



**AHAVAT ACHIM**  
 קהלת אהבת אחים  
 THE FAMILY SHUL

NITZAVIM | SEPT 3 - SEPT 10, 2021 | 26 ELUL - 4 TISHREI | CANDLE LIGHTING 7:07 PM | HAVDALAH 8:09 PM

**SHABBAT**

<b>FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 3</b>	
SHACHARIT	6:30 AM
EARLIEST CANDLE LIGHTING	6:04 PM
MINCHA	7:10 PM
CANDLE LIGHTING	7:07 PM
<b>SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 4</b>	
HASHKAMA	8:15 AM
SHACHARIT	9:00 AM
LAST KRIAT SHMA	9:41 AM
MINCHA	6:55 PM
MAARIV/HAVDALAH	8:09 PM

אב הרחמים is recited at Mussaf  
 צדקתך צדק is recited at Mincha

**IN OUR FAMILY**

This week's bulletin is dedicated in honor of Lori and David Garfunkel's 40th anniversary by Seymour Wigod. Here's to many more!

Please contact David Garfunkel if you wish to sponsor a kiddush or seudat shlishit.

To sponsor a celebration for your child's birthday at Shabbat groups email [kira.batist.msw@gmail.com](mailto:kira.batist.msw@gmail.com)! \$25 per family.

**THIS SHABBAT**

The COVID-19 committee met and made a few additions to existing COVID-19 protocols to hopefully help make the shul experience comfortable for everyone. These are (1) everyone at the bimah during leining is required to wear a mask and (2) a few tables on the men's side of davening will be designated as "mask only" tables. It is important to reiterate that ALL unvaccinated individuals, including children two years and above, **MUST** wear a properly fitting mask at all times (no exceptions) while indoors on Shul premises.

The Hashkama minyan will be located in the main sanctuary starting at 8:15 am. Until the air conditioning is repaired, the main minyan will take place in the David Schwitzer <sup>ע"ה</sup> Social Hall.

Groups for children ages 0-5 are held in the parking lot from 10:15a-11:15a. Groups for kids 6 and up will resume this week in the shul parking lot at 10:15 AM. We can't wait to see you!

Going forward, Kiddush will be held outdoors. In order for this to work, everyone is asked to help setting up for and cleanup up from Kiddush.

The pre-mincha Shemita shiur will be held in the David Schwitzer <sup>ע"ה</sup> Social Hall at 6:35pm.

Seudat shlishit is sponsored by the Agress family to commemorate Amy's fathers yahrzeit: Rav Yisroel Yehuda Ben Ephraim Michal Ha'Levi Pruzansky ז"ל. Due to the mask-wearing mandate for anyone not vaccinated, those who are not vaccinated should eat seudat shlishit prior to coming to shul.

**THIS WEEK**

Rosh Hashanah begins on Monday night and will end on Wednesday night.

Thursday is a fast day, Tzom Gedalia. The fast will begin at 5:19am and end at 7:55pm.

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

Please join the Youth Department for an exciting Sukkot craft and pizza party! Create a special decoration for your Sukkah! This fun event will be led by Sara Yehaskel on *Sunday, September 12th at 3:30 PM*. \$5 per child or \$8 per family. RSVP: [kira.batist.msw@gmail.com](mailto:kira.batist.msw@gmail.com)

Children ages 2 and up are invited to a special Sukkot Edition Stay and Play on *September 22nd at 4 PM*. Thank you to Liz Jacob for hosting us! More details to follow.

Have something to add to the bulletin? [Use our bulletin submission form!](#) (also available on our [website](#))

**ZEMANIM**

	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	9/5	9/6	9/7	9/8	9/9	9/10
Shacharit	8:00 AM	7:00 AM	7:35 AM	7:35 AM	6:00 AM	6:10 AM
Mincha/Maariv	7:10 PM	7:05 PM	7:05 PM	7:00 PM	6:45 PM	7:00 PM
Earliest Talit	5:32 AM	5:33 AM	5:34 AM	5:35 AM	5:36 AM	5:37 AM
Gedolah	1:27 PM	1:27 PM	1:26 PM	1:26 PM	1:25 PM	1:25 PM
Shkia	7:22 PM				7:15 PM	
Tzait	8:02 PM	8:00 PM	7:59 PM	7:57 PM	7:55 PM	7:54 PM



## YOMIM NORAIM / HIGH HOLIDAYS

As we have done in the past, we also plan to provide childcare during Yomim Noraim davening. Due to COVID-19 constraints, we expect the childcare to take place outdoors in the parking area. In order to properly plan and hire staff, we require those who plan to avail of childcare to register online at [Click here for High Holiday Child Care Registration](#). Childcare is free to all who daven with us. We have found that childcare works best when shul members take an active interest by spending time where groups take place. As such, we request that when registering, one parent from each family to sign up for a 30-minute slot.

Please note, there will not be assigned seating this year.

## IN OUR SHUL

We are looking for people to help us assemble the Shul Sukkah on Sunday morning, September 19 following morning minyan (approximately 9:00am). If you are available, please contact [Elliot Greene via email](#) or via text at 201-519-7951.

With the High Holiday season fast approaching, it is time to think about ordering your Lulav and Etrog set for Sukkot. Once again we will be working with Bnei Akiva of NY and NJ. The Arbat Haminim sale will be run as we did last year. Pre-order your Etrog and Lulav by [clicking on this link and completing the online form](#). If you haven't ordered your Lulov/Etrog sets yet, please note that Bnai Akiva has upgraded its online form so that you can save the \$10 shipping fee if you are planning to pick up your order from the shul. The deadline for the pre-order is *Friday, September 17 at 12:00pm*. Curbside pickup is scheduled for *Sunday, September 19 from 9:00am until 10:30am* in the Shul parking lot. Bnei Akiva will have a table with all the pre-orders. All you have to do is just "grab and go". Lulavim will be pre-tied and Etrogim will be labeled and set aside. If you have any questions, please contact [Elliot Greene via email](#) or at 201-519-7951.

## IN OUR COMMUNITY

Please see the attached letter from the Fair Lawn mikvah about Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur hours.

