

# Celebration!

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5782/2021



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# KING IN AMERICA

**A** basic theme of Rosh Hashanah is that it achieves the coronation of G-d as King of Israel and of the universe, as expressed in our heartfelt prayer and request: "Reign over the entire world!"

Such a request implies the readiness to place oneself in a state of full conformity with the Divine sovereignty. This is the meaning of, in Hebrew terminology, *Kabalat ol* – "the acceptance of the yoke" of Divine sovereignty – an acceptance which finds expression in all areas of daily life.

Every period and every locality has its special qualities and its particular challenges.

In our time, there is a prevailing trend in many circles toward increased self-sufficiency and independence, not only in regards to material matters, but in ideological matters as well; an increasing unwillingness to submit to the established order, to accept things before they are fully understood by one's own mind, and so on.

This, it would seem, represents a challenge to the very concept of *kabalat ol*.



**WHEN A PERSON WHO DOES NOT, AS A RULE, SURRENDER HIS INDEPENDENCE AND HIS CONVICTIONS IS CONVINCED THAT HE MUST RECOGNIZE AND SUBMIT TO A HIGHER AUTHORITY, THIS DECISION IS MADE ON A MUCH DEEPER AND MORE FUNDAMENTAL LEVEL**



This is particularly the case in countries that are (relatively) young and which were established upon a foundation of self-initiative and youthful energy, and where this spirit characterizes the entire structure of personal and communal life – all of which makes it more difficult to conform to the criteria of *kabalat ol*.

Notwithstanding the above, we have the dictum that G-d



does not demand of a person something that is beyond his or her capacity. Since submission to the sovereignty of G-d is the essence of Rosh Hashanah (and the foundation of all our deeds throughout the year), this is obviously applicable to all times and places. It is possible and incumbent upon us to achieve a full acceptance of the Divine Kingship in our time as well and also in the above-mentioned circumstances.

Indeed, there is a special quality to our *kabalat ol* in our time and in this part of the world. When a person who has been conditioned to having limits placed on his independence accepts something unquestioningly, this does not constitute a thorough and unequivocal acceptance; for such a person is accustomed to being told what to do and is often compelled to yield his will and modify his opinions. On the other hand, when a person who does not, as a rule, surrender his independence and his convictions is convinced that he must recognize and submit to a higher authority, this decision is made on a much deeper and more fundamental level and yields an absolute and immutable commitment.

*Adapted from a letter by the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, O.B.M.*

# Celebration!

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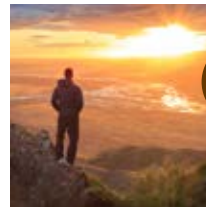
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Rabbi Sholom Ber Tenenbaum, *Director* • Mrs. Feigel Tenenbaum, *Program Director*

*If you have any questions, thoughts or comments concerning this publication, please contact us:*

Phone: 847-782-1800 • [info@chabadofgurnee.com](mailto:info@chabadofgurnee.com) • [www.chabadofgurnee.com](http://www.chabadofgurnee.com)

17684 W. Gages Lake Road, Grayslake, IL 60030

*Dedicated to the Rebbe,  
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, OBM,  
whose boundless love and teachings are an  
endless source of inspiration and guidance.*



# High Holidays *at* CHABAD

Rosh HaShanah/Yom Kippur Services should be memorable, meaningful and deep, as well as uplifting, engaging, and — enjoyable. That’s why we’ll have lively services (together with English explanation and translation), a warm environment with friendly people — and a serious Kiddush/ lunch after services. Everyone is welcome! **To reserve your seats please RSVP online at [www.chabadofgurnee.com/services](http://www.chabadofgurnee.com/services) or call our office at (847) 782- 1800.**

*All services will be held in a tent at Chabad. CDC guidelines will be followed.*

**LOCATION:** Chabad of Gurnee, 17662 W Gages Lake Rd, Grayslake IL 60030

## ROSH HASHANAH SERVICES

Monday, September 6 .....	Candle Lighting .....	6:57pm
Monday, September 6 .....	Evening Services .....	7:15pm
Monday, September 6 .....	Holiday Dinner .....	7:45pm
Tuesday, September 7 .....	Morning Service .....	9:00am
Tuesday, September 7 .....	Torah Reading .....	10:15am
Tuesday, September 7 .....	Shofar Blowing .....	11:00am
Tuesday, September 7 .....	Kiddush .....	1:00pm
Wednesday, September 8 .....	Morning Service .....	9:00am
Wednesday, September 8 .....	Torah Reading .....	10:15am
Wednesday, September 8 .....	Shofar Blowing .....	11:00am
Wednesday, September 8 .....	Kiddush .....	1:00pm

## YOM KIPPUR SERVICES

Wednesday, September 15 .....	Candle Lighting .....	6:41pm
Wednesday, September 15 .....	Kol Nidrei .....	7:00pm
Thursday, September 16 .....	Morning Service .....	9:00am
Thursday, September 16 .....	Torah reading .....	10:30am
Thursday, September 16 .....	Yizkor .....	11:30am
Thursday, September 16 .....	Mincha Service .....	5:30pm
Thursday, September 16 .....	Neila Service .....	6:40pm
Thursday, September 16 .....	Fast Ends .....	7:41pm

# G-D ON THE *Campaign* TRAIL



**A US PRESIDENT HAS FOUR YEARS** between elections, a congressman needs to renew his mandate every two years, while dictators stay in office for as long as they can keep their generals happy (or terrified). But G-d is up for reelection every year.

Every Rosh Hashanah, we crown G-d as our king. According to the Kabbalists, without this annual coronation (effected by our resolve to submit to the divine sovereignty, our recitation of the “verses of kingship” included in the special prayers of the day, and our sounding of the shofar), G-d’s “kingship” would not be renewed, and the whole of creation - which derives from the divine desire to be king - would cease to exist.

**(We don’t usually think of kings requiring election to their office, but that’s because the word “king” is a rather imprecise translation of the Hebrew word *melech*. A *melech*, by definition, is a sovereign whose kingship derives from a people’s freely chosen desire to submit to his rule. A king who reigns by force or exploitation is not a *melech* but merely a *moshel* or “ruler”.)**

**How does G-d prepare for His annual reelection? Does He just sit up there in His “palace” trusting in our good sense to proclaim Him king once again? Does He go after the vote, mingling with the masses, pressing the flesh, kissing babies?** Here’s

how Chassidic master Rebbe Schneur Zalman of Liadi (1745-1812), describes the month of Elul - the month that precedes the divine coronation on Rosh Hashanah:

It is like a king who, before he enters the city, the people of the city go out to greet him in the field. There, everyone who so desires is permitted to meet him; he receives them all with a cheerful countenance and shows a smiling face to them all. And when he goes to the city, they follow him there. Later, however, after he enters his royal palace, none can enter into his presence except by appointment, and only special people and select individuals. So, too, by analogy, the month of Elul is when we meet G-d in the field... (Likkutei Torah, Re’ei 32b; see also Likkutei Sichot, vol II p. 632 ff.)

While this description bears some resemblance to a politician running for office in a modern democracy, there are, of course, some significant differences. Such as the fact that a campaign promise by G-d is far more likely to be fulfilled than one that is made by your typical office-seeker.

**We have entered the month of Elul. The king is in the field; if you need something from Him, now’s the time to ask.**

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By Yanki Tauber*

# ELUL

AUGUST 8 – SEPTEMBER 6

HOW DO WE TAP INTO THE SPECIAL ENERGIES OF THIS MONTH?



**We check our mezuzahs and tefillin.**



**We hear the shofar daily.**  
*(Besides Shabbos)*



**We give extra charity daily.**  
*(Besides Shabbos)*



**We recite Psalm 27 daily.**



ROSH HASHANAH COMMUNITY DINNER

## *Under the Stars*

**Monday, September 6**

at **Chabad** 17662 W. Gages Lake Rd, Grayslake, IL 60030

**6:57 PM** Candle Lighting  
**7:15 PM** Evening Service  
**7:45 PM** Holiday Dinner

Capture the spirit and tastes of Rosh Hashanah with family and friends at this memorable Rosh Hashanah community Dinner.

**\$18/person**

By **RSVP only**: Call 847.782.1800 or online at [www.chabadofgurnee.com/services](http://www.chabadofgurnee.com/services)  
CDC guidelines will be followed.

# Getting Real

**HERE'S ANOTHER AREA** where Jewish and secular values greatly differ: holidays. Jewish life and “secular” life both consist of workdays and holidays. But beyond the semantic relationship, Jewish holidays and secular holidays have very little in common.

