

במחשבת

The Way of Emunah

Collected Thoughts
on the Weekly Parshah

From

**Rabbi Meir Isamar
Rosenbaum shlita**

Rosh Hashanah

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Rosh Hashanah



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Mechilas Avonos

Hashem Asks Us to Forgive Him:

The Ruzhiner Rebbe zy"ra (quoted in Sefer Ner Yisroel) once said that it is a great kindness from Hashem that He established Rosh Hashanah on Rosh Chodesh, the first day of Tishrei. He explained that we really do not have the right to be audacious enough to ask Hashem to forgive us for our many sins. However, the Gemara says (Chulin 60B) that on Rosh Chodesh, Hashem asks us to forgive him, so to speak, for making the moon smaller. Since He asks us for forgiveness on this day, we can ask him on Rosh Chodesh to forgive us as well.

We say to him, "**Ribono Shel Olam, we forgive You, and we ask You to forgive us as well!**"

He uses this idea to explain the words of Tehillim (130:3-4) that

we recite in the Rosh Hashanah prayers: "Hashem, if You keep our sins, who will stand?

For forgiveness is with You, in order that You be feared." We say to Him: If You keep our sins and do not forgive us, we will be unable to stand. However, "forgiveness is with You", meaning that He too asks for forgiveness on this day. Therefore, we also can ask Him to forgive us.

Hashem Can Forgo His Honor:

Sefer Sharsheres Hazahav relates that a wealthy *chasid* named R' Moshe Barron z"l from the city of Old Constantine in the Zhitomir region once was in the city of Brisk for Rosh Hashanah, and he went to daven in the bais medrash of the Rov of the city, Rav Yosef Dov

Soloveitchik *zt"l*. After davening, Rav Yosef Dov walked over to him and said, “*Poilisher chasid*, please tell me a *vort* or story of the Baal Shem Tov *zy”a*.”

Rav Moshe told him the following *vort* that he had heard in the name of Baal Shem Tov: There is a custom to recite “L’Dovid Mizmor” (Tehillim 74) after Maariv on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. This chapter of Tehillim is said in a special *nusach* and with much enthusiasm, and is recited line by line by the chazan, followed by the *tzibur*.

The Baal Shem Tov explained the reason for this custom by citing the Gemara (Kiddushin 31A) that says that a Nasi, a father or a Rov may forgo their honor, but a king may not. He said that the reason for this is because the honor a Nasi, father or Rov has is granted to them by

people. Since it “belongs to them”, they may choose to forgo it.

A king, on the other hand, is granted his *kavod* by Hashem. This is seen from the blessing one makes upon seeing a king, which is “*shechalak m’kvodo l’kavod basar v’dom*” – that Hashem gives some of His *kavod* to a flesh and blood king (Brachos 58A). This means that a king’s honor does not belong to him, rather it belongs to Hashem, and he has no right to forgo it.

According to this, one may ask how anyone can ask Hashem to forgive him for *aveiros bein odom l’Makom*. A king cannot forgive his honor, so how can we ask our King, Hashem, to do so?

For this reason, we recite L’Dovid Mizmor on the night of Rosh Hashanah, in which we say that He rules over the entire

world and we cry out to Him that since He is the one who is “the King of honor”, meaning that all honor belongs to Him, He has the right to forgo His honor and to forgive us.

When the Rov of Brisk heard this, he declared that **only the Baal Shem Tov could say such an incredible explanation!**

Hashem Forgives Little by Little:

Chazal say (Vayikroh Rabbah 30:7) that on Erev Rosh Hashanah, Hashem forgives Klal Yisroel for a third of our sins, during the Aseres Yemei Teshuva, He forgives us for another third, and on Hoshanah Rabbah, He forgives the final third. The Meforshim ask why He forgives us little by little, rather than forgiving all of our sins before Rosh Hashanah.

The Bas Ayin (Drush L'Erev Rosh Hashanah) explains with a *moshol* of a man who owed his friend 300 gold coins but didn't even have one coin to his name. He wasn't audacious enough to ask him to forgive the entire loan but he knew that he had no way of paying his friend back. When the lender saw him, he understood the situation and he felt bad for him, so he told him that he forgave one-third of the amount owed.