### ROSH HASHANAH 1

MONDAY, SEPT 6

SHACHARIT 7:00 AM

EARLIEST CANDLE LIGHTING 6:00 PM

MINCHA 7:05 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING 7:02 PM

TUESDAY, SEPT 7

SHACHARIT 7:35 AM

SHOFAR (APPROXIMATELY) 10:00 AM

MINCHA 7:05 PM

CANDLE LIGHTING AFTER 8:04 PM

אב הרחמים *is recited at Mussaf*  
צדקתך צדק *is not recited at Mincha*

### ROSH HASHANAH 2

WEDNESDAY, SEPT 8

SHACHARIT 7:35 AM

SHOFAR (APPROXIMATELY) 10:00 AM

MINCHA 7:00 PM

MAARIV/HAVDALAH 8:02 PM

*The prevailing custom is to go to a river (or other body of water) to say Tashlich on the 2nd day of RH.*

THURSDAY, SEPT 9 / TZOM GEDALIA

FAST BEGINS 5:19 AM

SHACHARIT 6:00 AM

MINCHA 6:45 PM

FAST ENDS 7:55 PM



## ROSH HASHANAH / TZOM GEDALIA

### EREV ROSH HASHANAH

The Shofar is not blown on Erev Rosh Hashanah to distinguish between the voluntary shofar blowing of Elul and the obligatory shofar blowing of Rosh HaShana. One takes a haircut and bathes. Immersion in a Mikvah should not be before an hour before midday so that we may enter the Day of Judgement in a state of holiness and purity. Candle-lighting Brachot are "שהחיינו" and "להדליק נר של יום טוב"

### FIRST NIGHT ROSH HASHANAH—א' דראש השנה

First night, after services we bless each other with: "לשנה טובה תכתב ותחתם", "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year". According to the Vilna Gaon we do not say "ותחתם" (and sealed) on Rosh HaShanah. At home to symbolize a sweet year we dip challah in honey. We also dip a piece of apple in honey and eat it after making the Bracha בורא פרי העץ. We then say, "May it be Your will our G-D and G-D of our fathers that You renew for us a good, sweet year." Other symbolic foods are eaten such as meat of a ram's head, or the head of a fish or fowl, followed by statements like, "May it be Your will that we be raised high and proud like the head and not lowly like the tail." We eat grated carrots (Yiddish word for carrots 'Mehren' can be translated as multiplying) and say, "May it be Your will that we be fruitful and multiply" and "May it be Your will that our merits increase."

### SECOND NIGHT ROSH HASHANAH—ב' דראש השנה

It is proper for women to wear a new garment or display a new fruit at candle-lighting so that the שהחיינו applies to these as well (do not eat the fruit before Kiddush). On the second night bring to the table a new fruit or wear a new garment so that the Bracha שהחיינו that we recite at the end of Kiddush applies to these as well. (If one forgot to prepare a new fruit or garment he still makes the שהחיינו)

### SOUNDING THE SHOFAR - BOTH DAYS—תקיעת שופר

Before sounding the Shofar, we recite "למנצח" (Psalm 47) seven times, followed by the verses whose first letters spell out "קרע שטן" "destroy Satan." The Baal T'kiah makes the Brachot: "לשמע קול שופר", "bearing in mind that the Brachot and sounding the Shofar also are on behalf of all those listening. Baal T'kiah blows three sets each of תשר"ת, תש"ת, and תר"ת. One absolutely must not talk during the first thirty sounds, and even afterwards one cannot talk until the conclusion of all one hundred sounds at the end of services unless absolutely necessary. After the first thirty blasts the Baal T'kiah leads the congregation in: אש"ר; and אש"ר; We return the Sifrei Torah to the ark.) One may not eat before hearing the Shofar sounded. However, if one feels weak, he may make Kiddush and taste some food immediately after the first thirty blasts - the prohibition against speaking during the Chazzan's repetition of Shemoneh Esrei is a very serious one.

### TASHLICH

Traditionally Tashlich is recited on Rosh Hashanah afternoon next to a body of water. If this cannot be performed on Rosh Hashanah, one can recite it any time until Yom Kippur. If it was not done before Yom Kippur, there is still some benefit in reciting it until Hoshana Rabba.

### FAST OF GEDALIAH—צום גדליה

Fast is observed from 5:19 AM until 7:55 PM. The cantor includes the prayer Anenu in the repetition of the Shachrit amidah. At Shacharit Thirteen Divine Attributes are said - Passages of Vayechal are read from the Torah (Shmot 32: 14 & 34: 1-10).

# Outdoor Tot Shabbat & Groups

@ Congregation Ahavat Achim

Parents & children ages 0-5 are  
invited to Daven and play together!

Shabbat mornings from 10:15-11:15 AM

To learn more about drop off options, please email  
[kira.batist.msw@gmail.com](mailto:kira.batist.msw@gmail.com)

Masking required for children 2 and older.





Yomim Noraim Mikvah Schedule 5782 / 2021

**All proceeds to benefit the Fair Lawn Mikvah**

**MEN:** The Fair Lawn Mikvah will be open for men on Erev Rosh Hashana and Erev Yom Kippur.

- Erev Rosh Hashana, Monday, September 6th, 6:00 am - 4:00 pm
- Erev Yom Kippur, Wednesday, September 15th, 6:00 am - 4:00 pm
- Yom Kippur appointments will be available a few days before Yom Kippur.

Three changing rooms will be available for each 10 minute slot. Showering is required at home. Bring your own towels. Masks must be worn in all common areas of the Mikvah facility. A COVID screening questionnaire must be signed upon your arrival. Please take all your belongings with you. The mikvah is not responsible for any items left behind.

To book your appointment, please go to [www.fairlawnmikvah.org](http://www.fairlawnmikvah.org). Click **book appointment**. Enter the Fair Lawn **zip code**. Click **book now**. Select **service** and **time slot**. After booking, you will receive a confirmation email with a code. Please give that code to the attendant when you arrive. Payment is required when you book your appointment. To book a family appointment please call 201-468-0098. \$20 per person / \$54 per family.

**WOMEN:** To make an appointment for Rosh Hashana, please contact the Mikvah directly.

Call the Mikvah at 201-468-0098 or email us at [fairlawnmikvah@gmail.com](mailto:fairlawnmikvah@gmail.com) with any questions. The Fair Lawn Mikvah is located at the back of Shomrei Torah, [19-10 Morlot Avenue](#).

Wishing everyone a K'tiva v'Chatima Tova!

The Fair Lawn Mikvah Association



Dear Ahavat Achim Family,

With the High Holiday season fast approaching, it is time to think about ordering your Lulav and Etrog set for Sukkot. Once again we will be working with Bnei Akiva of NY and NJ. The Arbat Haminim sale will be run as we did last year. Pre-order your Etrog and Lulav by clicking on this link and completing the online form:

<https://www.bneiakiva.org/mifalahavat/>

The deadline for the pre-order is Friday, September 17 at 12:00 noon. Curbside pickup is scheduled for Sunday, September 19 from 9:00am until 10:30am in the Shul parking lot. Bnei Akiva will have a table with all the pre-orders. All you have to do is just "grab and go". Lulavim will be pre-tied and Etrogim will be labeled and set aside.