On the secular calendar, vacation days are dispersed throughout the year to provide a respite from the drudgery of the daily work routine. In fact, many people work for their vacations: their job is merely a means towards an end, the end being the relaxation and enjoyment on the day when one is not in the office. Granted, the primary reason for working is to generate income to pay the basic bills and make ends meet, but it's the holiday vacation plans which provide the added incentive to volunteer for the overtime shift. **And unless you are a certified workaholic, the office will not be on your mind when you are enjoying your family barbeque, sunset over the Pacific, or the slopes in Aspen. The office has served its purpose; now it's time to enjoy the reward!**

Jewish holidays, on the other hand, do not populate the Jewish calendar to provide for relaxation and vacation from Jewish everyday life. In fact, Jewish holidays are characterized by intensification in religious activity, added hours spent in the Jewish office (aka: synagogue), and multitudes of seasonal rituals and

traditions. **Rather, the holidays are beacons of light interspersed through the year, each one intended to illuminate the rest of the Jewish “work year” with its unique shade of spiritual light and inspiration.**

**In short: in the business world people work in order to be able to holiday; in the Jewish world, we holiday in order to be able to work!**



G-d is more interested in our mundane workdays than our extra-curricular holiday antics. We can be portraits of piety when clad in a *tallit* swaying to the High Holiday prayers, braving the elements to eat in the *sukkah*, or ecstatically dancing on Simchat Torah — but is this the real you? It is our daily routine which truly reflects who we are, not our occasional inspired outbursts of holiday holiness.

**And G-d so desperately wants to be part of our real life — not just part of our holiday plans. So He gives us holidays, hoping that during these moments of inspiration we will allow Him to enter our hearts - and hoping that we won't evict Him during the *havdallah* ceremony which follows the holiday.**

Will we?

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By Naftali Silberberg*

# WHAT WOULD WE DO *WITHOUT* **ROSH HASHANAH?**

## **Rosh Hashanah is more than just a holiday; it is Judgment Day.**

That's why the traditional greeting at this time is not "happy holiday," or even "good yom tov" or "chag sameach," but rather "shanah tovah" or, in Yiddish, "ah gut yohr" ("good year"). The heavenly court will be deciding our destiny and determining our fate for the new year, so our wish for each other is that these days of reckoning go well, and that we each be blessed with only good things for the new year.

**And this is precisely what makes our New Year observances distinctively different from those of so many others around the world. For Jews, New Year's Day is joyous but sombre. No late night partying for us. No drunken revelry as the clock strikes midnight. Actually, I've often wondered whether New Year's Eve partygoers are just having a harmless, fun night out, or if there is some kind of subconscious drowning of sorrows in drink as they mourn the passage of another year and all its unfulfilled dreams.**

And I've also often wondered what we Jews would do without Rosh Hashanah. This is the season of *cheshbon hanefesh* (spiritual stocktaking), when we take inventory of our most personal, intimate moments. We reflect on the year gone by, our successes and our shortcomings. We consider and reconsider our relationships with G-d and with other people. We try to pinpoint our failings so that we may correct them for an improved year to come. We make amends with those we may have hurt in the year gone by. We put an end to the petty grudges and *faribels* (grievances) of life, and look forward to a better, happier, more serene and peaceful future.

But what if we didn't have Rosh Hashanah? What if there were no season dedicated to self-appraisal and assessment? Would we create it on our own? And if not, would we ever emerge from the rut we work ourselves into over a long, hard year? I imagine that we would just continue along the same tedious treadmill of life until something drastic arrived out of the blue to jolt us from our lethargy.

Without Rosh Hashanah, would we ever stop to consider whether the way we are living is the way we really want to live? Would we ever pause and become introspective enough to rethink life's game plan? More than likely, we would just keep running the rat race and, as some wise person once observed, "In the rat race, even if you win you're still a rat!"

Rosh Hashanah is a time when we are compelled to sit up and take notice, to put the brakes on the mediocre merry-go-round and shout, "Stop the world, I want to get off!" These Days of Awe compel us to think about life, about ourselves, about our families, relationships and our way of life. And if necessary, to do a re-think. It gives us the chance for at least an annual "compass reading" to establish our sense of direction so that, if necessary, we can alter our course and reroute ourselves. How does the voice inside our GPS put it? "Recalculating." Most of us do need to recalculate from time to time.

So if we didn't have this once-a-year challenge and opportunity for personal introspection, what are the chances we would actually sit down and do it of our own volition? Probably very small indeed. Well, thank G-d we do have Rosh Hashanah. And the time for stocktaking is now. Or, as the legendary Hillel put it in Ethics of the Fathers, "If not now, when then?"

**In our chaotic, often mad, world we ought to appreciate and embrace this wonderful opportunity. Honestly and truly, what would we do without Rosh Hashanah?**

I wish my readers, our community—and indeed the world—a shanah tovah. May we all be inscribed in the Book of Life for a happy, healthy, peaceful, prosperous, safe, secure and spiritually rewarding new year.

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By Yossy Goldman*





# Was last year a **failure?**

Tell me you don't recognize this: **"Well, last year was a total fiasco, but next year will be totally different!"** "I failed at everything last year, but the coming year I will have an absolute metamorphosis!"

I've uttered and have heard these statements too many a time. They are so cliché, and so wrong.

Now, hold it. I do believe people can and will change, if only they wish to. A person can change his or her life around in a second, and I dare not mock the repentant.

The issue I take with these statements is with the first half of each one: "Last year was a failure. I failed last year. I was a loser..."

No, you weren't! That is so not true! How can you discard a year like that? Weren't there so many good things you did, wonderful times you experienced, and many moments of commendable self-growth?

Regardless of how many unpleasant incidents occurred in your life in the last 12 months – whether a divorce, the death of a loved one, a job loss, the pain of estranged children, or other personal challenges – there were likely still many positive moments.

Did you not give charity?

Did you not contribute to the building of a relationship?

Did you not celebrate others' happiness with them, and mourn for your fellow's pain?

Did you never smile?

Did you not see the hand of G-d guiding your steps?

The attitude of "last year was bad..." is wrong, a lie.

But worse, it guarantees another "failure" for the year to come. The logic is simple: **If you were unable to see how much you accomplished last year, how many blessings you accumulated, what are the chances you will be aware of your growth, and the positive events coming your way during the year to come?**

In summary: When summing up the year behind us, let us accept the year for what it was: a year of blessing for which we are grateful, of admirable growth of which we are proud, and of mistakes and hardships from which we grew. All in all it was a good year, thank G-d.

And G-d willing, next year will be even better.

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By Levi Avtzon*



# DO-IT-YOURSELF

## ROSH HASHANAH



### THE SHORT LIST

- Hearing the sounding of the ram's horn (shofar) on both days of Rosh Hashanah
- Lighting candles each evening - see times below
- Eating festive meals with sweet delicacies during the night and day, which include:
  - Kiddush over wine or grape juice
  - Round, raisin challah bread dipped in honey
  - Apples dipped in honey (on the first night)
  - The head of a fish, pomegranates, and other foods symbolizing our wishes for the coming year (on the first night)
  - A new fruit (on the second night)
- Performing Tashlich, a brief prayer said at a body of fresh water on the 1st day of Rosh Hashanah
- Attending services in synagogue

Wanna be a do-it-yourself pro? Get your own Rosh Hashanah prayer book (machzor) at <http://store.kehotonline.com>

**vi-hi-gee-an-u liz-man ha-zeh.**

*Translation: Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and let us reach this time.*

### RECITING KIDDUSH

**Sept 6 and 7 in the evening**

Before starting the Rosh Hashanah meal on both the first and second night, we sanctify the holiday by reciting the kiddush over a cup of wine or grape juice.

Attention, Gentlemen!