Once the borrower heard this, he realized that the lender was a kind and merciful man, and that he could ask him to forgive even more of the loan. The next time he saw him, he asked him to forgive another one-third of the loan, and he agreed. Once he agreed to this, the next time the borrower saw him, he was able to ask him to forgive the remainder of the debt.

So too, Hashem forgives us

little by little so that we should realize that He is kind and merciful and we can continue to

daven to Him and ask Him to forgive the remainder of our debt to Him.

The Tefillos of Rosh Hashana:

Saying the Tefillos with Kavanah:

Sefer Yosher Divrei Emes (Ois 56) writes in regards to the *tefillos* of Rosh Hashanah: “Everyone recites the prayers with much *hisorerus* but the most enthusiasm is for the *piyyutim* and new prayers that are only said on the Yomim Noraim. The *tefillos* of Pesukei D’Zimrah, Korbanos, Shema and Shemonah Esrei are said quickly, just like they are said all year long. People fail to realize that these are the main prayers and the rest is ‘add-ons’, and the added prayers can only be accepted if the main prayers are said properly. One could see this from the actions of Rav Menachem Mendel of

Premishlan *zt”l*, who treated the main prayers as the main thing.”

Uplifting All of the Tefillos:

He continues: “Especially on this awesome day of Rosh Hashanah, one must concentrate on the meaning of the words and letters. **In this way, one uplifts all prayers recited improperly throughout the year, as is stated in many Sefarim.**”

Our Lives Depend on Tefillah:

The *pasuk* states (Bereishis 6:18): “And you shall come to the *teiva*, you, your sons, and

your wife.” Sefer Ginzei Yosef (Satanov, Parshas Ki Savo) quotes the Magid of Mezheritzh zy”a as explaining this to mean that a person should recognize that his life, as well as the lives of his wife and children, depend on how he approaches “the *teiva*”, which is a reference to *tefillah*. He adds that **this is especially true on the Yomim Noraim, when our lives literally depend on how we recite the *tefillos*.**

Davening With Tears:

In addition to davening with *kavanah*, our *tefillos* should be with copious tears. This is because the gates of tears never close, and prayers said with tears are able to break through the Heavens and reach Hashem’s Throne of Glory.

One year on Rosh Hashanah, the Tzemach Tzedek of

Lubavitch zy”a was sick in bed, and he davened in his private room with a minyan of only him and nine other men. After the blowing of the shofar, when it was time to start Tefilas Mussaf, the *mispalelim* looked at each other, wondering who would daven for the *amud*. One of them pointed to the *shochet*, R’ Shimon, and gestured that he was fitting to serve as the Shliach Tzibur. Since it is forbidden to talk after the *tekios*, he only motioned with his hands, but did not say a word.

In response, Rav Shimon gestured with his hands that he couldn’t daven for the *amud* because he wasn’t familiar with the *nusach* that was used there. However, the Tzemach Tzedek motioned to him that he should do it anyway. Of course, he could not refuse the Rebbe, so he went up to serve as the chazan for Mussaf.

As soon as he reached the *amud*, he broke out in tears and he was unable to stop crying until the end of davening. Afterwards, the Rebbe said to him, **“Why did you claim that you couldn’t daven for the *amud*? You davened very well!”**

Davening With Humility:

Another important aspect of *tefillah* is to daven with a broken heart. The Dzikover Rebbe *zy”a* related that the Tzemach Tzadik of Vizhnitz *zy”a* was once reciting the Selichos on Erev Rosh Hashanah aloud when he came to the words, *“Im he’evu pnei malkam b’azus panim u’metzach.”* (If the king’s face was disfigured from your audacity.) Suddenly, one of those present shouted, “Rebbe, this is referring to me!”

It is also related that in his great humility, the Kобрiner Rebbe *zy”a* aroused the *tzibur* to see their own lowly state and to recognize how far they had all become distanced from Hashem. One year, as he was davening for the *amud* on Rosh Hashanah, he came to the words *“l’hafnos ailecha kol rishei aretz”* (to turn to you all the wicked of the land), and he cried out, **“Me too! Me too!”**

He became so excited that several men near him fainted and water had to be spilled on them to revive them.

