzvot of the Torah which we received from the Creator more than three thousand years ago. Our holy Torah instructed us to sit in the sukkah, and even though we have been in exile close to two thousand years, we will not desert its commands."

The general listened attentively to the words of the Rabbi. When the Rabbi finished his emotional address, the general went over to him and, much to the surprise of everyone present, shook his hand. Immediately after he silently departed, together with the police officers.

That Sukkot was celebrated by the Jewish people of Kiev with special joy. They celebrated the festival itself as well as the victory over the people who wanted to prevent them observing the mitzvot and instead were overcome.

From that day on a change was noticeable in the governor. He stopped trying to cause trouble for the Jewish people. He even annulled previous decrees he had passed against them.

*Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.*

# The Bamboo Roof Test

by Tzvi Jacobs

Jews eat in a sukkah, a branch-covered booth, during the autumn holiday of Sukkot - that is, most everyone, except Rabbi Yitzchak Greenberg and his wife Sara, who for eight consecutive years could not eat in their sukkah. No, this is not in the Soviet Union or some other country where religious freedom does not exist, or where Jews are such a minority that they are afraid to be different. No, this was New York City where Jews are everywhere and where religious freedom reigns.

Rabbi Greenberg earned his living as a high school science teacher in the New York City public school system. On the Sabbath and Jewish holidays, he served as the rabbi at the Interboro Jewish Center in East New York. The once flourishing Jewish neighborhood had become quite dangerous, yet the Jews who remained in the neighborhood had pure, simple faith. In the mid-sixties, they had built a beautiful synagogue, with a stained-glass skylight and colorful murals on the walls.

Every Friday afternoon, Rabbi and Mrs. Greenberg would leave the comfort and safety of their Oceanside, Long Island, home and move into an apartment in East New York. The rabbi and his wife fell in love with the members of the synagogue, who were all so sweet and kind and sincerely religious. When Rabbi and Mrs. Greenberg would arrive in synagogue on Friday evening, everyone would stand and applaud. They deserved it! After services, as a safety precaution, the forty or so congregants, who were all middle-aged and elderly, would walk the Rabbi and his wife to their "Shabbos apartment," and afterwards to each other's homes.

During those years, one Jew after another was maimed, robbed, and even murdered, some in their own apartments. Nobody was safe.

In the back of the synagogue, there had once been a sturdy wooden-framed sukkah. But every night during the Sukkot holiday, youngsters who lived in the apartment building overlooking the synagogue's yard would hurl bricks and boulders onto the loose and flimsy bamboo poles that served as the s'chach that covered the sukkah. [This s'chach has to resemble the porous nature of the "Clouds of Glory" that protected the freed Hebrews as they wandered for 40 years in the Sinai Desert.]

Finally, in 1985, a week before Rosh Hashanah, the synagogue's president telephoned Rabbi Greenberg, "Rabbi, we're closing the shul. We can't even get ten men for a minyan."

Sad as he was to see the synagogue close down, Rabbi Greenberg was happy to finally have a chance to celebrate the upcoming Sukkot holiday in a sukkah. And what a perfect location for a sukkah - on the patio of his Oceanside home, facing the waterfront. He built a sukkah and it looked gorgeous. His wife adorned the table beautifully with silver candlesticks and fine china. Rabbi and Mrs. Greenberg eagerly looked forward to the evening, when they would eat the first festival meal in their sukkah.

Just before sunset, Mrs. Greenberg lit the Yom Tov holiday candles. Suddenly, it became dark. Thick, dark clouds filled the sky. Without warning, CRAACK! Lightning zapped across the darkened sky. Thunderous clapping and a fierce storm whipped across the waterfront. For five minutes, the house shook from the thunder and violent wind.

The storm ended as suddenly as it had begun. Fearing the worst, Rabbi Greenberg walked onto the patio. "Ribono Shel Olam? Master of the Universe!" he cried.

Amazingly, the sukkah was still standing (actually leaning, which was good enough for it still to be considered kosher). However, the bamboo poles, which served as the sukkah's makeshift roof, had crashed on the set table, knocking over the candlesticks and bouncing the china to the ground. Bamboo poles were everywhere except on top of the sukkah. Without the s'chach above, the sukkah was not considered a sukkah.

The Rabbi felt dejected. It was already evening and the Sukkot holiday had begun. The first two days of Sukkot are special like the Sabbath, and Jewish Law forbids one to build a sukkah on those days; one is not even allowed to touch the bamboo, let alone put it back on the sukkah's roof.

It's enough of a test of faith when it rains on the first night of the seven-day Sukkot holiday. Some people may even take it as a slight, or in a humbler spirit, as a sign of God's displeasure. After all, God invites every Jew to sit in His holy booth and then He dumps water on us!

A chasid tries to look at every situation in a positive light, and would view a rainstorm on the Sukkot holiday as a test from God. The chasid will show God that he loves the mitzvah of sitting in the sukkah so much that he will joyfully eat in the sukkah even when the rain is pouring through. But Rabbi Greenberg did not even have that opportunity, because according to Jewish law, his sukkah was no longer valid to eat in.

"We sacrificed and suffered these past eight years not eating in a sukkah. And now this happens!" Rabbi Greenberg vented to his wife, who was quietly cutting vegetables for a salad. This was a difficult test, even for a chasid.

Rabbi Greenberg trudged upstairs to his study and searched in his tomes of Jewish law. In such a case, where he had no other sukkah to eat in, did the Law permit him to place the bamboo back on? He found the ruling: the s'chach can

only be replaced on top of the sukkah by a non-Jew.

Where was he going to find a handy person tonight to fix his sukkah and come out in this weather?

Just then, Rabbi Greenberg recalled a story he had heard years earlier.