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who creates the fruit of the vine. [Amen]

Blessed are You, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has chosen us from among all nations, raised us above all tongues, and made us holy through His commandments. And You, L-rd our G-d, have given us in love this Day of Remembrance, the festival of holy assembly, a day for sounding the shofar, a holy assembly, commemorating the Exodus from Egypt. For You have chosen us and sanctified us from among all the nations, and Your word, our King, is true and enduring forever. Blessed are You L-rd, King over all the earth, who sanctifies Israel and the Day of Remembrance. [Amen]

*Glance at the festival lights, then continue:*

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

*Pour some wine from the cup to be distributed to those listening, and drink at least 2 ounces of the remaining wine while seated.*



## The Detailed List

### LIGHTING CANDLES

**Sept 6 at 6:57 pm; Sept 7\* after 7:57 pm**

*\*From a pre-existing flame*

Girls and women light candles and recite the following two blessings:

**Bo-ruch a-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu**

**me-lech ho-olom a-sher ki-de-sha-nu  
be-mitz-vo-sov ve-tzi-vo-nu le-had-lik ner  
(On night of Sept 18 add: "shel Shabbat Vi-") shel  
Yom Ha-zi-karon.**

*Translation: Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and has*

*commanded us to kindle the light of the Day of Remembrance.*

**Bo-ruch a-toh  
Ado-noi E-lo-  
hei-nu me-lech  
ho-olom she-  
he-che-ya-nu  
vi-kee-yi-ma-nu**



## A NEW FRUIT

On the second night of Rosh Hashanah, a "new fruit," i.e., a seasonal fruit which we have not yet tasted since its season began, should be present on the table when the holiday candles are kindled and during the kiddush. While reciting the Shehecheyanu blessing after candle-lighting and after the kiddush, one should have the new fruit in mind.

This fruit is eaten following the kiddush, before washing for bread. Before partaking of the fruit we say the following blessing:

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

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

## ROUND CHALLAH

Following the kiddush (and on the second night, the eating of the new fruit), we perform the ritual washing for bread, after which we say the following blessing:

**Ba-ruch a-tah Adonai, E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ha-olam, a-sher ki-desh-an-u be-mitz-vo-tav ve-tziv-anu al ne-til-at ya-da-yim.**

*Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and commanded us concerning the washing of the hands.*

When everyone has returned to the table, we raise the two loaves (traditionally, round challas are used for Rosh Hashanah) and recite the Hamotzie blessing:

**Ba-ruch atah A-do-nai, E-lo-hei-nu Melech Ha-Olam, hamotzie le-chem min ha-ar-etz.**

*Blessed are You, L-rd, our G-d, King of the universe, who brings forth bread from the earth.*

Cut the challah, dip it in honey and have a bite.



## APPLES & HONEY

On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, after eating the challah with honey, it is customary to eat several foods which symbolize the type of year we wish to have:

We dip a piece of sweet apple into honey. Before eating it we say:

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

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

We then say:

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

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



Abraham's devotion to G-d, which has characterized His descendants ever since (Genesis 22:1-24) and the shofar-blowing recalls the ram, which figures prominently in this story. The haftarah tells of G-d's eternal love for His people (Jeremiah 31:1-19).

## TASHLICH

On the afternoon of the first day of Rosh Hashanah, it is customary to go to a body of water (ocean, river, pond, etc.) and perform the Tashlich ceremony, in which we ceremonially cast our sins into the water. With this tradition we are symbolically evoking the verse "And You shall cast their sins into the depths of the sea." The short prayer for this service can be found in your machzor prayer book.



## SHOFAR

The central observance of Rosh Hashanah is hearing the sounding of the shofar, the ram's horn. It is a Mitzvah to hear the Shofar on both days of the holiday.



## THE SYNAGOGUE

We spend more time than usual in the synagogue. The holiday prayerbook—called a machzor—contains all the prayers and Torah readings for the entire day.

Torah readings: On the first day, we read about Isaac's birth (Genesis 21:1-34). The reading is followed by a haftarah reading about the birth of Samuel the Prophet (1 Samuel 1:1-2:10). The common theme in these readings: prayers for children were answered, and both births took place on Rosh Hashanah.

On the second morning, we read about Abraham's near-sacrifice of his son Isaac, a powerful display of



# ADELAIDE

IN GRATITUDE TO THE REBBE'S, RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON, OBM, GIFT OF LOVE  
— WE PRESENT THE FOLLOWING STORY.

**I**t was during my first years in Sydney when I taught a half-day and worked in my father-in-law's business the other half.

A few weeks before Rosh Hashanah I received a call from the president of the Jewish community in Adelaide. He was hoping I could come there for the High Holy Days, since their community did not have a rabbi. We had four small children, and leaving home to spend the Days of Awe in a distant city would have been difficult. I turned down the offer.

**Several days later I received an urgent letter from the Lubavitcher Rebbe: "How can you turn them down?! This is very important; it is your duty to go!" Apparently, they had written to the Rebbe and told him of their predicament and my refusal to go.**

At the end of the letter, the Rebbe added a handwritten note: "During your stay, look after the Egyptian Jews in Adelaide." I didn't know what to make of this vague instruction but I would soon find out.

I arrived in Adelaide on the day before Rosh Hashanah and went at once to the synagogue. As I walked around, a woman suddenly approached and asked, "Where is the holiest place here?" I pointed to the Ark in which are housed the Torah scrolls.

The woman went out and returned with a teenaged blind girl. She brought her to the Ark and left her there. The girl kissed the curtain of the Ark and fell to the floor sobbing. Minutes later the woman reappeared, took the girl, and left.

It was all so strange. I found the attendant and asked for an explanation. "It's ridiculous," he snorted. "She's one of those Egyptian Jews who came here but avoid any connection with us. Her parents don't come on Rosh Hashanah, so she must have decided to come the day before."

The Rebbe's note flashed in my mind: "Look after the

Egyptian Jews." I raced outside to find her, but she and her escort had disappeared.

On Rosh Hashanah I noticed a small group praying on the shul's perimeter; these were the Egyptian Jews. When the prayers ended I stood at the entrance, at the president's request, wishing everyone a happy and prosperous New Year. I noticed that the small group of Jews who didn't budge, and when I asked an assistant, I was told, "These are Egyptian Jews who are at odds with the community; there was a dispute, and now they have nothing to do with us."

The following day, after the prayers, instead of going to the entrance, I headed straight toward the Egyptian Jews to wish them a good New Year. I could sense everyone else's eyes were fixed on my back.

"Is there a blind girl among you?" I asked.

"Yes."

"Where are her parents?"

"They don't come to the synagogue."

"Please give her my best wishes for a good year."

**Monday morning the telephone in my room rang: "I'm the blind girl." Before I could reply, someone grabbed the phone from her hands and hung up.**

It was very disturbing. When Thursday night, the eve of Yom Kippur, came, I was quite upset and told the cantor what had happened. "Don't be foolish," he answered. "Do me a favor and stay away from the Egyptian Jews; don't make trouble."

Of course, I ignored his advice. I asked him to find the girl's address and phone number, and called her immediately.

"Is this the girl who visited the synagogue before Rosh Hashanah?" I asked.

"Yes. Who is speaking?"

"Rabbi Gutnick."



The line went dead.

Again and again I tried. They would answer and hang up.

**Refusing to give up, I jumped into a taxi and gave the girl's address. More than half an hour later, at 11 pm, I reached the house. I knocked on the door. When it opened, I stuck my foot in.**

"Please. Help me," I said. "It's a long trip and I came especially to talk with you."

They let me in. We sat together in the living room, where the girl joined us. I spoke with them from my heart. My familiarity with Jewish life in Egypt helped break the ice and, to some degree, I won their trust.

When the mother went to prepare some tea, I turned to her daughter. She faced me and broke down sobbing; tears sprang to my eyes, as well.

"What is it?" I asked her.

Somewhat calmer, she began her story:

"We arrived here about a year ago after fleeing with other Jews from Nasser. I have been blind from birth. When my parents were looking for a school for the blind, the only facility around was Catholic. They registered me and, for my part, I was very happy. Then, five months later, a priest who came there every week started talking to me about their religion. I didn't take anything he said seriously. A few months later, though, they told my parents that if I was to continue there at no expense, I would have to convert.

"One day I overheard my father telling my mother: 'We have no choice; we have to agree to the conversion.' I was broken.

**"I may not know a lot about Judaism, but I know there is a G-d of the Jews, and I made up my mind to pray to Him. I asked a neighbor to bring me to the synagogue. She brought me there and, at my request, asked where the holiest place was. I fell to the floor and asked G-d to show me what to do. Then I went back home to wait.**

"On Rosh Hashanah, some guests came to visit. Seeing me, they joked: 'Betty! Some rabbi came from Sydney and all he talks about is you! How does he know you?' When I heard this I ran to my room and cried and cried. I knew that you were the one that G-d had sent to help me. I tried to call you after Rosh Hashanah, but my mother hung up the telephone. But I knew you would come, no matter what."

"Betty," I asked, "will you do whatever I tell you?"

"I MAY NOT KNOW A LOT ABOUT JUDAISM, BUT I KNOW THERE IS A G-D OF THE JEWS, AND I MADE UP MY MIND TO PRAY TO HIM. ... I FELL TO THE FLOOR AND ASKED G-D TO SHOW ME WHAT TO DO."

"Yes, even if you tell me to run away from home!"

"No, that won't be necessary."