The Neshamos Join Our Tefillos:

The Chasam Sofer *zy”a* writes (Drashos Chasam Sofer, Chelek 2, page 350) that on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, *neshamos* of the Avos and of

tzadikim who have already left this world come back to join us in our prayers.

This explains the statement of Chazal (Rosh Hashanah 32B) that the Heavenly angels say to Hashem, “Why don’t the Jewish people say Shira on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur?” Hashem replies, “The book of life and the book of death are

open before me, and they should say Shira?”

He explains that although the dead daven with us, and their *tefillos* are effective, they cannot say Shira until *techiyas hameisim*, as there is a rule that “the dead cannot praise Hashem.” Thus, we cannot say Shira either because the dead are amongst us.

Tekias Shofar

The 100 Kolos Make the Difference:

The Bais Aharon of Karlin *zy”a* explained the words we recite “*l’hogeh dayos badin*” by citing the well known expression “whoever has the *maya* (money) has the *daya* (opinion).” Accordingly, we are saying that **through the *maya* (100) kolos of the shofar, we become the people who have “*daya*”, and we can determine (*hogeh*) that the judgment will be good.**

Hashem Forgives One Who Admits his Sins Between the Tekios:

The Kamarna Rov *zy”a* writes in Sefer Zohar Chai that only Hashem has the power to forgive us of our sins, as no *bais din* is able to do this. He says that between the *tekios*, one should be silent and confess his sins in his heart, and, if one does so, **Hashem Himself will say: “*Salachti.*” I forgive you!**

The Tekios Can Atone For Everything:

The *pasuk* (Tehillim 89:16) states: “Fortunate is the nation that know the blowing of the shofar; Hashem, may they walk in the light of Your face.” The Medrash (Vayikroh Rabbah 29:4) states: Rebbe Yoshiah said: Do the other nations of the world not know how to blow a shofar? Don’t they also have horns? Why does it call Klal Yisroel “the nation who knows the blowing of the shofar”? The answer is that Klal Yisroel knows how to use the blowing to get Hashem to get up from His throne and change a decree from strict judgment to mercy. Through the blowing, He becomes filled with compassion.

Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz *zy”a*, explains that it says in Rav Sholom Sharaby’s *Sefer Nahar Sholom* that **the time of *tekias* shofar is such an auspicious**

time that we can then rectify an entire year’s worth of problems.

This is hinted to in the Medrash that notes that regarding all other Korban Mussafs the *pasuk* uses the word “*vehikravtem*”, and you shall bring close, but by the Mussar of Rosh Hashanah, it says “*v’asisem osah*”, and you shall make it. The Medrash says that Hashem told Klal Yisroel: My children, I consider it as if you “were made” by me today. I consider you to be a new creation today. This means that Hashem turns us into a new creation, and we are once again perfect and pure. This is why the time of *tekias* shofar is such an auspicious time. It is a time when we can fix everything! At that time, we become new people, and we are returned to our natural state of perfection.

This is hinted to in the Medrash when it says that we use the

shofar to “get Hashem to change a decree.” **Through the shofar, we become a new person, and this finds us favor in Hashem’s eyes.**

In this vein, the Divrei Yechezkel quotes the Arizal as saying that during every day of the Aseres Yemei Teshuva, one can atone for every *aveirah* he did during that day of the week throughout the previous year. If this is true, one may ask why we need ten days of *teshuva*. Wouldn’t one week be enough?

He answers that on Rosh Hashanah, the main thing is to crown Hashem as our King, rather than to think about our sins. During those two days, we should think of ourselves like newborn babies who have no sins and can focus on glorifying Hashem. After crowning Hashem as King, we have one week to atone for all of our sins of the year, and we then have

Yom Kippur to complete our purification.

Atoning for the Wayward:

Sefer Ohel Shlomo (page 45, Ois 3) quotes the Yid Hakadosh of Peshischa zy”a as saying that the word “shofar” is an acronym for “*shoresh poreh rosh v’la’annah.*” (This is an expression used for someone who has fallen to a low level of sin.) The meaning of this is that **even someone who has fallen to a very low level can be uplifted by the shofar.**

The Tekios Uplift the Tefillos:

Sefer Tiferes Shlomo explains the *bracha* of “*l’shmoa kol shofar*” (to hear the voice of the shofar) by citing the Gemara (Rosh Hashanah 27B) that says

that “all *kolos* (voices) are kosher for the shofar.” This can be understood to mean that the shofar uplifts the voices of all the *tefillos* of the entire year, as well as all of the Torah and mitzvos that were not done with full devotion.