About 200 years ago, in a shtetl in Eastern Europe, the entire community chipped in money to help a poor bridegroom get started in a business. Following the community's advice, the groom bought a horse and wagon and drove to the market to buy flour, which he would then resell in the village.

One day, he bought sacks of flour with the remainder of his money, and carefully loaded them onto the wagon. While riding home, a violent gust of wind flipped his wagon over. All the sacks of flour were flung onto the rocky ground. The sacks burst open and the wind blew the flour away. The young man turned upright the empty wagon, and feeling totally distraught drove straight to his Rebbe. The sad groom told the Rebbe about the terrible misfortune.

After a few minutes of deep meditation, the Rebbe said, "God made that wind. I have to call Him to a din Torah (a rabbinical court hearing)."

The Rebbe wept and pleaded the case for the groom. Minutes passed. Finally, the Rebbe looked up and smiled. "You have won the case. Now, return to your village and all will be well."

On the road home, the groom's wagon got stuck in the mud. The unlucky groom took a broken branch and tried to dig out the wheel. The branch struck against something hard and he pushed it out of the mud. It was a chest! The young man pried it open and, behold, it was overflowing with gold coins and jewels.



After searching in vain for its owner, a judge ruled that since apparently robbers had hidden this treasure in the ground and there was nobody to whom he could return the treasure, the groom was allowed to keep it. The couple invested their fortune wisely, and became known throughout the land for their generosity and warm hospitality.

After recalling this poignant story, Rabbi Greenberg put his head on the table and cried. For eight years, he had been unable to eat a holiday meal in a sukkah because of the danger of eating outside in a sukkah in East New York. But, now, Rabbi Greenberg finally had the opportunity to eat in his own sukkah and God's wind had blown it down.

After intense concentration and heartfelt tears, Rabbi Greenberg lifted his head, smiling. "Dear," he said to his wife, "I feel like I won the court case."

Barely two minutes had passed, there was a knock on the door. A man stood at the door with a toolbox and rope. "Robby! What are you doing here?"

"I came to fix your booth," Robby said. Then, without even waiting for a response, Robby entered the house, walked through the living room and dining room, and stepped onto the patio.

Rabbi Greenberg was in shock. He had not seen Robby for nine or ten years. Robby, who was not Jewish, worked as a licensed electrician for an observant Jew in Spring Valley, New York. Each time the business was going to be closed for a Jewish holiday, Robby would take the

homebound train to Oceanside, Long Island, and pop into the nearby Ocean Harbor Jewish Center. There he would find Rabbi Greenberg, who at the time served as a part-time rabbi of this synagogue, and would ask the rabbi what the upcoming holiday that was providing him a vacation was about.

Now, standing on the Rabbi's patio, Robby set down his toolbox and ropes, and inspected the damage to the sukkah. Rabbi Greenberg stood behind him, shaking his head in disbelief. "Robby, you've never been to my home. How did you know where I lived?"

"I knew you lived in Oceanside [Robby lived in Long Beach, which was one town over], so I looked up your address in the phone book," Robby answered, while anchoring down the sukkah with ropes. "Now, Rabbi, if you don't mind waiting inside your house, I'll be finished in no time."

Twenty short minutes later, Robby stepped into the house. "It's all done, Rabbi. So now, have a happy holiday."

"Robby, who sent you? How did you know to come here? You must be an angel of G-d."

"No, I'm no angel," Robby laughed. "During the storm, a crazy feeling lured me to go onto my veranda. When I saw the strong winds, I said, 'Now it's that holiday of booths. I bet Rabbi Greenberg's blew down and he needs help.'"

Robby smiled. "Rabbi and Mrs. Greenberg, have a beautiful holiday."

*Reprinted from an email of KabbalaOnline.org.*

# Laws & Customs: Hoshanah Rabbah, Simchat Torah and Shabbat Bereishit

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## 🕊️ HOSHANAH RABBAH – EVENING (SUNDAY NIGHT)

As on every *Erev Chag*, one should not donate blood or undergo any procedures or tests involving blood loss. On *Hoshanah Rabbah*, this injunction applies even at night. [Of course, this does not apply in cases of great need, and certainly not when it is *Pikuach Nefesh*.]

Some have the custom of staying awake the entire *Leil Hoshanah Rabbah*.

*Hoshanah Rabbah* is an appropriate time to give more *Tzedakah* than usual.

Even though time is more limited on *Leil Hoshanah Rabbah*, Chabad have the custom to participate in a *Simchat Beit Hashoeva*.

The entire *Sefer* of *Devarim* is recited (individually) before midnight (12:25am). Some have the custom to do it in public with a *Sefer Torah*.

In some communities, after midnight, the entire *Tehillim* is recited with a *Minyan*, but not at length.

After each *Sefer* of *Tehillim*, one recites the *Yehi Ratzon* for *Hoshanah Rabbah*, as well as the *Yehi Ratzon* normally recited when one says *Tehillim* after moonrise.

According to Chabad, during or after the recitation of *Tehillim*, the *Gabbaim* distribute apples. After *Tehillim*, these are dipped in honey and eaten in the *Sukkah*.

## 🕊️ HOSHANAH RABBAH – DAVENING (MONDAY)

Some have the custom to wear a *Kittel* throughout davening. Some hold that just the *Chazzan*, *Baal Koreh* and *Baal Tokea* (for those who blow *Shofar*) wear a *Kittel* whilst the rest of the Shul do not and some, including Chabad, do not wear a *kittel* at all.

A set of *Hoshanot* is prepared for each member of the family, including women and children – even those below the age of *Chinuch*.

Preferably, one shouldn't use a set of *Hoshanot* already used by someone else. [One should purchase *Hoshanot* only from a reliable vendor who ensures that there is no concern of *Gezel* (theft).]