Her parents came into the room and, seeing the tears, knew she had confided in me. They wept too: "We didn't want her to convert; we're Jews. But what choice did we have? We had to do this for her own benefit."

I calmed them, "With G-d's help everything will be okay."

Then I called the synagogue administrator. Telling him briefly what was happening, I asked him to come over right away.

**"Have you lost your mind?!" he screamed, "12:30 at night?! I'm in pajamas, sleeping!"**

"Pajamas or not, get in your car and come over. Unless you would rather look for a new rabbi for Yom Kippur."

In a few hours we had worked out a solution for the family. I promised to keep in touch and help in any way I could. Thank G-d things worked out well for the girl and her family.

• • •

A few years later I met privately with the Rebbe in New York. Looking at me intently, with a faint trace of a smile, his words were:

"That 'sign' was not only for the girl. It was for you, too. You should know that your life's work is opening the eyes of those who lack vision—in spiritual matters.... It is time for you to drop everything else and devote yourself fulltime to the spiritual service of the Jewish people."

*Rabbi Chaim Gutnick eventually became the Jewish Chaplain of the Australian Army and a prominent Rabbinical figure in the Australian Jewish community and abroad.*

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# FORGIVENESS BEGINS at Home

Back in elementary school, I thought that forgiveness was a game. Every year we would review the laws of the holidays, and when it came to the laws of Yom Kippur, the teacher would tell us that we must ask forgiveness of our friends before we ask G-d to forgive us.

So I would dutifully walk over to Shimmy and say, "Do you forgive me?" And he would smile and say, "Sure I forgive you! Do you forgive me?" I would hastily answer "Sure!" and run over to David and do the spiel all over again. You forgive; I forgive. As meaningless as a handshake between diplomats.

**As I grew older, my emotional intelligence grew, my self-awareness developed, and I came to realize that forgiveness is not child's play, but serious business, a real ego-dynamite, and that "Sorry" is not (just) a board game.**

I learned that sometimes it takes more courage to ask for forgiveness than to be the one to grant it.

And I also learned that as hard as forgiveness can be between acquaintances, it's still child's play compared to the guts and humility it takes to drive the two-way street (asking for and granting forgiveness) between ourselves and those closest to us: our parents, our siblings, our spouse.

**It hurts to walk over to the person whom you love so much, and inevitably hurt, and ask for**

**forgiveness.** Many will say that asking forgiveness from a loved one ranks as one of the most awkward encounters in a person's life.

But it is the most important act of forgiveness we can ever do. It is the most challenging, and as a consequence, the most rewarding. Forgiving those you love makes your life happier and healthier, and initiates tremendous self-growth. Forgiveness benefits the forgiver as much as it benefits the forgiven. It brings closure.

**There is nothing more healing in a relationship than the balm of forgiveness. "I am sorry, Mom and Dad!" "I accept your apology, honey, and I want you to know that I love you regardless. I will always love you and accept you."**

In case we hurt our loved ones in any way throughout the past year, now is the time to bring the relationship full circle. Not as diplomats, but with self-awareness, honesty, and with our whole heart.

In summary: Heroes are those who treat the people in their homes with at least the same courtesy as the nameless gas station owner on a lonely highway.

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By Levi Avtzon*



# Does G-d Ignore My Prayers?

## QUESTION:

I am on a high from Yom Kippur. I was truly moved by the prayers and the songs. But the little skeptic within me has one niggling question. There is something very important to me that for many years I have been praying for, and it has still not materialized. **Are my tears wasted? Can I believe in the power of prayer when, in my experience, it hasn't worked?**

## ANSWER:

No prayer is ignored and no tear goes unnoticed. But the response is not always in the form we expect it to be.

At the high point of Yom Kippur, toward the end of the day in the Neilah prayer, we address G-d with the following plea: "You who hears the sound of weeping, store our tears in Your flask, and save us from all cruel decrees."

**This seems to be a strange expression. Why would G-d store our tears? It doesn't seem to be of any use to keep our tears in a flask.**

The meaning behind this is profound. Not always are our prayers answered in the way we want them to be. Sometimes, in His wisdom, G-d does not grant us our wishes at the time we demand them. Instead, He stores away our tears and files away our prayers, to be taken out and answered at another time.

We are not privy to G-d's timetable, and we don't

get His system. But every word and every tear is accounted for, and makes an impact. When and how that impact is felt by us is up to G-d. A prayer said today for someone's health may take effect only many years later. We are depositing our request, but we don't know when it will be withdrawn.

In physics, the law of conservation of energy states that energy can never be destroyed, it just changes from one form to another. There is a similar law in metaphysics. **No prayer is ever lost; no tear is ever wasted.**

**Your request will be granted; it just may be in an unexpected form.** So keep

praying, because every word is stored away. It will rebound back to you when you need it most.

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# YOM KIPPUR

## GETTING READY

SEPTEMBER 15

### FORGIVENESS, CHARITY & HONEY CAKE

Yom Kippur atones for sins which are committed against G-d, but not for wrongdoings between man and man. It is therefore important on the day before Yom Kippur to apologize and seek forgiveness from friends, relatives, and acquaintances to heal any ill feelings that may have arisen during the past year. At the same time, forgive the misdemeanors of others against you. According to how you forgive others, that's how G-d forgives you.



On the day before Yom Kippur charity is given in abundance. As we ask G-d for charity and kindness in judging us and granting us a good and sweet year, we too, should act kindly toward others.

At the morning service on the day preceding Yom Kippur there is a charming age-old Jewish custom to “bet'n lekach” or “ask for honey cake.” In addition to the blessing for a sweet year represented by the honey's sweetness, it is also in the hope that if it was decreed that we would be on the receiving end at any time during the coming year, this should be the sum total of our asking.



### INCREASING THE FEASTING

On the day before Yom Kippur we eat two festive meals. One in the morning and one before the fast begins. On this day it is customary to eat challah dipped in honey and kreplach (small dumplings generally filled with ground meat, and then boiled and served in chicken soup).

At the second meal one should not drink intoxicating beverages. It is also customary not to eat fish at this meal. When reciting the Grace After Meals, one should have in mind that he may drink until the onset of the fast. (For time, p. 31.)



### BLESSING THE CHILDREN

Before going to shul it is customary for parents to bless their children with the Priestly Benediction:

***“May G-d bless you and guard you...May G-d shine His countenance upon you and be gracious to you...May G-d turn his face toward you, and grant you peace.”***

Many have the custom of also saying: “May G-d make you like Efrayim and Menashe” (for a son); or, May G-d make you like Sarah, Rivkah, Rachel, and Leah” (for a daughter).

### WEARING WHITES

Many communities have the custom of wearing white clothes on Yom Kippur, as on this day we are compared to angels. It is also customary not to wear gold jewelry, as gold is reminiscent of the sin of the Golden Calf, and on the Day of Judgment, we do not want to “remind” the “Prosecutor” in the heavenly court of our past sins.

### CANDLE LIGHTING

Like every Shabbat and Jewish holiday, Yom Kippur is ushered in before sunset with candle lighting. It is also customary to light memorial candles for the deceased before the Yom Kippur candle lighting. (For the candle lighting blessings see page 31.)



### YOM KIPPUR DON'TS

On Yom Kippur it is prohibited to eat or drink. Women over 12 years old and men over 13 must fast. If one is physically unable to fast for health reasons, he/she should consult a Rabbi. In addition, there are four other activities specifically prohibited on Yom Kippur. They are: 1) washing, 2) wearing leather shoes, 3) engaging in marital relations, and 4) the use of body lotion, creams, etc. The fast begins a bit before sunset on the evening preceding Yom Kippur and ends the next day at about 50 minutes after sunset. (For correct times see page 31.)



# YOM KIPPUR

## *A Time to Bond*

SEPTEMBER 15 & 16

### WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year. On this day, all of the Jewish people are united in their hearts and thoughts with our heavenly Master, Al-mighty G-d. The significance of this day is that G-d chose it to be His day of forgiveness. Forgiveness in the case of one person to another comes from a sense of consideration, closeness, friendship and love beyond that person's behavior. In the case of a child, it comes from an inner, deep sense of unbounded love and being intrinsically united with one's child. Similarly, even when we transgress G-d's will and subsequently blemish our relationship, G-d is willing to forgive us. For He is our Father. Our essence, our Neshama (soul), is G-dly and descends from Him. Thus, G-d's setting aside a special day for forgiveness is a manifestation of G-d's love for us. This is what makes it the "Holiest Day," for on this day, G-d reveals the depth of His relationship with us. What is required of us is to return to Him, to relate to Him, and to fulfill His wishes, which He related to us in the Torah. It is required that we recognize and admit our wrongdoings, ask for forgiveness, and resolve firmly to become more loyal to G-d: to heed His will, study His Torah and accept upon ourselves one more mitzvah, through which we relate to Him and fulfill His wish every day.