If you have any questions, contact Elliot Greene at [egreene@acm.org](mailto:egreene@acm.org) or via cellphone at 201-519-7951.

The Programming Committee



AHAVAT ACHIM  
קהלת אהבת אחים  
THE FAMILY SHUL

Highest Quality & Exclusively from Israel

# ARBAT HAMINIM sale



Scan  
to order  
now!

All proceeds from this sale  
go toward scholarships and  
other Zionist youth programs

**Locations for home delivery:**

- Englewood/Teaneck/New Milford/Bergenfield and surrounding areas
- Westchester/Scarsdale/White Plains and surrounding areas
- West Orange/Livingston and surrounding areas
- Fairlawn and the surrounding areas
- Queens/Five Towns and surrounding areas
- Washington Heights

**Exact Time TBA but will be the week before Succot.**

**Pick-up and in-person sales information to follow.**

  
**\$5 OFF**  
PURCHASE

WITH PROMO CODE **BANE5**

\*Coupon for pre-order only

[www.bneiakiva.org/mifalahavat](http://www.bneiakiva.org/mifalahavat)

For more information, please contact: [arbaminim@bneiakiva.org](mailto:arbaminim@bneiakiva.org) | 212-465-9536

# ***Sukkot Craft & Pizza Party***



***Create a special sukkah decoration  
with your friends!***

***Led by Sara Yehaskel***

***Sunday, September 12 at 3:30 PM***

***Outside the shul Sukkah***

***\$5 per child or \$8 per family***

***RSVP to [kira.batist.msw@gmail.com](mailto:kira.batist.msw@gmail.com) by 9/2***



**AHAVAT ACHIM**

קהלת אהבת אחים

תש"פ ע"ה



To sponsor a celebration for your child's birthday at Shabbat groups email [kira.batist.msw@gmail.com](mailto:kira.batist.msw@gmail.com)!

\$25  
per  
family



AHAVAT ACHIM  
— קהלת אהבת אחים —  
THE FAMILY SHUL





# COVENANT & CONVERSATION



## LESSONS IN LEADERSHIP

WITH RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS זצ"ל



With thanks to **Wohl Legacy** for their generous sponsorship of *Covenant & Conversation*. Maurice was a visionary philanthropist. Vivienne was a woman of the deepest humility. Together, they were a unique partnership of dedication and grace, for whom living was giving.

Rabbi Sacks זצ"ל had prepared a full year of *Covenant & Conversation* for 5781, based on his book *Lessons in Leadership*. The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust will continue to distribute these weekly essays, so that people all around the world can keep on learning and finding inspiration in his Torah.

## Defeating Death

### Nitzavim 5781

Only now, reaching Nitzavim, can we begin to get a sense of the vast, world-changing project at the heart of the Divine-human encounter that took place in the lifetime of Moses and the birth of Jews/Israel as a nation.

To understand it, recall the famous remark of Sherlock Holmes. "I draw your attention," he said to Dr Watson, "to the curious incident of the dog at night." "But the dog did nothing at night," said Watson. "That," said Holmes, "is the curious incident."<sup>1</sup> Sometimes to know what a book is about you need to focus on what it does *not* say, not just on what it does.

What is missing from the Torah, almost inexplicably so given the background against which it is set, is a *fixation with death*. The ancient Egyptians were obsessed with death. Their monumental buildings were an attempt to defy death. The pyramids were giant mausoleums. More precisely, they were portals through which the soul of a deceased pharaoh could ascend to heaven and join the immortals. The most famous Egyptian text that has come down to us is *The Book of the Dead*. Only the afterlife is real: life is a preparation for death.

<sup>1</sup> Arthur Conan Doyle, "*The Adventure of Silver Blaze*".

There is nothing of this in the Torah, at least not explicitly. Jews believed in *Olam HaBa*, the World to Come, life after death. They believed in *techiyat hametim*, the resurrection of the dead.<sup>2</sup> There are six references to it in the second paragraph of the Amidah alone. But not only are these ideas almost completely absent from Tanach. They are absent at the very points where we would expect them.

The book of *Kohelet* (Ecclesiastes) is an extended lament at human mortality. *Havel havalim... hokol havel*: Everything is worthless because life is a mere fleeting breath (Ecc 1:2). Why did the author of Ecclesiastes not mention the World to Come and life-after-death? Another example: the book of Job is a sustained protest against the apparent injustice of the world. Why did no one answer Job to say, “You and other innocent people who suffer will be rewarded in the afterlife”? We believe in the afterlife. Why then is it not mentioned – merely hinted at – in the Torah? That is the curious incident.

The simple answer is that obsession with death ultimately devalues life. Why fight against the evils and injustices of the world if this life is only a preparation for the world to come? Ernest Becker in his classic *The Denial of Death* argues that fear of our own mortality has been one of the driving forces of civilisation.<sup>3</sup> It is what led the ancient world to enslave the masses, turning them into giant labour forces to build monumental buildings that would stand as long as time itself. It led to the ancient cult of the hero, the man who becomes immortal by doing daring deeds on the field of battle. We fear death; we have a love-hate relationship with it. Freud called this *thanatos*, the death instinct, and said it was one of the two driving forces of life, the other being *eros*.

Judaism is a sustained protest against this world-view. That is why “No one knows where Moses is buried” (Deut. 34:6) so that his tomb should never become a place of pilgrimage and worship. That is why in place of a pyramid or a temple such as Ramses II built at Abu Simbel, all the Israelites had for almost five centuries until the days of Solomon was the *Mishkan*, a portable Sanctuary, more like a tent than a temple. That is why, in Judaism, death defiles and why the rite of the Red Heifer was necessary to purify people from contact with it. That is why the holier you are – if you are a Kohen, more so if you are the High Priest – the less you can be in contact or under the same roof as a dead person. God is not in death but in life.

**“Obsession with death ultimately devalues life.”**

Only against this Egyptian background can we fully sense the drama behind words that have become so familiar to us that we are no longer surprised by them, the great words in which Moses frames the choice for all time:

See, I have set before you today life and good, death and evil ... I call heaven and earth as witnesses today against you, that I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that you and your children may live. (Deut. 30:15, 19)

Life is good, death is bad. Life is a blessing, death is a curse. These are truisms for us. Why even mention them? Because they were not common ideas in the ancient world. They were revolutionary. They still are.