Each set of *Hoshanot* consists of five *Aravot* bound together with a *Lulav* leaf. [Neither the *Aravot* nor the *Lulav* leaf should be obtained from one's set of *Daled Minim*, unless there's no choice.]

The *Aravot* should measure at least three *Tefachim* (24cm) and should be of the same standard as those used in the *Daled Minim*. It is preferable to use fresh *Aravot* with all leaves intact. In extenuating circumstances, it is acceptable if there is at least one leaf per stem.

Before *Hallel*, the Chabad custom is to remove the two topmost rings of the *Lulav*, leaving only the three bottom rings. This allows for a more pronounced and joyous shaking of the *Lulav*.

For *Hosha'anot*, all the *Sifrei Torah* in the *Aron Hakodesh* are held at the *Bimah* by congregants who do not have a set of *Daled Minim* (or by anyone in the year of *Aveilut* who doesn't circle the *Bimah*). If all present have a set, the *Sifrei Torah* are placed on the *Bimah*. The *Aron Hakodesh* remains open throughout *Hosha'anot*.

One without a set of *Daled Minim* does not circle the *Bimah*. [It is best to borrow a set in order to participate.]

According to the Chabad custom, when each of the seven paragraphs of *Hosha'anot* are recited, the initial phrases are recited quietly whilst standing in one place, and each phrase is preceded with the word *Hosha'anah*. The phrases from the letter "Samech" or "Ayin" onwards are recited aloud after the *Chazzan*, and each phrase is preceded **and** followed with the word *Hosha'anah*. Most other communities recite all the phrases aloud, after the *Chazzan*. These phrases are timed to coincide with one complete circuit around the *Bimah*. At the end of each paragraph, the special *Passuk* for *Hoshanah Rabbah* is also said and in some communities the *Shofar* is blown.

During *Hosha'anot*, the *Lulav* is held with the right hand and the *Etrog* with the left. A left handed person will hold the *Lulav* in his left hand and the *Etrog* in his right. The Lubavitcher Rebbe would generally hold them joined together and touching his chest. The set of *Hoshanot* (i.e. the five *Aravot*) are not held at this time.

After *Hosha'anot* is completed, the *Sifrei Torah* are returned to the *Aron Hakodesh* and the *Chazzan* recites *Kaddish*. The *Daled Minim* are then put aside, and only then are the set of *Hoshanot* picked up.

They are beaten exactly five times directly against the ground (and not another object), and put aside. This is followed by the special *Yehi Ratzon* printed in the *Siddur*. [There is no need to beat very forcefully, nor to make any of the leaves fall off.]

The *Daled Minim* and *Hoshanot* are *Muktzah* on *Shmini Atzeret*, so they should be placed in a suitable place beforehand. Many have the custom to put *Hoshanot* on top of the *Aron Hakodesh* after use.

After *Shabbat Bereishit*, the *Daled Minim* (including *Lulav* rings) and *Hoshanot* may not be discarded along with other trash without first being wrapped in plastic. They certainly should not be trodden on. [Some burn these items, especially at the time of *Biur Chametz* or when baking the *Matzot*. Others use the *Hadassim* for *Besamim* and make a jam with the *Etrog*.]

Some say *L'David Hashem Ori* for the last time at *Shacharit*, others, Including Chabad, say it for the last time at *Mincha*.

### 🕉️ HOSHANAH RABBAH – DAYTIME

Sukkot is the time of judgement for water – and by extension, all life forms that depend on water. *Hoshanah Rabbah* is the last day of judgement.

A meal for Chag is served. The *Challot* are dipped in honey. It is not necessary to have *Lechem Mishneh*. There is a custom to eat *Kreplach*.

This is the last meal in the Sukkah.

Just like on *Erev Shabbat*, it is preferable to refrain from a proper meal once the tenth *Halachic* hour of the day begins (3:17pm) in order to properly enjoy the

meal for Chag at night. However, one may snack in small quantities.

Some immerse in a *Mikvah* after midday (12:25pm).

### 🕯️ SHMINI ATZERET / SIMCHAT TORAH NIGHT

Candle-lighting (Monday night) is at 5:33pm. The *Brachot* are *L'Hadlik Ner Shel Yom Tov* and *Shehecheyanu*.

One should try to light an extra candle (preferably a Yizkor candle) in memory of the Kedoshim who perished on Simchat Torah 5784 and those since then.

One should ensure that some practical benefit is derived from the candles after Shabbat and *Chag* begins. One needs to be especially attentive to this on *Shmini Atzeret / Simchat Torah*, when it is common for the entire family to be at *Shul* until late.

When a man is required to light candles, he does not recite *Shehecheyanu*, as he will be doing so in *Kiddush*.

### 🕯️ SIMCHAT TORAH DAVENING (TUESDAY)

Many say the verse of Vayedaber Moshe before the Amidah. The Sephardic custom is to say Eileh Moadei and some, Chabad and those who follow the Gra, have the custom not to say any Passuk.

Before Hakafof, some have the custom to make Kiddush. For those who do make Kiddush before Hakafof, please see the section, "Seudat Chag" later on page 72.

A woman who needs to recite *Kiddush* should not say *Shehecheyanu*, as she already did so at candle-lighting.

### 🕯️ HAKAFOT

Ordinarily, a *Sefer Torah* may not be moved to another location merely for one

time use. However, if necessary, one may be lenient on *Shmini Atzeret / Simchat Torah*.

The Previous Lubavitcher Rebbe – citing the *Rebbe Rashab* – states: "The forty eight hours of *Shmini Atzeret and Simchat Torah* should be dearly cherished. Here in Israel it is the twenty four hours of *Shmini Atzeret / Simchat Torah*. At each moment, it is possible to draw buckets and barrels of treasures, both material and spiritual, and all this is accomplished by dancing." The joy of *Simchat Torah* is even more pronounced than that of *Simchat Beit Hashoeva* or *Chag* in general.