### PRAYER BASICS

Jews recite prayers 3 times each day. On Shabbat and holidays an extra prayer is added, totaling four prayers on these special days. Yom Kippur tops them all with 5.

1. **Maariv** – The first prayer of Yom Kippur, it is recited at night – just after the holiday begins. We begin with the famous Kol Nidrei prayer.
2. **Shacharit** – The morning prayers.
3. **Musaf** – The additional prayer for Shabbat and holidays.
4. **Mincha** – The afternoon prayers.
5. **Neila** – This special prayer is recited only once a year, on Yom kippur. It is the final prayer of the day.

### VIDUI

Everyone rushes to be in shul as the sun sets, and Yom Kippur is ushered in with the heartrending Kol Nidre. But the most vital prayer—repeated ten times over the next 26 hours—is the Vidui. In this prayer we accept responsibility for every possible human

error we may have made. Since it is difficult to recall all of them, they are listed in the prayer book in alphabetical order. With each Vidui, the soul is freed and climbs higher and higher, until the ultimate high at the N'eela service, as the Heavenly Gates begin to close and the soul rises to the loftiest heights of the year.

### KOL NIDREI

The sun is setting and Yom Kippur begins. Starting very softly, the solemn Kol Nidrei ushers in the holy day. It is sung three times, each time louder than the last, as if entering a spiritual palace and coming closer to the Eternal King. Kol Nidrei, which means "all vows," nullifies the binding nature of promises in advance. One declares all future vows and promises invalid, by declaring that all vows are "absolved, remitted, cancelled, declared null and void, not in force or in effect." (It must be emphasized that there are conditions and restrictions as to the nature of the vows affected by this nullification. They do not nullify vows made between one person and another).

The origin of this prayer is in medieval Spain. Jews were forced at swordpoint to swear that they will abandon Judaism. It is said that on Yom Kippur they would gather together secretly, and formally cancel any such vows, past or future. They could then

pray on the Sacred Day with a clear conscience. Today no one forces us to deny Judaism. But our spiritual weaknesses often lead us to feel that we are restricted, tied down, or trapped in various ways and therefore prevented from full self-expression as Jews. Excuses

such as, "I would like to eat kosher, but I must eat with my clients."— or "I simply do not have the time to put on Tefillin"— are common. These limitations are a form of a "vow," a pledge to the mundane, to the corporal. On Yom Kippur we express our sincerity by freeing ourselves from our habits and resolving to do things differently. G-d, in turn, assists us in dissolving our self-imposed restrictions. Whatever our apparent normal commitments and "pledges" to material and secular values, on Yom Kippur we are given freedom to openly express total love and dedication to G-d.



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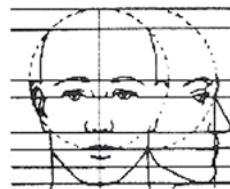
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# Got the Post-Yom Kippur Blues?

## QUESTION:

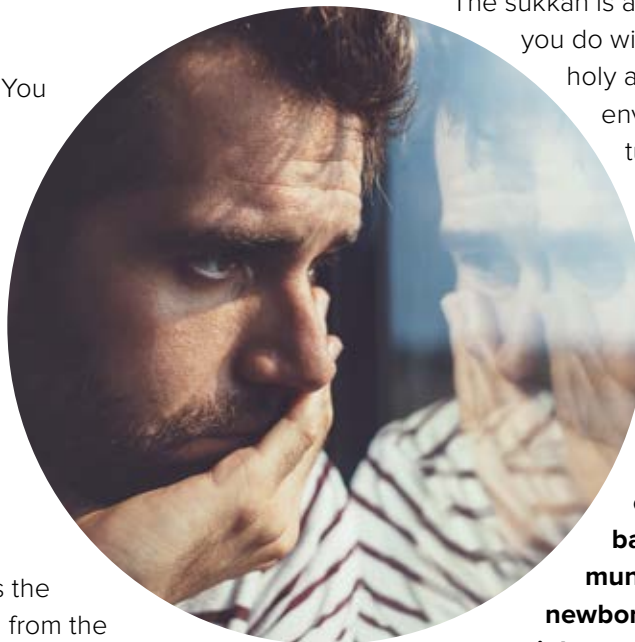
I think I have the post-Yom Kippur blues. Every year I get all inspired by the fast, and am sure that I will be more committed to Judaism in the year ahead. But somehow it dissipates pretty quickly (like around the third mouthful after breaking the fast). I don't want to lose it again this year. Any suggestions?

## ANSWER:

I know just what you need. You need to be swaddled.

A newborn baby, moments after birth, is taken by a midwife and wrapped in a swaddling cloth. This serves to keep the newborn protected and warm. Having just emerged from the security and nurture of the womb, the baby is particularly vulnerable and sensitive. A good swaddling cloth gives the infant a sense of protection from the cold and harsh world into which it has emerged.

**But swaddling doesn't last long. You rarely see teenagers wrapped up in a cloth with their arms behind their ears. (Though perhaps some should be.) Swaddling is a brief bridging stage between the safety of the womb and the hazards of real life.** A well wrapped baby will eventually grow to face life unwrapped. The swaddle cloth just helps get them there.



Your soul needs that bridge too. You have emerged from the womb of Yom Kippur, your soul pure and renewed. The negative residue from your past has been cleansed. Your soul is now tender and sensitive, and easily susceptible to the coldness of spiritual apathy and other moral germs floating in the air. You need some protection. You need to be swaddled. You need a sukkah.

The sukkah is among the only mitzvahs that you do with your whole being. The holy air of the sukkah completely envelops and surrounds you. It turns everything you do into a holy act. Simply eating, drinking and chatting is a mitzvah when it is done in the Divine shade of the sukkah. When you sit in a sukkah, you are swaddled by sanctity.

**Going from the highs of Yom Kippur straight back into the routine of the mundane world is like taking a newborn from her mother's womb straight out into the cold night. You just can't do that. Sit in the sukkah. Bask in its sacred shade. Feel wrapped in its warm embrace.**

You aren't suffering from post-Yom Kippur blues, you are just an unswaddled soul. The sukkah can fix that.

(Source: Likkutei Dibburim IV, p. 1534)

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By Aron Moss*

# A Sense OF THE NEW YEAR

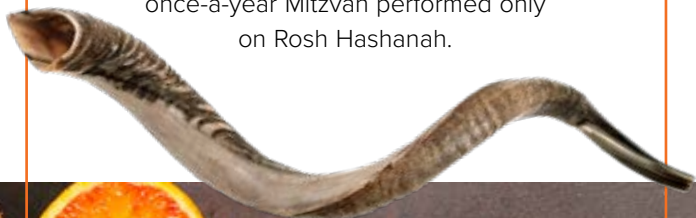
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# The **MULTICULTURALISM** Debate

**AN ONGOING DEBATE** in many Western societies today revolves around the value of multiculturalism versus the importance of assimilating the various groups and segments which constitute a society into a homogeneous entity. As is the case with the majority of widely debated issues, both sides of this particular polemic bring valid points and convincing arguments to the discussion table.

On one hand, a society is enriched by diversity and exposure to a variety of cultures, languages and value systems. Coercing elements of society to conform to a particular mold—no matter how splendid that mold may be—is an attempt to stifle the soul of that element, and anathema to a culture that prides itself in allowing freedom of expression. As Kabbalah teaches, true beauty results from the harmonization of diverse colors and flavors.

On the other hand, the smooth functionality of a nation depends largely on a united population that feels a strong kinship with one another. Diverse segments of a population which are constantly competing with each other make for an unhealthy society. Globally, much violence and strife, and many civil wars, result from tensions between co-citizens of rivaling religions, values or ethnicities. Thus, the acculturation of a nation's citizens might sound harsh and nationalistic, but is actually the key to a unified society, and ultimately a stable one.

The Jewish nation is also demographically diverse: Ashkenazim, Sephardim, chassidim, observant, not-so-observant, scholars, laymen, men, women, etc. We, too, struggle with the issue of forging a multicultural population into a singular nation. Sociologists attempting to resolve the “melting pot issue” would perhaps be well-advised to examine the Torah's perspective on *e pluribus unum*.