Accordingly, we recite the words “*l’shoma kol shofar*” because the word “*l’shmoa*” can mean “to gather” (as in 1 Shmuel 15:4: “*Vayishma Shaul es ha’am.*” And Shaul gathered the nation). **We are saying that the shofar has the power to gather together all of the Torah, mitzvos and *tefillos* of the entire year that were unable to ascend until now and to uplift them so that they can rise up.**

With this idea, he explains the verse (Devarim 11:12): “The eyes of Hashem your G-d are upon it from the beginning of the year until the end of the year.” This means that the shofar takes

all of the *tefillos* uttered from the beginning of the year until the end and uplifts them.

Confusing the Satan:

Tosafos states (Rosh Hashanah 16A) in the name of the Yerushalmi that when the Satan hears the sound of the shofar for the first time, he becomes confused and frightened and when he hears it the second time, he says that this must be the shofar of the *geulah* and he is about to be killed. Therefore, he has no time to make accusations against Klal Yisroel.

Rav Bunim of Peshischa zy”a explains that by confusing the Satan we are teaching him a lesson. We show him that when he is confused and disconcerted from a relatively small thing like the blowing of the shofar, he loses his sense of reason and can’t make sensible decisions.

We then ask him how he could possibly judge the Jewish people badly. We are forced to run around for *parnassah* and are

full of worries and confusion all day... so how could he try to judge us negatively?

Sheyirbeh Zechuyoseinu

The Avos and Moshe Rabenu Increase Our Merits:

In Sefer Degel Machaneh Efraim it is stated as follows: "I once stood before him (the Baal Shem Tov *zy"ra*) on Motzoei Rosh Hashanah, and he told me what had happened there (in the Upper Worlds on Rosh Hashanah). He related that 'the fathers of the world' were standing before the King of Judgment. I can't recall if he said that all of the Seven Shepherds were there or just Avrohom, Yitzchok and Yaakov. He said that they presented Him with the merits of Klal Yisroel. Moshe Rabenu was also there and he was acting as the

middleman, turning this way and that and taking the merits, and he was using his wisdom and all types of tactics to ensure that the prosecutors do not come with the sins."

The Tzadikim Steal the Chovos:

Sefer Toldos Kedushas Levi relates that Rav Levi Yitzchok of Berditchov *zy"ra* once had an "*aliyas neshama*" on Rosh Hashanah. When he awoke from his vision, he related that he ascended to the Heavens and saw a large chamber that was being used as a place of judgment for Klal Yisroel. He saw that the Satan and his minions were very

busy. They were hurrying to bring many bundles full of *aveiros*, and the pile they were making kept getting bigger and bigger.

He looked around and saw that no one was there to defend Klal Yisroel other than himself. Although it was almost impossible to stand before the legions of prosecuting angels who were guarding the huge pile of *aveiros*, he found a way to get around them. He looked to his right and saw the door to Gan Eden, the resting place of the Avos and all *tzadikim*. He looked to his left and saw the door to *gehenim*, with its raging fires. When the prosecuting angels got busy with a new bundle of *aveiros*, he ran and picked up all of the bundles he could hold and threw them into *gehenim*, where they were burnt to a crisp.

When the Satan returned and saw that the *aveiros* he had

collected for an entire year had been stolen, he screamed loudly. He looked at Rav Levi Yitzchok and realized that only he could have done such a thing. He grabbed him by his collar and led him to the Heavenly Bais Din and said, "I caught a thief."

The Bais Din ruled that according to the Torah, if someone cannot repay what he stole, he must be sold as a slave. Therefore, they said that Rav Levi Yitzchok must be sold into slavery.

This caused a tremendous outcry in the Upper Worlds. The Avos and the *tzadikim* left their places in Gan Eden to purchase Rav Levi Yitzchok in order to redeem him. However, the Satan kept raising the price. Whenever the *tzadikim* made an offer, he demanded more. Hashem Himself then arose and said that He would pay the highest possible price. He said, "**I own**

the entire world and I will purchase him!”

Hashem thus purchased Rav Levi Yitzchok, making him His slave.