*Atah Haretah* (and *Av Harachamim*) is recited. Different people are honored with leading the recital of each verse.

The Chabad custom is to recite *Atah Haretah* three times. At the end of *Atah Haretah* and *Av Harachamim*, the *Passuk* of *Vehaya Zarachah* is recited three times as well.

Only afterwards is the *Aron Hakodesh* opened.

All the *Sifrei Torah* – even ones which are not *Kosher* – are brought out of the *Aron Hakodesh* for *Hakafot*, with their crowns.

For each *Hakafah*, different people are honored with holding the *Sifrei Torah*.

One may not refuse the honor of holding the *Torah* during a *Hakafah* (unless the *Torah* is too heavy for him), just as one may not refuse an *Aliyah*.

For each *Hakafah*, the *Sifrei Torah* circle the *Bimah* once, after which the congregation sings and dances until the *Gabbai* announces the end of the *Hakafah*. The *Sifrei Torah* are returned to



the *Aron Hakodesh* between each *Hakafah*.

The *Sifrei Torah* may be given to boys under the age of *Bar Mitzvah* during the dancing, but not for the actual circuit around the *Bimah*.

Children are given flags and encouraged to participate in the dancing.

While dancing, Stop for a moment, open your eyes, and pay attention to those around you. Look for the boy standing there alone, the boy who came with his mother to Shul, the boy whose father may be celebrating elsewhere, with another family, is fighting for our safety, has been taken hostage, murdered, or left this world.

Bring him into the circle, put him on your shoulders, make him feel part of it. Do not leave any child behind. Do not let anyone feel missed out. Give them at least one *Hakafah* at this big celebration.

A person in the year of *Avelut* does not go to *Hakafot* alone, and is instead accompanied.

Ordinarily, one stands when the *Sifrei Torah* are outside the *Aron Hakodesh*. However, it is common practice to permit sitting during *Hakafot*. It is still praiseworthy to stand when possible, especially during the actual *Hakafot* circuits around the *Bimah*. Either way, one should stand when the *Sifrei Torah* are being brought out of the *Aron Hakodesh* and when they are returned.

As we relive the hardest day Israel has experienced, last year Simchat Torah, before we return the *Sifrei Torah*, the community should stop, to say Tehillim

and Mi Shebeirach for those who perished as well as to say a Mi Shebeirach for the safety and return of our soldiers and hostages. We should never forget, and even though Simchat Torah is supposed to be a happy and joyous day, we still need to remember the Kedoshim.

After all of the *Hakafot*, the *Sifrei Torah* are returned to the *Aron Hakodesh*, and *Aleinu* is recited after it is closed. Some communities read from the *Torah* after *Hakafot*.

One who visits another *Shul* which is still performing *Hakafot* should rejoice and sing with them.

#### 🕯 SEUDAT CHAG

After *Hakafot*, one eats the meal for Chag, unless he already did so before *Hakafot*.

A woman who needs to recite *Kiddush* should not say *Shehecheyanu*, as she already did so at candle-lighting.

If a man repeats *Kiddush* exclusively for a woman (or women), he should remember not to recite *Shehecheyanu*, as they already did so at candle-lighting.

The *Challah* is dipped in salt, and not in honey. [More than a *K'beitzah* (a measurement of volume equal to the displacement of 57ml of water) of *Challah* must be eaten, as per every *Shabbat* and *Chag*.]

#### 🕯 YA'ALEH VEYAVO IN BENTCHING

If one forgets *Ya'aleh Veyavo* in *bentching*, but remembers before saying *Hashem's* name at *Bonei Yerushalayim*, he goes back. If one remembered after that, but before beginning the next *Brachah*, he recites the extra *Brachah* as printed in some *Birkonim*. If one already began even

the first word (*Baruch*) of the next *Brachah*, one must begin *bentching* again. The *Harachaman* for *Chag* is recited in that order.

### 🕯️ HALLEL – SIMCHAT TORAH DAY (TUESDAY)

Full *Hallel* is recited. When reciting *Hallel*, one may not interrupt it – other than for those things that one may respond to during the *Brachot* of *Kriat Shema*. [I.e. If the *Chazzan* recites *Kedushah*, one responds *Kadosh*, *Baruch* and *Yimloch*. When the *Chazzan* says *HaE-I Hakadosh*, one answers *Amen*. When the *Chazzan* says *Modim*, one answers the three words *Modim Anachnu Lach*. When the *Chazzan* recites *Kaddish*, one answers *Amen Yehei Shmei* etc, and *Amen* to *D'Amiran B'Alma*. One also answers *Barchu* and *Amen* when the *Brachot* are recited before and after an *Aliyah* or *Haftorah*.]

It is preferable to recite *Hallel* with the *Minyan*. If one is not up to the *Minyan*, this creates a dilemma; on the one hand it is appropriate to recite *Hallel* with the congregation, and on the other hand, it is appropriate that one *davens* in the correct order.

If one forgot to recite *Hallel*, he should recite it with a *Brachah* any time he remembers, until sunset.

If one mistakenly recited half-*Hallel*, he must repeat the entire *Hallel* (without a *Brachah*).

### 🕯️ SHMINI ATZERET / SIMCHAT TORAH DAY

After *Shacharit*, it is customary to make *Kiddush* as a preparation for *Hakafot*. However, a full *Seudah* should not be eaten until after *Mussaf*. Some only make *Kiddush* after having an *Aliya*.

*Atah Haretah* is conducted in most communities in the same fashion as the previous night, together with seven separate *Hakafot*.