We are now ushering in the holiday of Sukkot. The two primary mitzvot of this holiday are dwelling in the sukkah and the taking of the Four Kinds. Jewish unity is one of the primary themes of this holiday, and these two mitzvot are symbolic of two approaches to Jewish unity; the sukkah champions the cause of Jewish nationalism and focuses on our nation as a homogeneous unit, while the Four Kinds symbolize the importance

of “Jewish multiculturalism.”

We sit in a sukkah in commemoration of the clouds of glory which miraculously encircled the Jewish people while they traveled in the desert. The clouds did not differentiate between one Jew and another—all were equal beneficiaries of their shade and protection. We, too, sit together in a sukkah as a symbol of our unity. We focus on that what unites us—our common values, mission, and souls—rather than that which divides us. We leave behind our differences and unite behind one flag.

The Four Kinds, however, tell a different story. According to the Midrash, the four different species represent different sorts of Jews, spanning the spectrum from the most observant and scholarly to the simplest of our people. Nevertheless we take the Four Kinds and hold them together, because we are one people despite the differences. But as opposed to the sukkah, this mitzvah doesn't attempt to achieve unity by ignoring our differences; rather it points out the differences, embraces them and secures our unity in spite of them.

This is because unity achieved at the expense of disregarding our unique personalities and strengths is a flawed unity. It means that the unity is very limited, limited to our shared goals and souls. Our daily lives which are so colored by our unique personalities remain unaffected by the sukkah-style unity.

But without the type of unity advocated by the sukkah, the multicultural approach of the Four Kinds would not succeed. For without an underlying unifying factor, diverse people have nothing to rally around. The Four Kinds is an endeavor to build on the unity of the sukkah by injecting our individual personalities with our pervading unity; by devoting our assorted strengths, talents and natures to perpetuating the ideals that unite us; by recognizing that the different pieces of the puzzle may look dissimilar, but are all there to complete one picture.

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By Levi Avtzon*



# The Sukkah

SEPTEMBER 20 – 27

## WHAT?

Following Yom Kippur we celebrate Sukkot, the festival of huts, and the season of our rejoicing. It is the third of the Jewish festivals (the first two are Passover and Shavuot). During the entire seven days of the festival, all meals are eaten in the Sukkah, and it is otherwise regarded as home. When partaking of a meal containing at least two ounces of bread or cake, we say the blessing “Layshev BaSukkah,” (See blessing on page 24) thanking G-d for granting us this mitzvah.

## WHY?

The Sukkah is reminiscent of the booths in which the Jewish people dwelt after leaving Egypt. It also reminds us of the miraculous “clouds of glory” that surrounded and shielded our ancestors during their forty years of wandering on the way to the Promised Land. The Sukkah inspires us to trust that today, too, G-d will protect us in His special way, and that is the reason we have outlived our greatest adversaries in all generations. On the festival of Sukkot, we remember G-d’s kindness and reaffirm our trust in His providence by dwelling in a “Sukkah” — a hut of temporary construction with a roof covering of branches — for the duration of the festival.

## A UNIQUE MITZVAH

The commandment of dwelling, eating, and spending time in the Sukkah is unique in that one’s entire person, while in the Sukkah, is involved in the mitzvah. The mitzvah of Sukkah encompasses every part of the body. It is like receiving a divine embrace. As mentioned, the festival is celebrated for seven days. The first two days are holy days (similar to Shabbat). The following five days are intermediate days, known as Chol Hamoed, when travel and limited work is permitted.

## HOSHANA RABBAH

The seventh day of Sukkot is called Hoshana Rabba. It is customary to stay awake the preceding night and recite the book of Deuteronomy and the Book of Psalms. In the morning, we circle the Bimah (the Torah reading platform) in the synagogue seven times while holding the Lulav and Esrog, reciting special prayers, called “Hoshanot.” In an ancient rite of profound mystical significance, we beat five willow branches which are bound together on the floor, symbolically “sweetening” G-d’s judgment. During the day on Hoshanah Rabbah, we eat a festive meal in the Sukkah. Kiddush is not recited, but we begin the meal with challah dipped in honey and delicious Kreplach, (boiled meat dumplings) which symbolize the covering of severity with loving-kindness.

## HOLIDAY TO DO LIST

- Candlelighting, both nights, Sept. 20 & 21 (see schedule on p. 31)
- Kiddush and festive meals, both nights & both days, Sept 20, 21 & 22
- Eat all meals in the Sukkah. Make a special blessing for eating in the Sukkah (see page 24)
- Make a blessing on the Four Kinds each day, (see page 24)
- On Hoshanah Rabbah, eat festive meals and tap the aravot (willow branches)

# THE FOUR KINDS

SEPTEMBER 21 – 27

One of the special mitzvahs of Sukkot, which is performed everyday except Shabbat, is the “The Four Kinds” (described in detail below). We recite a blessing over them and, holding them close together, wave them to all six directions: right, left, forward (facing east), upward, downward, and back - slightly over your right shoulder (facing west) to signify that G-d’s presence is everywhere. Like all other mitzvahs, it should be performed because it is G-d’s will. However, like all the mitzvahs, it has its own particular significance and meaning. The most famous interpretation is that these four species represent the unity of all different kinds of Jews. What’s so powerful about this Mitzvah is; that you need all four kinds together to perform the mitzvah which illustrates to us how indispensable every Jew is.



## Esrog

A rare citrus fruit, combines both a taste and a fragrance that are enjoyed by all – represents the individual who excels in Torah\* study, as well as observance of mitzvahs.\*



## Lulav

A palm branch, is from a tree that bears dates which is a pleasant tasting fruit, but it is odorless – represents those individuals who are Torah scholars, but who do not particularly emphasize good deeds.



## Hadasim

The myrtle twigs, are fragrant but tasteless – represent individuals excel at good deeds but not in Torah study.

## Aravos

The willow branches, have neither taste nor smell – represent those individuals who do not excel in either Torah study or good deeds.

---

*\*Fragrance = Good deeds (A pleasant aroma spreads & those nearby are touched; likewise good deeds & Mitzvot positively affect those around us)*

*Good Taste = The Torah Scholar (As one internalizes what they eat; likewise one internalizes that which they have learned)*

## BLESSING ON THE SUKKAH

September 20-27

During the seven days of Sukkot when eating bread or cake in the Sukkah, recite blessing #1. Many maintain the custom of eating or drinking nothing outside the Sukkah. When observing this mitzvah for the first time this season, recite blessing #3.

**1.** Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sher Ki-de-sha-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Ve-tzi-vanu Le-shev Ba-su-kkah.

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

## BLESSING ON THE FOUR KINDS

September 21-27

Every day of Sukkot, except Shabbat, we make a blessing over the "Four Kinds." Preferably this mitzvah is performed in the morning, however, if missed, one may do it all day until sunset.

Here is how to do it: Take the lulav/palm branch bound with the myrtle and willow in the right hand and say blessing #2. Then pick up the esrog/citron with the left hand and hold it together with the lulav/palm branch.

When observing this mitzvah for the first time this season, recite blessing #3.

**3.** Boruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom She-heh-chi-ya-nu Veh-ki-ye-ma-nu Veh-hi-geh-ya-nu Liz-man Ha-zeh.

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

It is customary to wave the Four Kinds to all four points of the compass as well upward and downward.

**2.** Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olam A-sher Ki-de-sha-nu Be-mitvo-sov Ve-tzi-vanu Al Ne-ti-las Lu-lov.

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

# Got your sukkah ready?

Before Sukkot, construct a temporary, 3-4 walled structure directly under the sky – no trees or overhang above. For roofing, toss on any cut, inedible vegetation that will last for seven days. Favorites are western cedar, bamboo and corn husks (without the corn). Use enough to provide more shade than sunlight.

**Time-hungry? There are pre-fab sukkah kits that go up in a matter of minutes – just make sure your walls are secure and firm.**

For seven days, make the sukkah your official home. Don't panic: As long as you eat your meals there, you're okay. We also try to include anything else we would normally do in the house – like reading a book or talking with a friend.

The main thing is fill your Sukkah with family and friends, enjoy great meals, sing songs, tell stories and speak words of Torah wisdom.

**Need help building your sukka? Call Chabad at 847.782.1800 before September 12.**





# SAY NO TO DRUGS

## And All Other Artificially Induced Highs...

Rabbi Mendel Futerfas was imprisoned in a Siberian labor camp for the crime of assisting his coreligionists in escaping the USSR in the dark post-World War II days. Many of his fellow inmates were professionals and intellectuals from the upper-crust of society, imprisoned because of the ostensible "threat" they constituted to Soviet ideology.