How then do you defeat death? Yes there is an afterlife. Yes there is *techiyat hametim*, resurrection. But Moses does not focus on these obvious ideas. He tells us something different altogether. You achieve

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<sup>2</sup> The Mishnah in Sanhedrin 10:1 says that believing that the resurrection of the dead is stated in the Torah is a fundamental part of Jewish faith. However, according to any interpretation, the statement is implicit, not explicit.

<sup>3</sup> New York: Free Press, 1973.

immortality by being part of a covenant – a covenant with eternity itself, that is to say, a covenant with God.

When you live your life within a covenant something extraordinary happens. Your parents and grandparents live on in you. You live on in your children and grandchildren. They are part of your life. You are part of theirs. That is what Moses meant when he said, near the beginning of this week's parsha:

It is not with you alone that I am making this covenant and oath, but with whoever stands with us here today before the Lord our God *as well as those not with us here today*. (Deut. 29:13-14)

In Moses' day, that last phrase meant "your children not yet born." He did not need to include "your parents, no longer alive" because their parents had themselves made a covenant with God forty years before at Mount Sinai. But what Moses meant in a larger sense is that when we renew the covenant, when we dedicate our lives to the faith and way of life of our ancestors, they become immortal in us, as we become immortal in our children.

**You achieve  
immortality by being  
part of a covenant with  
eternity itself.**

It is precisely because Judaism focuses on this world, not the next, that it is the most child-centred of all the great religions. They are our immortality. That is what Rachel meant when she said, "Give me children, or else I am like one dead" (Gen. 30:1). It is what Abraham meant when he said, "Lord, God, what will you give me if I remain childless?" (Gen. 15:2). We are not all destined to have children. The Rabbis said that the good we do constitutes our *toldot*, our posterity. But by honouring the memory of our parents and bringing up children to continue the Jewish story we achieve the one form of immortality that lies this side of the grave, in this world that God pronounced good.

Now consider the two last commands in the Torah, set out in parshat *Vayelech*, the ones Moses gave at the very end of his life. One is *hakhel*, the command that the King summon the nation to an assembly every seven years:

At the end of every seven years ... Assemble the people – men, women and children, and the stranger living in your towns – so that they can listen and learn to fear the Lord your God and follow carefully all the words of this law. (Deut. 31:12)

The meaning of this command is simple. Moses is saying: It is not enough that your parents made a covenant with God at Mount Sinai or that you yourselves renewed it with me here on the plains of Moab. The covenant must be perpetually renewed, every seven years, so that it never becomes history. It always remains memory. It never becomes old because every seven years it becomes new again.

And the last command? "Now write down this song and teach it to the Israelites and make them sing it, so that it may be a witness for me against them" (Deut. 31:19). This, according to tradition, is the command to write [at least part of] a Sefer Torah. As Maimonides puts it: "Even if your ancestors have left you a Sefer Torah, nonetheless you are commanded to write one for yourself."<sup>4</sup>

What is Moses saying in this, his last charge to the people he had led for forty years, was: It is not sufficient to say, our ancestors received the Torah from Moses, or from God. You have to take it and make it new in every generation. You must make the Torah not just your parents' or grandparents' faith but your own. If you write it, it will write you. The eternal word of the eternal God is your share in eternity.

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<sup>4</sup> Mishneh Torah, Hilchot Tefillin, Mezuza, VeSefer Torah 7:1.

We now sense the full force of the drama of these last days of Moses' life. Moses knew he was about to die, knew he would not cross the Jordan and enter the land he had spent his entire life leading the people toward. Moses, confronting his own mortality, asks us in every generation to confront ours.

Our faith – Moses is telling us – is not like that of the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, or virtually every other civilisation known to history. We do not find God in a realm beyond life – in heaven, or after death, in mystic disengagement from the world or in philosophical contemplation. We find God in life. We find God in (the key words of Devarim) love and joy. To find God, he says in this week's parsha, you don't have to climb to heaven or cross the sea (Deut. 30:12-13). God is here. God is now. God is life.

And that life, though it will end one day, in truth does not end. For if you keep the covenant, then your ancestors will live in you, and you will live on in your children (or your disciples or the recipients of your kindness). Every seven years the covenant will become new again. Every generation will write its own Sefer Torah. The gate to eternity is not death: it is life lived in a covenant endlessly renewed, in words engraved on our hearts and the hearts of our children.

And so Moses, the greatest leader we ever had, became immortal. Not by living forever. Not by building a tomb and temple to his glory. We don't even know where he is buried. The only physical structure he left us was portable because life itself is a journey. He didn't even become immortal the way Aaron did, by seeing his children become his successors. He became immortal by making us his disciples. And in one of their first recorded utterances, the Rabbis said likewise: Raise up many disciples.

To be a leader, you don't need a crown or robes of office. **All you need to do is to write your chapter in the story, do deeds that heal some of the pain of this world, and act so that others become a little better for having known you. Live so that through you our ancient covenant with God is renewed in the only way that matters: in life.** Moses' last testament to us at the very end of his days, when his mind might so easily have turned to death, was: Choose life.



## AROUND THE SHABBAT TABLE

1. Is it common for people to be fixated with death?
2. What is the problem with having a preoccupation with death? Why does Judaism argue against this?
3. How can achieve immortality, according to Judaism? Can you think of some specific ideas?

# CEREMONY & CELEBRATION

FAMILY EDITION

THIS SERIES IS BASED ON THE TEACHINGS AND WRITINGS OF  
RABBI LORD JONATHAN SACKS רצ"ל



## ROSH HASHANAH



Educational content provided by Dr. Daniel Rose together with The Rabbi Sacks Legacy Trust

### Rosh Hashanah in a Nutshell

**THE TEN DAYS** that begin on Rosh Hashanah and end with Yom Kippur are the holy of holies of Jewish time. On the Yamim Noraim, the Days of Awe, we can almost feel God's presence and sense His closeness. For although we know that God is *always* close to us, we do not always feel close to Him. He is always to be found, but we do not always seek Him out. The atmosphere in the synagogue is intense and serious. The atmosphere in the synagogue is intense and serious, (and for those who are unable to experience Rosh Hashanah shul services, it is our challenge to find the spiritual energy to replicate this atmosphere in our own homes.)

On Rosh Hashanah God judges the whole world and decides on their fate for the coming year. It is as if the world has become a courtroom. God Himself is the Judge. The shofar announces that the court is in session, and we are on trial, giving an account of our lives. If taken seriously, this is a potentially life-changing experience. It forces us to ask the most fateful questions we will ever ask:

- Who am I?
- Why am I here?
- How shall I live?
- How have I lived until now?
- How have I used God's greatest gift: time?
- Whom have I wronged, and how can I put it right?
- Where have I failed, and how shall I overcome my failures?
- What is broken in my life and needs mending?
- What chapter will I write in the Book of Life?