The Chabad custom is that the seven *Hakafot* are recited consecutively, without the *Gabbai* announcing the end of each *Hakafah*. The *Sifrei Torah* are held by the same people throughout, and they circle the *Bimah* three and a half times in total; half a circuit per *Hakafah*.

There is no singing and dancing until after the circuits are all completed. After the dancing and singing, the *Sifrei Torah* are returned to the *Aron Hakodesh*, which is then closed.

The *Aron Hakodesh* is reopened for *Kriat Hatorah*, and 3 *Sifrei Torah* are taken out.

During *Kriat Hatorah*, everyone receives an *Aliyah*. This can be achieved a number of ways:

- By forming a number of smaller *Minyanim*.
- By repeating the first five *Aliyot* multiple times, even though the entire *Minyan* has already heard these *Aliyot*. [Obviously, a *Minyan* must remain present and listen to *Kriah* the entire time.]
- Multiple people may be called up for each *Aliyah*; they all make the *Brachah* all together. The usual restriction of family members receiving consecutive *Aliyot* does not apply, and they may even ascend to the same *Aliyah*. For *Kohen*, only *Kohanim* participate. Similarly, for *Levi*, only *Levi'im* participate.

The last *Aliyah* before *Chattan Torah* is designated as "*Kol Hanearim*". All children

participate, and an adult receives the *Aliya* with them, making the *Brachah* on their behalf with a *Tallit* spread over all of them. [It is not the Chabad custom to recite “*Hamalach Hagoel*”. It is also not the Chabad custom to spread a *Tallit* over them, nor over the *Chattan Torah* and *Chattan Bereishit*.]

The *Chattan Torah* or *Chattan Bereishit* may be a *Kohen* or *Levi*. They may also be related to each other. One who received an *Aliyah* earlier may still receive one of these *Aliyot*. [However, the same person should not be called up for both *Chattan Torah* and *Chattan Bereishit* in the same *Minyan*.] Multiple people may be called up to these *Aliyot*.

The congregation stands for the last *Passuk* of the *Torah*, after which they all respond *Chazak Chazak v’Nitchazek*. The *Chattan Torah* responds as well.

During *Chattan Bereishit*, the congregation recites aloud – before the *Baal Koreh* – each *Passuk* that begins *Vayehi Erev*. At the last *Veyehi Erev*, the congregation reads from that *Passuk* until the end of the *Aliyah* out loud, followed by the *Baal Koreh*.

According to the Chabad custom, *Hagbah* is performed as usual, and not by reversing one’s hands and turning the *Torah* mid-air, which is the custom in most communities. Some have the custom to do *Hagbah* prior to *Leining*.

Each of the first two *Hagbahot* occur only after the next *Sefer Torah* has already been placed down.

If there are only two *Sifrei Torah*, the first *Sefer Torah* is reused for *Maftir*.

After *Haftorah*, the special *Piyuttim* printed in the *Siddur* are recited, and everyone sings and dances exuberantly.

There is a custom that the *Chattan Torah* and *Chattan Bereishit* sponsor a Kiddush in honor of the completion of the *Torah*.

### 🕯️ SHMINI ATZERET / SIMCHAT TORAH MUSSAF

Just before *Yizkor*, we should remember last year’s tragedy and remember those who were murdered just for being Jewish.

We should celebrate those who survived and we should celebrate those who went out to save lives and honor the dead.

Those rescue workers have been scarred for life and we need to remember their heroism and pray for their continued success and support.

*Yizkor* is recited before *Mussaf*. Those who leave the Shul for *Yizkor* may recite “*Av Harachamim*” after *Yizkor* if they wish to.

Needless to say, when davening *Mussaf*, one must be fit to stand before the King.

After the *Kaddish* before *Mussaf*, the *Gabbai* announces “*Mashiv HaRuach u’Moric HaGesheim*”. From that point onwards, one recites “*Mashiv HaRuach u’Moric HaGesheim*” in the *Amidah*.

If one heard this announcement before davening *Shacharit*, he recites “*Mashiv HaRuach u’Moric HaGesheim*” in the *Amidah* of *Shacharit* as well. This does not apply when one is davening *Shacharit* together with another *Minyan*. If one mistakenly said “*Moric HaTa*”, he continues the *Amidah* and doesn’t repeat it.



The *Chazzan* recites the special *Tefillah* of *Geshem* during *Chazarat Hashatz*. The congregation joins in for each of the six paragraphs that begins with *Zechor*. When the *Chazzan* concludes each of these paragraphs, everyone says the refrain out loud all together.

*Chag* ends at 6:44pm.

### 🕯️ SHABBAT BEREISHIT (SHABBAT MEVARCHIM)

Candles are lit at 5:28pm.

“Vi m’shtelt zich avek Shabbat Bereishit, azoy geit a gantz yohr” – As we conduct ourselves on *Shabbat Bereishit*,

so goes the rest of the year. There are different customs regarding the ending of some *Aliyot*. According to Chabad custom, *Chamishi* ends at *Perek 4 Passuk 22*, and *Shishi* ends at *Perek 5 Passuk 24*.

The *Molad* will be Wednesday Morning, 12:54am and 8 *Chalakim*. [*Rosh Chodesh Cheshvan* is Wednesday and Thursday.]

A *Kiddush* is conducted after *davening* in honor of *Shabbat Mevarchim* and *Shabbat Bereishit*.

*Tzidkotecha* is not recited. *Vihi Noam* and *V’atah Kaddosh* are recited on *Motzei Shabbat*, *Shabbat* ends at 6:44pm.







## The Jewish Weekly

Dear friends, can I have your attention for a second - especially the men.