This group often wondered how Mendel maintained his cheerful demeanor despite the sub-human conditions which pervaded the camp. When they posed the question to him, he instantly replied:

**"You are all dejected because your incarceration prevents you from materializing your life's goals. My goal in life is to serve G-d. And that—I can do wherever I may be!"**



Aside for the damage caused to the body by illegal or other mind-altering substances and excessive consumption of alcohol, as well as their potential for wreaking damage on relationships and careers, they also invariably disappoint those who turn to them in order to fill a void in their lives. In the end, they solve nothing; they only offer a temporary escape from melancholic feelings and/or one's sense of inadequacy and lack of accomplishment. Indeed, even at the moment one is experiencing an artificial high, the problems don't disappear. Even if one succeeds in momentarily removing all worries from the conscious mind, they always lurk in the sub-conscious—never allowing the person to find complete solace. As a wise person once said, "People imagine they can drown their troubles in drink; little do they know that their troubles float..."

But "escapism" isn't relegated to the world of hallucinogenics. On a deeper level, **most of our supposed sources of**

**happiness are—to a certain extent—a subtle form of escapism.** They are an escape from who we are; an attempt to find happiness from without, instead of finding true happiness within. While we chase transient possessions in our pursuit of happiness, we imagine that the reason for our emptiness and lack of happiness is our failure in achieving our goals. Happiness and utopian bliss are certain to wash over our lives once we've earned our first few million... If only we knew that it is all an exercise in futility. I once saw a quote from mega-millionaire Hollywood icon Jim Carrey, saying that he wishes that everyone had what he did—just so that they could see how meaningless it all is!

**Happiness comes not from possessions. While one can find a certain measure of happiness in one's accomplishments, such happiness is also incomplete. For our accomplishments will never fully meet our satisfaction. Ultimate happiness is happiness with who we are, contentment with our very identity.**

During the High Holidays—and specifically on Yom Kippur—we connect with our innermost core, the essence of the Jewish soul which is eternally and unconditionally connected to G-d. It is precisely because of this unconditional bond that G-d annually grants us a full-hearted forgiveness, despite our behavior in the previous year. During Yom Kippur, however, the atmosphere is too somber and intense, and we are too involved in serious repentance, for us to savor and appreciate what transpires during those awesome moments. It takes a few days for our incredible fortune to sink in: Connection to G-d is who we are! And because this is our very identity, absolutely nothing can alter it—attempting to disconnect a Jew from G-d would be akin to attempting to transform a cow into a horse!

"Fortunate are we! How good is our portion, how pleasant is our lot, and how beautiful our heritage!"

So for seven days we forget about all else. We leave behind our home and possessions—and all other imaginary sources of happiness—and go out into a flimsy non-weatherproof hut. We sing, rejoice and say *I'chaim*; we're happy because we finally focus and what's really important in life—our own selves!

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By Naftali Silberberg*

# A **SIXTH** DIMENSION

I was at the corner of Grove and Baldwin, just minutes away from my mid-afternoon coffee, when they stopped me. Two boys, in conservative but rumpled suits, big black hats shielding their faces from the sun.

## **They wanted me to light a candle.**

But not just any candle; they wanted me to light a candle for G-d. To change the world. To bring perfection. I wondered if soon they'd tell me it was the key to wealth.

## **I said no.**

I was searching for meaning all my life.

I knew money was not the key. Even the Citi ads agreed.

I needed more. Fulfillment. Career. A sense of self-worth. A group of friends. A part in changing someone's life. And I got it all, but it wasn't enough.

On that day, I knew I needed more. But I was prepared to give more community service, a more challenging job. Not G-d.

## **I don't need G-d in my life. I live in this world,**

not in nirvana. I don't need ritual, repetitive cultish behavior to give color to my world. I certainly didn't need a plain white tea light to replace my lavender-scented pillar.

I needed meaning.

## **So I said no.**

Weeks later, they stopped me again.

This time, they were carrying branches and fruit. They wanted me to wave them in the air, to shake them in all directions. For G-d. For world peace. For unity.

What a ridiculous way of avoiding reality.

## **I said no.**

**But the next day, I said yes.**

I figured, what harm can come from a little foreign culture? So I shook the fruit. And there were no fireworks, no visions of G-d, no glow of accomplishment. Just like I expected.

But later that night, there was something different. Nothing big, nothing I could quite put my finger on. Just a very slight feeling of good.

So the next day, I waved the branch again. I repeated the strange syllables, and waved the fruit around. But not for world peace. Just to catch that elusive feeling.

Now, I light candles every Friday night. I stopped putting milk in my chicken à la King. I read words of praise daily from a little book. To G-d.

What changed?

Oddly enough, it hasn't changed the things I do. I still have my career. I still have my friends. I still volunteer at the women's shelter. But it's more.

Nothing has changed. Nothing has changed in my 5-dimensional world.

But I've discovered a sixth dimension I never knew existed.

I would never have believed it if I heard it. Reading about it would make no difference. Sound can be understood only in the context of other sounds.

Not until I shook a branch could I have reference for that dimension. And not until I began doing more could I really feel its presence.

Those boys could have talked me blue in the face, but it would be meaningless on its own. I had to actually do it myself.

And now I know why they stopped me.

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As told to Nechama Dina Hecht*



# LOVE, MARRIAGE and Hakafot

**Men usually don't sit over coffee talking about their marriages.** That's why a particular conversation between three males stuck in my mind — we were discussing the joys of wedded life.

"I love my wife," said Berl. "That's why I do everything she asks me to do. She says, 'Berl, please take out the garbage,' and right away, I take out the garbage."

We all agreed that Berl loves his wife.

**Not to be outdone, I said: "I also do everything my wife asks me to do. In fact, she doesn't even have to spell out what she wants. It's enough that she says, 'Whew! That garbage bag is sure smelling up the kitchen!' for me to understand that she wants me to take out the garbage. Which I do, of course."**

We all agreed that I love my wife even more than Berl loves his.

But in the end it turned out that Shmerl's marriage was the most loving of all. Shmerl's wife doesn't have to ask her husband to do things for her. She doesn't even have to drop hints. "I wake up in the morning" Shmerl explained, "and I just know that she wants me to take out the garbage. Or buy her a diamond ring. She doesn't have to crinkle her nose or mention the ring her cousin Sarah got for her birthday. I just know what she wants me to do for her, and I do it."

The month of Tishrei is replete with mitzvot—full of opportunities for carrying out G-d's will. For more than three weeks, our days are filled with praying, repenting, fasting, feasting, dancing, building a sukkah, acquiring a set of Four Kinds or a bundle of hoshanot, and dozens of other mitzvot, customs and observances.

The observances of Tishrei fall under three general categories. There are biblical precepts that are explicitly commanded in the Torah, such as sounding the shofar on Rosh HaShanah, fasting on Yom Kippur or eating in the sukkah on Sukkot. There are also a number of rabbinical

mitzvot—observances instituted by the prophets and the sages by the authority vested in them by the Torah. For example, the five prayer services held on Yom Kippur and the taking of the Four Kinds on all but the first day of Sukkot are rabbinical institutions.

Finally, the month of Tishrei has many minhagim or customs—such as eating an apple dipped in honey on the first night of Rosh HaShanah or conducting the kaparat in the wee hours of the morning on the day before Yom Kippur. **The minhagim are not mandated by biblical or rabbinical law, but by force of custom: these are things that we Jews have initiated ourselves as ways to enhance our service of our Creator.**

Most amazingly, the climax of the month of Tishrei—the point at which our celebration of our bond with G-d attains the very pinnacle of joy—is during the hakafot of Simchat Torah, when we take the Torah scrolls in our arms and dance with them around the reading table in the synagogue—a practice that is neither a biblical nor a rabbinical precept, but merely a custom.

**For it is with our observance of the minhagim that we express the depth of our love for G-d.**

The biblical commandments might be compared to the explicitly expressed desires between two people bound in marriage. The rabbinical mitzvot, on which G-d did not directly instruct us but which nevertheless constitute expressions of the divine will, resemble the implied requests between spouses. But the minhagim represent those areas in which we intuitively sense how we might cause G-d pleasure. And in these lie our greatest joy.

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By Yanki Tauber*



# SHEMINI ATZERET AND SIMCHAT TORAH

SEPTEMBER 27, 28 & 29

## THE EXCLUSIVE AFTER-PARTY

Following the seven days of Sukkot are Shemini Atzeret and Simchas Torah, which culminate all the holidays of the month of Tishrei. The Midrash compares this holiday to an “intimate family party,” before the long journey into the world for the rest of the winter. For us, as well as for G-d Himself, it is difficult to separate from the holiness of these festive days, when we feel so close to G-d, and we are now about to engage in the mundane life of the rest of the year. So G-d asks us to “Tarry yet another day.”