Rav Levi Yitzchok concluded, “This was the *paytan*’s intention with the words ‘*l’tzofeh ni’staros bayom din, l’koneh avadav badin, l’rachem amo badin*’ (to investigate the hidden on the Day of Judgment, so purchase His slaves with justice, to have mercy on His nation with justice). When *aveiros* are stolen by *tzadikim* and hidden on the Day of Judgment, Hashem investigates and purchases them as a show of mercy to His nation.

He also used this story to explain the *pasuk* (Tehillim 32:1): “Praised is He who shows favoritism, covers the sins.” Chazal (Yalkut Shimon) say on this *pasuk* that on Yom Kippur, the Satan wants to bring

accusations against Klal Yisroel and he lists their sins, but Hashem says, “The Jews are thieves”, and He lists their merits.

Rav Levi Yitzchok explains that *tzadikim* steal the documents that record the sins of Klal Yisroel and hide them from the Satan. On Yom Kippur, the Satan lists the sins but Hashem asks to see the records. When he cannot find them because they were stolen, Hashem says that Klal Yisroel are thieves, as they stole the records of the sins.

Hashem Silences the Prosecutors:

We recite in the Rosh Hashanah davening: “And everyone believes that He answers quietly.” The Rebbe of Radzimin *zy”a* said at his *tish* on the night of Rosh Hashanah that this

should be read as saying that when the Satan brings accusations against Klal Yisroel, Hashem answers, **“Quiet... Don’t say anything!”**

Eating Sweets to Annul the Prosecutors:

Sefer Emunas Yisroel explains the minhag to eat honey and sweet foods on Rosh Hashanah, as well as the reason we are happy and confident that we will be judged favorably, by quoting a *moshol* from the Magid of Trisk zy”a: There once was a princess who was expecting a baby. When it came time for the birth, the king’s enemies put a magic spell on her that prevented the baby from coming out. When the king asked his advisors what to do, they told him to shoot off cannons as a sign of celebration, which was done whenever a baby was born in the king’s

household. When the enemies saw that the king was celebrating, they thought that their spell had not worked, so they stopped doing it.

So too, on Rosh Hashanah we eat sweets and we act joyfully so that the Satan should see this and think that we have already been judged favorably. Therefore, he will stop trying to harm us and he will leave us alone.

Judging Tzadikim With Accidental Sinners:

Rav Yaakov Yisroel of Charkas zy”a once became very enthusiastic on Rosh Hashanah and defended Klal Yisroel by quoting the *pasuk* (Tehillim 1:5): “Therefore, the wicked shall not stand up in judgment, nor shall the sinners in the congregation of the righteous.” He translated this verse to mean that the wicked – meaning those who sin

intentionally – will not be able to stand in judgment at all. However, the “sinners” – meaning those who sinned accidentally – should be “in the congregation of the righteous” – they should be judged together with the *tzadikim* and found worthy.

Davening for Parnasah:

The *pasuk* states (Bereishis 21:25): “And Avrohom chastised Avimelech in regards to the well of water that the servants of Avimelech stole.” Sefer Ahavas Shalom (on Rosh Hashanah) writes that this verse hints to the three set times when one should daven for *parnasah*. These times are: 1. On Pesach, when it is decided how much wheat will grow that year. 2. On Shavuot, when it is decided how much fruit will grow that year. 3. On Rosh Hashanah, when we are all

judged for the year.

The *pasuk* says that Avrohom chastised “Avi Melech”, which literally means “the Father, the King.” Thus, it is saying that he spoke to Hashem about “the well of water that the servants of Avi Melech stole.” This can be understood to mean that Avrohom asked Him why He allows the nation of the world to have so much sustenance.

The verse continues to say that “Avi Melech”, i.e., Hashem, replies: “I don’t know who did this thing. And also you did not tell (*lo higadeta*) me.” **This is a reference to the Hagadah Shel Pesach.** Avi Melech then says: “And also I (*anochi*) did not hear.” **This a reference to Shavuot, when we read the Aseres Hadibros, which begin with the word “Anochi”.** Avi Melech then says: “Except for today...” This is a reference to the day of Rosh Hashanah. In

other words, Hashem is saying that we only ask for *parnassah* on Rosh Hashanah, and not on the two other designated times, and that is the cause of our problems.