Tonight, when you go with your family to Shul to sing,  
dance and rejoice on Simchat Torah.

Stop for a moment, open your eyes, and pay attention to those around you.  
Look for the boy standing there alone, the boy who came with his mother to  
Shul, the boy whose father may be celebrating elsewhere, with another family,  
is fighting for our safety, has been taken hostage, murdered, or left this world.

Bring him into the circle, put him on your shoulders,  
make him feel part of it.

Do not leave any child behind. Do not let anyone feel missed out.  
Give them at least one Hakafah at this big celebration.

It says

“ושמחת בחגך אתה ובנך ובתך ועבדך ואמתך והלוי והגר והיתום והאלמנה אשר בשעריך”  
אם אתה משמח את שלי, אני משמח את שלך -

“And you shall rejoice in your festival, you, and your son, and your daughter,  
and your manservant, and your maidservant, and the Levite, and the stranger,  
and the orphan, and the widow, who are within your cities.”  
- if you rejoice mine, I will rejoice yours”.

Chag Sameach  
With Love

*Yossie Frankel*



## A Very Special Simchat Torah Story

by Yitta Halberstam & Judith Levantl

It was a cold autumn day; the skies covered with the perpetual cloud of ash that hovered daily over Auschwitz. A group of fifty young yeshiva students were herded into the gas chambers, ostensibly for a cold shower. This was well enough into the history of Auschwitz that the cold truth of the cold showers was well known to the young men. They all knew that the nozzles would soon open and bathe them in a cascade of noxious fumes that would choke off their air supply and drain them of life.

The Nazi guards - gleefully awaiting the usual onset of panic, complete with frantic banging on the doors, desperate efforts to reach the sealed windows and futile clawing against bare walls - were surprised by this unique group. Just before the showers released their poison a young man addressed his friends.

"Brothers," he cried, "today is Simchat Torah, when the Jewish world rejoices having concluded their annual reading of the Torah. During our short lives we have tried to uphold the Torah to the best of our ability and now we have one last chance to do so.

"Before we die let us celebrate Simchat Torah one last time. We have nothing; no clothes to cover us or Torah with which to rejoice. But we have G-d who is surely here among us today. So let us dance with G-d Himself before we return our souls to Him."

With this, he placed his hand on his fellow's shoulder and fifty young men broke out in joyous dance, the song of "Purify our hearts to serve you with sincerity" on their lips. The bewildered Nazis stood just beyond the gas

chamber and could not understand the meaning of the incongruous celebration. The beastly commandant, who was accustomed to humiliated, broken Jews, could not countenance this spectacle of Jewish pride and flew into a rage.

Bursting into the chamber he grabbed the first boy and demanded to know the reason for the dance. Calmly, the boy replied, "We are celebrating our imminent departure from a world ruled by beasts such as you."

The commandant decided to put an immediate end to the festivities with a cruel announcement. "You think you will escape your tortuous existence in the peaceful gas chamber, but I will grant you a truly painful departure. I will spare you today, but tomorrow I will torture every bone in your bodies; I will slice your flesh till you expire." The commandant ordered the boys released from the gas chambers and housed in a barrack overnight.

Despite their fate, the boys celebrated Simchat Torah all night with joyous song and dance. They sanctified G-d's name by dedicating their last night to expressing gratitude for the privilege of their Jewishness and for the precious gift of the Torah.

Later that night, the boys were miraculously selected for transport to another camp by a high-ranking Nazi official who was not aware of their "crimes." This selection saved their lives and Auschwitz survivors testified that the entire group survived the Holocaust

# A Courageous Outrageous Topsy Simchat Torah Blessing

by Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

Rabbi Shneur Lipskar tells a moving story about his experience at the home of Rabbi Asher Tumarkin, the Chabad shliach (emissary) in Kazakhstan when he was a yeshiva student.

Lipskar, who lives in Jerusalem, traveled with two other Chabad yeshiva students to Karaganda, Kazakhstan for Tishrei in the year 5780 (Sept. 2019) to assist Rabbi Tumarkin, who arrived there in 2015 with his wife Rachel to establish Chabad of Karaganda.

"When we entered his home for the first time, I didn't see any children," Lipskar wrote. "After a few hours passed and no kids returned from school or child care, I suddenly understood that they don't have children, although they had been married already for almost ten years.

"The thought that they didn't have children struck me hard. How is it possible to run a Chabad house, to conduct classes and deliver lectures, to help Jews with the daily mitzvot and other good deeds, and then return to a childless home? A clean and neat house - too neat, no toys on the floor. No sleepless nights, no children to gently cover with his tallit during the priestly blessing. How is it possible?

"We spent the time building a sukkah in the courtyard, praying with the congregation and helping Jews to bless on and shake the lulav. And then came Simchat Torah. Back home we were used to enthusiastic crowds on Simchat Torah, but in Kazakhstan it wasn't like that. Mainly elderly Jews attended and it was quiet.

"But we didn't want to simply fulfill our obligation by dancing. We wanted to truly rejoice. So we began to drink and toast l'chaim ('To life!')- another cup and another cup and..., in between singing and taking turns to hold and hug the Torah scrolls.

"Afterward we had the festive holiday evening meal. The other two students sobered up somewhat. I didn't. Rav Asher said a short Torah interpretation. We sang some more and then I requested that we sing Yeladim by Eviatar Banai [a moving song about children by a well-known Israeli singer]. No one else knew it so I sang it by myself and everyone was quiet and listened.

The song is about children, on the emotional moment that one's child leaves to yeshiva boarding school with only his parents' prayers for well-being and success to accompany him. The song suddenly reminded me of the 'matter' that no one mentions. But I was drunk enough not to think about what's appropriate to say or not say.