These are days of reflection and introspection when we stand in the presence of God and acknowledge how short and vulnerable life really is, and how little time we have here on earth.

There is no time to waste to become the very best people we can be!



### Points to Ponder

**1** Aren't these questions we should ask ourselves every day? Why especially now on Rosh Hashanah?

**2** Does the recognition that life is short help or hinder the way you live your life?

**3** Ask yourself these nine questions now. Do you have answers?

### What Rosh Hashanah Says to Us

**THE GENIUS** of Judaism was to take eternal truths and translate them into time, into lived experiences. Other cultures have constructed philosophies and theologies, elaborate systems of abstract thought. Judaism prefers truth lived to truth merely thought. Ancient Greece produced the logical imagination. Judaism produced the chronological imagination, truth transposed into the calendar.

Rosh Hashanah, the anniversary of the creation of humanity, invites us to live and feel the human condition in graphic ways.

Here are 10 messages from Rosh Hashanah that speak directly to our lives today.

#### 1. Life is short

However much life expectancy has risen, we will not, in one lifetime, be able to achieve everything we might wish to achieve. This life is all we have. How shall we use it well? We know that we will not finish the task, but neither are we free to stand aside from it.

**REFLECT:** What will you try to achieve today after reflecting on this?



Adapted from the introduction to the *Koren Rosh Hashanah Machzor* with commentary and translation by Rabbi Sacks

## 2. Life is a gift from God

Life itself, each day, every breath we take, is the gift of God. Life is not something we may take for granted. If we do, we will fail to celebrate it. God gives us one gift above all others, said Rambam (Maimonides): life itself, beside which everything else is secondary. Other religions have sought God in heaven, or in the afterlife, the distant past or the distant future. Here there is suffering, there reward; here chaos, there order; here pain, there balm; here poverty, there plenty. Judaism has relentlessly sought God in the here-and-now of life on earth. Yes, we believe in life after death, but it is in life before death that we truly find human greatness.

... **REFLECT:** How does understanding this change the way you are going to live?

## 3. We are free

Judaism is the religion of the free human being freely responding to the God of freedom. We are not in the grip of sin. We are not determined by economic forces or psychological drives or genetically encoded impulses that we are powerless to resist. The very fact that we can do *teshuvah*, that we can act differently tomorrow than we did yesterday, tells us we are free. Philosophers have found this idea difficult. So have scientists. But Judaism insists on it, and our ancestors proved it by defying every law of history, surviving against the odds, refusing to accept defeat.

... **REFLECT:** Where do we find this concept reflected in the prayers of Rosh Hashanah?

## 4. Life is meaningful

We are not mere accidents of matter, generated by a universe that came into being for no reason and will one day, for no reason, cease to be. We are here because a loving God brought the universe, and life, and us, into existence – a God who knows our fears, hears our prayers, believes in us more than we believe in ourselves, forgives us when we fail, lifts us when we fall and gives us the strength to overcome despair. The historian Paul Johnson once wrote: “No people has ever insisted more firmly than the Jews that history has a purpose and humanity a destiny.” He concluded: “The Jews, therefore, stand right

at the centre of the perennial attempt to give human life the dignity of a purpose.” This is one of the truths of Rosh Hashanah.

... **REFLECT:** Do you have a sense of the meaning of your life?

## 5. Life is not easy

Judaism does not see the world through rose-tinted lenses. The sufferings of our ancestors haunt our prayers. The world we live in is not the world as it ought to be. That is why, despite every temptation, Judaism has never been able to say the Messianic Age has come, even though we await it daily. But we are not bereft of hope because we are not alone. When Jews went into exile, the *Shechinah*, the Divine presence, went with them. God is always there, “close to all who call on Him in truth” (Tehillim 145:18). He may hide His face, but He is there. He may be silent, but He is listening to us, hearing us and healing us in ways we may not understand at the time but which become clear in retrospect.

... **REFLECT:** Does this message from Rosh Hashanah resonate with you? Can you feel God’s closeness in times of difficulty?

## 6. Life is still sweet

Life may be hard, but it can still be sweet, the way the challah and the apple are on Rosh Hashanah when we dip them in honey. Jews have never needed wealth to be rich, or power to be strong. To be a Jew is to live for simple things: the love between husband and wife, the sacred bond between parents and children, the gift of community where we help others and others help us and where we learn that joy is doubled and grief halved by being shared. To be a Jew is to give, whether in the form of *tzedakah* or *gemilut chasadim* (acts of loving-kindness). It is to learn and never stop seeking, to pray and never stop thanking, to do *teshuvah* and never stop growing. In this lies the secret of joy. Throughout history there have been hedonistic cultures that worship pleasure and ascetic cultures that deny it, but Judaism has a different approach altogether: to sanctify pleasure by making it part of the worship of God. Life is sweet when touched by the Divine.

... **REFLECT:** Where is the sweetness in your life?



*Life may be hard, but it can still be sweet, the way the challah and the apple are on Rosh Hashanah when we dip them in honey.*

## 7. Our life is a work of art

Our life is the single greatest work of art we will ever make. Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, in one of his earliest works, spoke about *Ish Hahalachah*, the halachic personality and its longing to create, to make something new, original. God too longs for us to create and thereby become His partner in the work of renewal. “The most fundamental principle of all is that man must create himself.” That is what *teshuvah* is, an act of making ourselves anew. On Rosh Hashanah we step back from our life like an artist stepping back from their canvas, seeing what needs changing for the painting to be complete.

⋮ **REFLECT:** If you were going to create an expression of your life using any medium (e.g. visual art, poetry, prose, music, etc.) how would you do it?

## 8. We are what we are because of those who came before us

Our lives are not disconnected particles. We are each a letter in God’s Book of Life. But single letters, though they are the vehicles of meaning, have no meaning when they stand alone. To have meaning they must be joined to other letters to make words, sentences, paragraphs, a story, and to be a Jew is to be part of the strangest, oldest, most unexpected and counter-intuitive story there has ever been: the story of a tiny people, never large and often homeless, who nonetheless outlived the greatest empires the world has ever known – the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Greeks and Romans, the medieval empires of Christianity and Islam, all the way to the Third Reich and the Soviet Union. Each in turn thought itself immortal. Each has gone. The Jewish people still lives. But we do not start with nothing. We have inherited wealth, not material but spiritual. We are heirs to our ancestors’ greatness.

⋮ **REFLECT:** Think of all the ways your life has been enriched by your parents, grandparents, and great grandparents (and beyond).