Living All Year Like It's Rosh Hashanah:

Rav Pinchos of Koritz *zy"ta* (quoted in Imrei Pinchos, Moadim, Ois 121) would say that Rosh Hashanah is the blueprint for the entire year. The way one acts on Rosh Hashanah is the way he will be treated all year. He would say that this is the reason we do not eat sour-tasting foods on Rosh Hashanah. We do not want to have a "sour taste in our mouths" all year.

For this reason, Rav Pinchos would not deliver a *drasha* before *tekios*, as he was concerned that he might inadvertently say something

improper, and this could have an effect on his entire year. He would say that on Rosh Hashanah, one should speak as little as possible, limiting his words to Torah and tefillah.

He also compared Rosh Hashanah to build a house. Before one builds a house, he has to draw the plans, and the house is built according to those plans. So too, on Rosh Hashanah we draw the plans for the entire year.

I Wish I Was in Sanz:

The custom amongst *chasidim* is to spend the Yomim Noraim in the presence of *tzadikim*. It is related that one year on Rosh Hashanah, Rav Eliezer of Dzikov *zy"ta* was sitting at his *tish*, surrounded by his holy sons and *chasidim*, when he signed and said, "If I were an *ehrlicher* Yid, I would be in Sanz right

now!”

After the *seudah*, his sons asked him why he made the *chasidim* feel bad. They had left their families and spent a lot of money to travel to be with him,

and they felt bad when they heard their Rebbe say that he wished he were somewhere else. Rav Eliezer replied, “What do you want from me? Do you want me to lie even on this holy night?”

Tashlich

Hashem Hides the Sins: are turned into merits.

The *pasuk* states (Micha 7:19): “And cast off into the waves of the sea, all of their sins.” Sefer Imrei Yehuda (Brezhan, Parshas Beshalach) quotes the Magid of Zlotchov zy”a as asking why the sins should be thrown into the sea, rather than being eradicated from the world altogether.

He answers by quoting the Gemara (Yoma 89B) that says that when does *teshuva* out of fear, his intentional sins are transformed into accidental sins, whereas when one does *teshuva* out of love, his intentional sins

Accordingly, Hashem does not completely discard our sins. Rather, he hides them in the sea so that they can be transformed into merits when we do *teshuva*. This can be compared to a person who covers a candle with a cup so as to block the light, but when he wants to see the light, he can always take off the cup. If he would extinguish the fire, however, the light would be lost and he would be unable to get it back when he needs it.

On Rosh Hashanah, we do *teshuva* out of fear of the Day of

Judgment. Therefore, our intentional sins are transformed into accidental sins. However, we still possess those unintentional sins. We then go to *tashlich* and throw the sins into the sea, asking Hashem to keep them there until we can turn them into merits. On Purim, when we accept the Torah and do *teshuva* out of love (Shabbos 88A), those sins are turned into merits. On Pesach, we return to the water and reclaim those sins, which are now merits. For this reason, the water we draw for Pesach is called “*mei mitzvah*”.

The Maskil Who Did Teshuva:

There once was a *maskil* who would mock Rav Yissochor Dov of Belz zy”a and say that he was not at all impressed by him. The *chasidim* told him to go see how he says *tashlich* and then let

them know if he still felt the same way.

He went to *tashlich* and stood on the opposite side of the river with a smirk on his face. But when he saw the Rebbe throw his *gartel* from side to side and beginning to cry out the words “*Mi Keil komocha*” in the *nusach* of Belz, he too began to cry. He fell to the ground in fear and ultimately did full *teshuva*.

May we all merit a Kesiva V’Chasima Tova and a sweet New Year.



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Every week, Lachmei Mordechai supports 145 families of widows/widowers and over 400 orphans in the city of Bait Shemesh by providing them with meat, fish, and many other food staples, delicacies, which are delivered straight to their door.

Hashem Yisborach guarantees that He will bring joy to those who bring joy to His children.

This is the best possible insurance policy for children, livelihood, health and peace of mind.

Sponsor the cost of sending a package of meat, fish and food staples for a widowed and orphaned family in Bait Shemesh and Hashem promises to send you whatever salvation you need!

A one-week sponsorship for one family's food package is \$200