"I shouted with great pain: 'Reb Asher, you are a good Jew! And you have a heart of gold! You could have been a stay-at-home Chabadnik in Kfar Chabad, but you chose the difficult path of being a shliach of the Rebbe in a distant, very foreign, Muslim land! You gave your whole life for the Rebbe! You deserve children!'

"There was silence. R' Asher turned white. but I continued to talk. 'We three are issuing a rabbinical ruling that you deserve a baby boy before the end of this new year. I swear to you that you and your wife will have a ben zachar within this year!'

"I then hugged him enthusiastically. R' Asher whispered 'Amen' with intense kavanah (focused intention), whereupon I was immediately carried to my room by my friends (where I threw up).

Lipskar concluded his story: "An hour ago I got a phone call from the two bochurim that were with me. After almost ten years with no children, a baby boy was born to R' Asher that day!

"And that day was exactly nine months since my shlichut mission in Kazakhstan."

*Reprinted from an email from KabbalaOnline.org.*

# The Women's Balcony

*by Sarah Shapiro*

One evening during the “intermediate days” of the festival of Sukkot, at the Simchat Beit HaSho’evah celebration held annually at Neve Yerushalayim, a Jerusalem women’s seminary, my daughters and I engaged in four or five hours of nonstop dancing. The booming loud music, provided as it is each year by a local women’s band, was earsplitting, irresistible, rhythmic, sometimes sweet and yearning. The women and girls, mostly strangers to each other, came in all ages, and for those uninhibited hours hundreds of us danced and danced and danced as if nothing else in the world existed but our feet, and our songs, and our exhilaration.

On the bus ride home late that night, as my littlest girl fell asleep on my lap and my teenagers talked with their friends, I thought of a Simchat Beit HaSho’evah celebration twenty-five years earlier, when a young Jewish woman, harboring some tender hopes and fervent questions, entered a synagogue. By herself in New York City, she had heard that on this night there would be dancing going on here, and she’d looked forward to it all week. She couldn’t wait to dance, she hoped to find a community that would embrace her, she wanted Jewish explanations for everything in her own life and on the planet. And last but not least, when she walked through those doors, she wanted G-d Himself to be there waiting for her.

From the women’s balcony of the 72nd Street Synagogue, I looked down upon the men dancing for a Jewish holiday I’d never heard of until that day. Fathers held children aloft on their shoulders as they circled around and around and around; small girls and boys dashed in and out of the delighted procession. These self-inclusive families were everywhere, it seemed. The music was fast and loud and catchy. Outside there was thunder and lightning and cold. In here it was warm and bright.

“I’d like to know why the women aren’t dancing with the men.”

I tapped my foot and looked around discreetly at the women occupying the tiered benches, and when I couldn’t stand it any longer, sidled over to the sedate-looking lady seated a bit to my left. I had recently started recognizing these people’s well-coiffed wigs; this woman had on a brown one, and a little round hat atop that. “Excuse me, can I ask you something?”

“Yes?” She turned her head partway. She appeared, I thought, to be some sort of European, in her early thirties: trim, no-nonsense, attractively even-featured, attired in a navy blue suit with a lacy white collar.

Next to her I felt unkempt, but it was the disorderliness of my ravenous heart I had to hide. “Excuse me, could you tell me—”

“Yes?”

“I’d like to know why the women aren’t dancing with the men.”

She stared with large hazel eyes. Her chin drew in. The pretty girl at her side, who I supposed was her daughter, around twelve, with glossy auburn braids, leaned forward slightly and surveyed me with guarded curiosity. I felt like a wild-hearted monster compared to these two. “The English,” the woman said. “I am sorry, I do not know to speak Engl—”

I repeated the question, not trying this time to conceal the hard edge beneath my words.

One, two. A few moments stood between us. Then: “You should speak to my husband. He is a rabbi. He will know how to answer you very good, he knows better to talk than I. Wait after downstairs and I will bring him.”



Afterwards, in the wood-paneled anteroom, I waited. A cloakroom was on one side, an oaken stairway on the other. Girls and women and little children were all coming down the stairs with a lot of conversation and noise, men and boys and more little children were exiting out of some hallway to my right, everyone was getting their coats and wraps. Families reunited, the place gradually emptied out, and I was alone. Suddenly an opaque glass door opened up and a black-suited, bearded man with a large black yarmulka stepped forth. As the door shut behind him, I caught a fast glimpse of the brightly lit synagogue proper within.

He stood before me, wary. Was I scaring these people?

"Yes," he said, "my wife tells me—" Also a European, it seemed, from some vague country like Belgium. "You want to know about the dancing?"

A sudden bitter irritation twisted inside me. This husband, this rabbi of hers, better prove women weren't second-class citizens, after all, in this whole get-up. And heaven help him if he couldn't give me an answer, pronto.

"Right. I want to know why the women aren't allowed to dance with the men." My anger sounded to my own ears flat, cool, confident, the way I wanted it. "They should enjoy themselves, too."

The man drew himself to his full height and looked down upon me with chin upraised. Now I understand: he was trying quickly to calculate what should be said in response. What would be of most benefit to this sad girl with the scared eyes? Is she from a Reform congregation? Is she one of those feminists? "The women do not need to dance, because they are on a higher level than the men." He squinted a little, trying to hit the right note with this hostile, melancholy American Jewess. He hoped to. "Do angels need to dance?"

Something opened up within me, some channel. I wanted to believe . . . him? The anger melted for a moment in my desire, the desire which had brought me to this painful place in the first place, where I felt impure and unworthy. Do angels need to dance? I tried to take it in. He's saying I don't need to dance, because I'm an angel. Their lives and mine were hardly on the same planet

But it was hard to keep my feet still.

Therefore, I'm unangelic?

I wish I were angelic.