## 9. Judaism asks great things of us and by doing so makes us great.

We walk as tall as the ideals for which we live, and those of the Torah are very high indeed. We are, said Moshe, God’s children (Deva-

rim 14:1). We are called on, said the prophet Yishayahu, to be His witnesses, His ambassadors on earth (Yishayahu 43:10).

Time and again Jews did things thought impossible. They battled against might in the name of right. They fought against slavery. They showed that it was possible to be a nation without a land, to have influence without power, to be branded the world’s pariahs yet not lose self-respect. They believed with unshakeable conviction that they would one day return to their land, and though the hope seemed absurd, it happened.

Judaism sets the bar high, and though we may fall short time and again, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur allow us to begin anew, forgiven, cleansed, undaunted, ready for the next challenge, the next year.

⋮ **REFLECT:** What do you think Judaism is asking of you in your life?

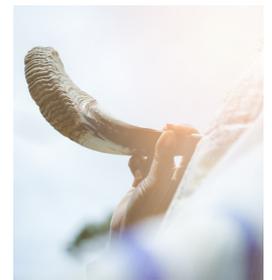
## 10. We are dust of the earth but within us is the breath of God

And finally comes the sound of the shofar, piercing our defences, a wordless cry in a religion of words, a sound produced by breath as if to tell us that that is all life is – a mere breath – yet breath is nothing less than the spirit of God within us: “Then the Lord God formed man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being” (Bereishit 2:7).

And whether the shofar is our cry to God or God’s cry to us, somehow in that *tekiah, shevarim, teruah* – the call, the sob, the wail – is all the emotion of the Divine-human encounter as God asks us to take His gift, life itself, and make of it something holy, by so acting as to honour God and His image on earth, humankind.

For we defeat death, not by living forever but by living by values that live forever; by doing deeds and creating blessings that will live on after us, and by attaching ourselves in the midst of time to God who lives beyond time, “the King – the living, everlasting God.”

⋮ **REFLECT:** Close your eyes and hear the shofar. What is it saying to you? What do you want it to say to God on your behalf?



*And finally comes the sound of the shofar... a wordless cry in a religion of words.*

# Deep Diving into the Tefillah of the Day: Unetaneh Tokef

Tefillah text and commentary taken from the Koren Sacks Rosh Hashanah Machzor

וַנְתַנֶּה תְּקֵף קְדֻשַׁת הַיּוֹם / כִּי הוּא נוֹרָא וְאִים  
וּבוֹ תִנְשֵׂא מַלְכוּתְךָ / וַיִּכּוֹן בְּחֶסֶד כְּסָאֲךָ / וַתִּשָּׁב עָלָיו בְּאַמֶּת.  
אַמֶּת, כִּי אַתָּה הוּא דִין וּמוֹכֵיחַ, וַיּוֹדַע וְעַד  
וְכוֹתֵב וְחוֹתֵם וְסוֹפֵר וּמוֹנֵה  
וְתוֹפֵר כָּל הַנְּשָׁכָחוֹת / וַתִּפְתַּח אֶת סֵפֶר הַזְכוּרוֹת  
וַיִּמְאֲלֵנוּ יִקְרָא / וְחוֹתֵם יָד כָּל אָדָם בּוֹ.

וּבְשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל יִתְקַע / וְקוֹל דְּמָמָה דְקָה יִשְׁמַע  
וּמִלְאָכִים יִחְפְּזוּן / וְחִיל וּרְעָדָה יֵאֲחִזּוּן  
וַיֹּאמְרוּ, הִנֵּה יוֹם הַדִּין / לְפָקוֹד עַל צָבָא מְרוֹם בְּדִין  
כִּי לֹא יִזְכּוּ בְּעֵינֶיךָ בְּדִין  
וְכָל בָּאֵי עוֹלָם יַעֲבִירוּן לְפָנֶיךָ כְּבָנֵי מְרוֹן.

כְּבִקְרַת רוּעָה עֲדוּרוֹ / מֵעֲבִיר צֹאנוּ תַּחַת שִׁבְטוֹ  
כֵּן תֵּעָבִיר וְתִסְפֹּר וְתִמְנֶה / וְתִפְקֹד נַפְשׁ כָּל חַי  
וְתַחְתֶּיךָ קִצְבָה לְכָל בְּרִיָּה / וְתִכְתֹּב אֶת גְּזֵר דִּינָם.

בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה יִכְתָּבוּן / וּבַיּוֹם צוֹם כְּפֹר יִחַתְמוּן.  
כְּמָה יַעֲבִירוּן וְכְמָה יִבְרָאוּן  
מִי יִחִיָּה וּמִי יָמוּת / מִי בְּקָצוֹ וּמִי לֹא בְּקָצוֹ  
מִי בְּמִים וּמִי בְּאֵשׁ / מִי בְּחַרְבֹּב וּמִי בְּחַיָּה / מִי בְּרָעַב וּמִי בְּצָמָא  
מִי בְּרָעַשׁ וּמִי בְּמַגֵּפָה / מִי בְּחַנְיָקָה וּמִי בְּסִקְלָה.  
מִי יָנוּחַ וּמִי יָנוּעַ / מִי יִשְׁקִיט וּמִי יִטָּרֵף  
מִי יִשְׁלַח וּמִי יִתִּיֶסֶר / מִי יַעֲנֶה וּמִי יַעֲשִׂיר / מִי יִשְׁפֹּל וּמִי יִרוֹם.

וַנְתַנֶּה תְּקֵף Let us voice the power of this day's sanctity –  
it is awesome, terrible;  
on this day Your kingship is raised, Your throne is founded upon love,  
and You, with truth, sit upon it.  
In truth, it is You: Judge and Accuser, Knowing One and Witness,  
writing and sealing, counting, numbering,  
remembering all forgotten things,  
You open the book of memories –  
it is read of itself, / and every man's name is signed there.

וּבְשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל A great shofar sounds,  
and a still small voice is heard,  
angels rush forward / and are held by trembling, shaking;  
they say, "Here is the Day of Judgment  
visiting all the heavenly host for judgment –"  
for they are not cleared in Your eyes in judgment.  
And all who have come into this world pass before You like sheep.

כְּבִקְרַת רוּעָה As a shepherd's searching gaze meets his flock,  
as he passes every sheep beneath his rod, so You too pass Yours,  
count and number, and regard the soul of every living thing;  
and You rule off the limit of each creation's life,  
and write down the verdict for each.

בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה On Rosh Hashanah it is written / and on Yom Kippur it is  
sealed: / how many will pass away and how many will be born; / who  
will live and who will die; / who in his due time and who before; /  
who by water and who by fire; / who by sword and who by beast; /  
who of hunger and who of thirst; / who by earthquake and who by  
plague; / who by strangling and who by stoning; / who will rest and  
who will wander; / who will be calm and who will be harassed; /  
who will be at ease and who will suffer; / who will become poor and  
who will grow rich; / who cast down and who raised high.

וְתִשׁוּבָה וְתִפְלָה וְצַדִּיקָה / מֵעֲבִירוֹן אֶת רֵעַ הַגְּזֵרָה.

FASTING CRYING GIVING

But REPENTANCE, PRAYER and CHARITY  
avert the evil of the decree.

כִּי כְשִׁמְךָ כֵּן תִּהְלֶתְךָ / קִשָּׁה לְבַעֲסֵם וְנוֹחַ לְרִצּוֹת  
כִּי לֹא תַחְפֹּץ בְּמוֹת הַיָּמָת / כִּי אִם בְּשׁוּבוֹ מִדְּרָבוֹ, וְחַיָּה  
וְעַד יוֹם מוֹתוֹ תַּחְכֶּה לוֹ / אִם יָשׁוּב, מִיָּד תִּקְבְּלוּ.  
אַמֶּת, כִּי אַתָּה הוּא יוֹצֵרֵם / וַיּוֹדַע יִצְרָם / כִּי הֵם בְּשָׂר וְדָם.

אָדָם יִסּוּדוֹ מֵעָפָר / וְסוֹפוֹ לְעָפָר  
בְּנַפְשׁוֹ יָבִיא לְחֵמוֹ / מְשׁוּל בְּחֶרֶם הַנְּשָׁבֵר  
כְּחִצִּיר יָבֵשׁ, וְכִצִּיץ נוֹבֵל / כִּצְלַע עוֹבֵר, וְכַעֲנַן כְּלָה  
וְכַרוּחַ נוֹשֶׁבֶת, וְכֶאָבֶק פּוֹרֵחַ, וְכַחֲלוֹם יַעוּף.

וְאַתָּה הוּא מֶלֶךְ, אֵל חַי וְקַיִם.

כִּי כְשִׁמְךָ For as Your name is, so is Your renown:  
hard to anger, and readily appeased.  
For You do not desire the condemned man's death,  
but that he may come back from his ways, and live.  
To the very day he dies, You wait for him;  
and if he comes back: You welcome him at once.  
Truly, it was You who formed them,  
You know the forces moving them: / they are but flesh and blood.  
Man is founded in dust / and ends in dust.  
He lays down his soul to bring home bread. / He is like a broken shard,  
like grass dried up, like a faded flower,  
like a fleeting shadow, like a passing cloud,  
like a breath of wind, like whirling dust, like a dream that slips away.

AND YOU ARE KING –  
THE LIVING, EVERLASTING GOD.

## Background to the Tefillah

**NO PRAYER** more powerfully defines the image of the Days of Awe than does *Unetaneh Tokef*. The language is simple, the imagery strong, the rhythms insistent and the drama intense.

We do not know exactly who composed *Unetaneh Tokef* or when. A famous tradition dates it to the time when Jews in northern Europe were suffering brutal Christian persecution. It tells of Rabbi Amnon of Mainz, how he was pressured by the bishop, who was also mayor of the town, to convert. Eventually, after repeated prevarication, the bishop subjected him to cruel punishment, inflicting on him wounds from which he would die. On Rosh Hashanah, sensing that he was on the verge of death, Rabbi Amnon asked to be carried to the synagogue. As he entered he found the congregation about to say the *Kedusha*, and asked for permission to say a prayer as his dying words. He then said *Unetaneh Tokef*, and died (*Or Zarua* 2:276).

The discovery of ancient manuscripts in the Cairo Geniza suggests, however, that the prayer may be older than this. This and other factors suggest that, in its original form, it was composed in Israel several centuries before.

## Analysis

It is structured in four movements.

**The first** sets the scene. The heavenly court is assembled. God sits in the seat of judgment. The angels tremble. Before Him is the book of all our deeds. In it our lives are written, bearing our signature, and we await the verdict.

**The second** defines what is at stake: Who will live, who will die? Who will flourish, who will suffer, who will be at ease, who will be in torment? Between now and Yom Kippur our fate is being decided on high.

**The third** is the great outburst of faith that defines Judaism as a religion of hope. No fate is final. Repentance, prayer and charity can avert the evil decree. Life is not a script written by Aeschylus or Sophocles in which tragedy is inexorable. God forgives; God pardons; God exercises clemency – if we truly repent and pray and give to others.

**The fourth** is a moving reflection on the fragility of human life and the eternity of God. We are no more than a fragment of pottery, a blade of grass, a flower that fades, a shadow, a cloud, a breath of wind. Dust we are and to dust we return. But God is life forever.



## Points to Ponder

1 What are the core themes of Rosh Hashanah found in the text of this *tefillah*?

2 Why is it *teshuvah*, *tefillah* and *tzedakah* that can avert God's evil decree?

3 Do you think this is primarily a prayer of hope or despair?

## Rosh Hashanah for the Young (and Young at Heart!)

### Top Ten Rosh Hashanah Facts

1. Rosh Hashanah is the anniversary of the creation of the world!
2. The name of the festival in the Torah is not Rosh Hashanah, but rather Yom Teruah (the Day of Blasting). The name Rosh Hashanah comes from the Mishnah.
3. There are actually four New Years mentioned in the Mishnah: the new year for trees (15th of Shvat); the new year for tithes (1st of Ellul); the new year for counting the reign of the king and for counting the months of the calendar (1st of Nissan); and the new year for years (1st of Tishrei).
4. Rosh Hashanah is the only festival that is always two days long, even in Israel.
5. We blow the shofar 100 times on each day of Rosh Hashanah (unless it is Shabbat).
6. The shofar is generally a ram's horn (although it can be from other animals) to remind us of

the ram that was caught in a bush that Avraham used as a sacrifice in place of his son Yitzchak.

7. There are various symbolic foods we eat on the evening of Rosh Hashanah, called *simanim*, each one representing a blessing we hope for the new year. The best-known example is apple dipped in honey for a sweet new year!

8. The traditional Rosh Hashanah greeting is *Leshanah tovah tikatev vetichatem*; (May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year).

9. Many people have the custom to do *tashlich* on the first afternoon of Rosh Hashanah (unless this falls on Shabbat in which case we move to the second day). This involves saying a special prayer and symbolically casting away our sins at a body of fresh water (some people throw bread crumbs into the water to represent the casting away of the sins).

10. There is a custom not to sleep during the day of Rosh Hashanah so we start the year as we mean to go on by utilising every minute we have.



## It Once Happened on Rosh Hashanah...



**ONCE IT HAPPENED** in the days of Rav Avraham Yitzchak HaKohen Kook, the Chief Rabbi of pre-State Israel, that a group of workers, under pressure to complete a building in one of the neighbourhoods of Jerusalem, worked on Rosh Hashanah.

People living in the area sent word to Rav Kook, expecting him to order them immediately to stop. Instead he sent a representative to blow shofar for the workers.

They stopped working to listen. Some began to cry. When the blowing was completed, they decided of their own accord not to continue working on the holy day. Some ran home, changed their clothes, and joined Rav Kook at his yeshiva for the rest of Rosh Hashanah.

## Points to Ponder

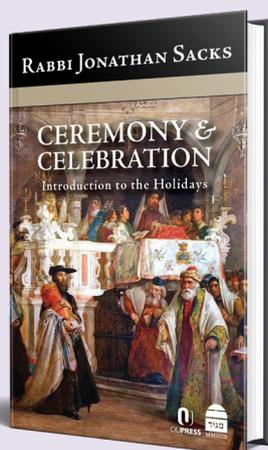
**1** Why do you think Rav Kook chose to approach these workers in this way rather than ordering them to stop working?

**2** Why do you think the shofar had this impact on the workers?

**3** What Rosh Hashanah lessons can we learn from this story?

## Chidon on the Chag (A Quick Quiz)

1. What does Rosh Hashanah mean?
2. What date is Rosh Hashanah?
3. How many names does Rosh Hashanah have?
4. What are the names of the three kinds of notes we blow on the shofar?
5. How many notes do we blow on the shofar on each day of Rosh Hashanah?
6. Name five of the *simanim* (symbolic foods) we eat on Rosh Hashanah evening.
7. Why do we eat pomegranates on Rosh Hashanah?
8. What kind of water is necessary to do *tashlich* on Rosh Hashanah?
9. What are the three sections of the Rosh Hashanah Musaf amidah?
10. Why do we have the custom to eat a new fruit on the second night of Rosh Hashanah?



## Ceremony & Celebration: Introduction to the Holidays

Bringing together Rabbi Sacks' acclaimed introductions to the Koren Sacks Machzorim, *Ceremony & Celebration* reveals the stunning interplay of biblical laws, rabbinic edicts, liturgical themes, communal rituals and profound religious meaning of each of the five central Jewish holidays: Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur, Succot, Pesach and Shavuot.

*Ceremony & Celebration* is published by Maggid/OU Press and is available to purchase online and in all good Jewish bookshops.

## Educational Companion to the Questions

### ROSH HASHANAH IN A NUTSHELL

1. Anyone who wishes to live a life with meaning will find themselves asking these or similar questions. A thinking and reflective person will address them more often than once a year. Rosh Hashanah ensures that even someone for whom introspection does not come naturally will still address these questions, and consider the answers to them, every year on the day that encourages the process of *Cheshbon Hanefesh* (self-accounting/introspection) when we stand in the presence of God and consider our lives.
2. The fleeting nature of life can lead to depression and a sense of nihilism and emptiness, or conversely it can inspire a search for meaning, and an aspiration to make every minute and every day count. Rosh Hashanah and Judaism in general encourages the second approach.
3. From a young child to an elderly person, these questions are the basic questions of a self-aware being who aspires to the betterment of their life. This is a natural wish even in young children. Having an adult to guide them in the asking and answering of these questions will be a good catalyst to the process.

### DEEP DIVING INTO THE TEFILLAH OF THE DAY

1. From the list of ten themes found above in “What Rosh Hashanah Says to Us” the following are clearly expressed in this *tefillah*: Life is short; life is a gift from God; we are free to act; life is not easy; we are dust of the earth but within us is the breath of God. Further Rosh Hashanah themes also found here are: the awesome nature of the day; God as King; God as a Judge and Rosh Hashanah as a Day of Judgement; the power of the sound of the shofar; our future is in the balance and decided on this day; we can still affect the decision through acts of *teshuvah*, *tefillah*, and *tzedakah*; God is a forgiving God.
2. These three signify the best acts to repair the three paradigm relationships a person can have: with ourselves (*Teshuvah* – repentance); with God (*Tefillah* – prayer); and with other humans (*Tzedakah* – charity). These are the three areas we need to focus on improving.
3. While there are aspects of despair found in the prayer (such as the vulnerability and fleeting nature of human life) at its core there is a profound statement of hope and positivity. It declares that our fate is ultimately within our control, that we have the secret to averting the evil decree, and God is a forgiving God.

### IT ONCE HAPPENED ON ROSH HASHANAH...

1. Rav Kook was famous for his love of all Jews. Rather than showing disapproval for their decision to work on Rosh Hashanah, which may have alienated them further from Judaism, he offered them the chance to hear the shofar at their workplace. He showed he cared and this approach ultimately brought them closer to Judaism.
2. The sound of the shofar is a powerful sound that reflects the emotions of the soul. Perhaps the workers tapped into its spiritual dimension, and it touched their souls. Or perhaps it was a familiar sound from their youth and it spoke to them once more and woke them from their haze of the pressures of adult life. Or perhaps it represented the love of Rav Kook for his fellow Jew and it was this that moved them.
3. The power of the sound of the shofar, if we are only open to hearing it. The power of acts of love and kindness, more important even than *teshuvah* and repairing our relationship with God. Fixing our human relationships come first.

### CHIDON ON THE CHAG (A QUICK QUIZ)

1. Head of the Year (not New Year!)
2. 1st and 2nd of Tishrei.
3. Five: *Rosh Hashanah*; *Yom Teruah* (Day of Blasting); *Yom Hadin* (Day of Judgement); *Yom Hazikaron* (Day of Remembrance); *Hayom Harat Olam* (the Day of the Creation of the World).
4. *Tekiah*; *Shevarim*; *Teruah*.
5. 100.
6. Apple and honey; dates; pomegranates; carrots; leeks; beet-roots; squash/gourds; fish; and the head of a fish or sheep. Other families may have additional traditions.
7. Because the many seeds are meant to represent the 613 *mitzvot* in the Torah.
8. “Flowing water”, preferably a stream with fish.
9. *Malchuyot* (kingship); *Zichronot* (remembrances); *Shofarot* (shofar blasts).
10. Because there is a difference of opinion whether the second day of Rosh Hashanah is a new festival or a continuation of the first day, we eat a fruit that we have not eaten for 30 days so that we can make a *shehecheyanu* blessing to cover both the fruit and, if needed, the new festival of the second day.

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