"Do angels need to dance" . . . It sounds like a compliment. It's surely a compliment. But not for me? Because I need to dance?

I wanted . . . something, and waited for more.

The rabbi, however, seemed to have completed what he had to say, and expected me, apparently, to go now.

Out I stepped into the wet Manhattan night, with his answer in my emptied heart.

Speeding along in this bus now, two decades down the road, a sorrow seized me for that child, almost as if she were a daughter to me rather than myself. I wished the well-meaning rabbi and his wife had told me that, of course, separate dancing by women is permitted, and explained honestly why women can watch men as they dance but not vice versa. I wished they'd convinced me that although none of us is an angel, I too would fly one day; and that sometimes I'd even transcend the prison of my human limitations by restricting myself according to halachah (Torah law).

I wished that, somehow, they had known how to make me feel included, that cold and rainy night, rather than ostracized.

But how could such things reasonably be expected? Culturally speaking, their lives and mine weren't taking place on the same planet. Just as mine hadn't prepared me in any fashion for them, theirs had in no way prepared them for relating to modern young American women. And in those years, there were no women's seminars yet in Manhattan, designed to speak my language.

As familiar shadows of Jerusalem rushed by in the darkness, it struck me, though, that even if the rabbi and his wife had given me those frank replies, perhaps I wouldn't have had ears to hear. The whole notion of separation of men and women would probably have seemed to me so old-fashioned and oppressive and strange that I might have rejected uncompromised truth, had it been proffered.

G-d Himself was waiting for me, however, just as I had hoped. A few weeks later, one of the couples in the neighborhood invited me to a Friday night meal. When the woman lit two candles for Shabbat and covered her eyes, I found the sight so very beautiful, and was so touched that this was a Jewish ritual, part of my own heritage, that I sat right down, took out my drawing pad, and executed an exquisite charcoal line drawing of the candles and their burning flames.

She said nothing. I sat there, blithely unaware that I was doing anything wrong, and drew my picture—until she distracted me with her baby (she saw that her guest was a newborn, too)—and felt that perhaps this world could be mine, after all. I was on my way.

*Reprinted from an email from Chabad.org Magazine.*

**Do you enjoy**  
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The image shows a hand holding a copy of 'The Jewish Weekly' magazine. The magazine cover features a portrait of a man and the headline 'It Once Happened'. In the background, there is a plate of food, possibly challah, on a wooden table.



# Times for Shabbat & Chag

All times listed are for Jerusalem only  
as per [www.myzmanim.com](http://www.myzmanim.com)

## Tishrei 5786 - 2025

### First day Rosh Hashana

Candle Lighting	5:59pm
Sof Zman Kriat Shma	
Magen Avraham	8:53am
Gra / Baal Hatanya	9:29am
Sunset - שקיעה	6:38pm
Motzei Chag	7:11pm

### Second day Rosh Hashana

Candle Lighting	after 7:12pm
Sof Zman Kriat Shma	
Magen Avraham	8:53am
Gra / Baal Hatanya	9:29am
Sunset - שקיעה	6:37pm
Motzei Chag	7:10pm

### Tzom Gedalia

Fast starts	5:17am
Sof Zman Kriat Shma	
Magen Avraham	8:53am
Gra / Baal Hatanya	9:29am
Sunset - שקיעה	6:35pm
Fast Ends Tukaccinsky	6:59pm

### Shabbat Shuvah

Candle Lighting	5:54pm
Sof Zman Kriat Shma	
Magen Avraham	8:54am
Gra / Baal Hatanya	9:30am
Sunset - שקיעה	6:33pm
Motzei Shabbat	7:06pm

### Yom Kippur

Candle Lighting	5:48pm
Sof Zman Kriat Shma	
Magen Avraham	8:54am
Gra / Baal Hatanya	9:31am
Sunset - שקיעה	6:26pm
Motzei Chag	6:59pm

### Shabbat Haazinu

Candle Lighting	5:45pm
Sof Zman Kriat Shma	
Magen Avraham	8:55am
Gra / Baal Hatanya	9:31am
Sunset - שקיעה	6:24pm
Motzei Shabbat	6:57pm

### First day Sukkot

Candle Lighting	5:41pm
Sof Zman Kriat Shma	
Magen Avraham	8:55am
Gra / Baal Hatanya	9:31am
Sunset - שקיעה	6:20pm
Motzei Chag	6:53pm

### Second day Sukkot (for Chutznikim)

Candle Lighting	after 6:54pm
Sof Zman Kriat Shma	
Magen Avraham	8:55am
Gra / Baal Hatanya	9:32am
Sunset - שקיעה	6:19pm
Motzei Chag	6:52pm

### Shabbat Chol Hamoed

Candle Lighting	5:36pm
Sof Zman Kriat Shma	
Magen Avraham	8:56am
Gra / Baal Hatanya	9:32am
Sunset - שקיעה	6:15pm
Motzei Shabbat	6:48pm

### Shmini Atzeret Simchat Torah

Candle Lighting	5:33pm
Sof Zman Kriat Shma	
Magen Avraham	8:57am
Gra / Baal Hatanya	9:33am
Sunset - שקיעה	6:12pm
Motzei Chag	6:45pm

### Simchat Torah

(for Chutznikim)

Candle Lighting	after 6:46pm
Sof Zman Kriat Shma	
Magen Avraham	8:57am
Gra / Baal Hatanya	9:33am
Sunset - שקיעה	6:11pm
Motzei Chag	6:44pm

### Shabbat Bereishit

Candle Lighting	5:28pm
Sof Zman Kriat Shma	
Magen Avraham	8:58am
Gra / Baal Hatanya	9:34am
Sunset - שקיעה	6:07pm
Motzei Shabbat	6:40pm

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