## OUR LAST STOP

The High Holiday celebrations in all their exciting shades and forms are out of the norm. We are overwhelmed by their powerful spirits. The Yom Tov of Shmini Atzeret and Simchas Torah following Sukkot represent the “Quite Private Party,” right before the time we move forward into the rest of the year. It is the time when we internalize the past month’s inspiration; the “last stop” when we embrace and re-harness ourselves to incorporate the holiday inspiration into the new year’s everyday life. Shemini Atzeret and Simchas Torah, like all Jewish festivals and holidays are observed with kiddush, festive meals, and restriction of work.

## Shmini Atzeret

SEPTEMBER 27 & 28

On Shemini Atzeret, many have a custom to continue to eat meals in the Sukkah, but do so without reciting the blessing of “Layshev Ba’Sukkah.” On Simchas Torah, the ninth day, we resume eating meals indoors.

## Simchat Torah

SEPTEMBER 28 & 29

### DANCING AND “HAKAFOT” (*circling*)

On the evening and in the morning of Simchas Torah (some also do so on the preceding evening of Shemini Atzeret), all the Torah scrolls are taken from the ark and carried in a parade of seven Hakafos, encircling the Bimah (the platform of the synagogue) singing and dancing with the Torah scrolls. Simchas Torah, which means “rejoicing with the Torah,” is celebrated with exuberant dancing. The rest of the year, we approach the Torah with serious study. On Simchas Torah, we approach, the Torah with joyful dance. This holiday emphasizes that the Torah is the inheritance of every single Jew – scholar and simple person alike.



## A NEVER-ENDING CYCLE

In completing the annual cycle of reading the Torah, we read the final section of the Torah, after which we immediately start to read the Torah again from the beginning. By starting to read the Torah anew, we demonstrate that learning never ends, especially when it comes to the Torah and its infinite wisdom. Children are given gifts of candy and fruit, because it is stated, "The commandments of the Lord are sweeter than honey."

## A TIME FOR THE FEET

Every part of the body has its mitzvah. We pray with our lips, read Torah with our eyes, light Shabbat candles and give charity with our hands. We study with our brain, love G-d with our heart, and hear the shofar with our ears. Similarly, every mitzvah has its day. On Simchas Torah, the feet have their day, as we march and dance with our feet, elevating and uplifting our whole body in honoring the Torah. They say on this day, the Torah itself wants to rejoice – and we provide the legs.

## ALL TOGETHER

The celebration of Simchat Torah again emphasizes Jewish unity. While there may be great differences between one person and another, all are equal when it comes to carrying the Torah and dancing with it on Simchas Torah. The scholar and the simple person, the committed and the estranged, dance together their arms intertwined with any differences between them forgotten amidst this joyous celebration.

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# simchat torah

## AT CHABAD

TUESDAY

**September 28**

**Evening Service**

7:15 PM

**Family Dinner**

**Dance with the Torah**

7:45 PM



**On Simchat Torah we dance with our feet, not with our heads.**

We are celebrating the Torah, and the Torah is something we study with our heads. But we dance with our feet, not with our heads. If we would dance with our heads, each one would dance a different dance, each in a different space, some with friends but not with others, some as lonesome souls.

One head is higher, one is lower, one is here on earth, the other in the clouds

or beyond, and some minds know only their own space that no one else can know.

But we dance with our feet, and all our feet are here on the same earth – none higher and none lower. So now we can all dance as one, with one heart, as a single being.

Now there is no loneliness, only joy.

**DANCING**  
with Feet

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# High Holiday Schedules & Blessings 5782 / 2021

Date	Holiday/Event	Blessing #	Gurnee
Mon Sept 6	1st Eve of Rosh Hashanah	1 & 4 *	6:57
Tues Sept 7	2nd Eve of Rosh Hashanah	1 & 4 **	7:57
Fri Sept 10	Shabbat Candle Lighting	5 ***	6:50
Wed Sept 15	Eve Yom Kippur - Fast Begins	2 & 4***	6:41
Thu Sept 16	Fast Ends		7:41
Fri Sept 17	Shabbat Candle Lighting	5 ***	6:37
Mon Sept 20	1st Eve of Sukkot	3 & 4 *	6:32
Tues Sept 21	2nd Eve of Sukkot	3 & 4 **	7:32
Fri Sept 24	Shabbat Candle Lighting	5 ***	6:25
Mon Sept 27	Eve of Shemini Atzeret	3 & 4 *	6:20
Tues Sept 28	Eve of Simchat Torah	3 & 4 **	7:19

**1. Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sher Ki-de-sho-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Vi-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik Ner Shel Yom Ha-zi-ko-ron.**

*Blessed are you, L-rd our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the light of the Day of Remembrance.*

**2. Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sher Ki-de-sho-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Ve-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik Ner Shel Yom Ha-kipurim.**

*Blessed are you, L-rd our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the light of Yom Kippur.*

**3. Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sher Ki-de-sho-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Vi-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik Ner Shel Yom Tov.**

*Blessed are you, L-rd our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the light of the Festival Day.*

**4. Boruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom She-heh-chi-ya-nu Veh-ki-ye-ma-nu Veh-hi-geh-ya-nu Liz-man Ha-zeh.**

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

**5. Bo-ruch A-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu Me-lech Ho-olom A-sher Ki-de-sho-nu Be-mitz-vo-sov Ve-tzi-vo-nu Le-had-lik Ner Shel Shabos Ko-desh.**

*Blessed are you, L-rd our God, King of the Universe, who has sanctified us by His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the light of the Holy Sabbath.*



\* If lighting after the time indicated, light only from a pre-existing flame.

\*\* Do not light before the time indicated. Light only from a pre-existing flame. A pre-existing flame is a flame burning continuously from the onset of the festival, such as a pilot light, gas or candle flame. \*\*\* Do not light after sunset.

## CANDLE LIGHTING GUIDELINES

1. Married women light two candles. Some women follow the custom of adding one candle for each additional member of the family.
2. Single women and girls - even the very young, as soon as they can say the blessing - should light one candle.

For more details and instructions visit [www.chabad.org/calendar/candlelighting](http://www.chabad.org/calendar/candlelighting).

# HERE'S my STORY

# DEFENDING ISRAEL IS DEFENDING THE WORLD

## MR. OVADIA ELI

Mr. Ovadia Eli served as mayor of Afula, member of Knesset, Deputy Minister of Defense, and as the chairman of the Airports Authority. He was interviewed in his office at Ben Gurion Airport in December of 2010.

Throughout the years that I served as the mayor of Afula, I became very close to the Chabad emissaries in the city — Rabbi Chaim Sholom Segal and Rabbi Shlomo Segal — and I came to consider them not only as my good friends but as my brothers. There came a time when I, and the Afula city council, decided to present the Rebbe with a key to the city — a symbolic golden key in an elegant box — as a token of appreciation for the important contribution that his emissaries were making to our city.

**Before we actually presented the key to the Rebbe, I began serving as a member of the Knesset, and I was appointed as the Deputy Minister of Defense, becoming responsible for protection of Israel's home-front.**

Two months later — during Sukkot of 1991 — I came to visit the Rebbe in New York with my wife Ruti. We were there for a few days, and we were hosted by Chabad chasidim in Crown Heights. In the afternoon of Hoshanah Rabbah — which coincided with Sunday that year — the Rebbe was distributing dollars, and I stood in line in order to hand him the ceremonial key to the city of Afula. The exchange I had with the Rebbe on this occasion made a deep impression on me.

Before I even managed to introduce myself, the Rebbe began to speak to me in great detail about the types of missiles which the enemy had and which might endanger the home-front. I was astonished by the vast knowledge he showed regarding the types of munition stockpiles that our enemies had and the dangers that may come from them.

**I was even more surprised by what the Rebbe said to me later on in the conversation: "You are responsible not just for the well-being of the citizens living in Israel, but also for the well-being of all Jews wherever they dwell in the world."**

I was impressed by what he was telling me — that the defense system in Israel is, in fact, responsible for the safety of all Jews. This was a very broad, systemic view and it fascinated me. I became convinced that he was right — that it is Israel's

responsibility and duty to ensure the security of Jews everywhere.

A few months after this meeting — on March 17, 1992

— the Israeli embassy in Buenos Aires was bombed, with twenty-nine killed and more than 240 injured. As the Deputy Minister of Defense, I worked to arrange a rescue team to fly from Israel to Argentina, but it took more than a day to get it



off the ground. I then recalled the Rebbe's words, and I decided to establish a permanent crew of emergency rescue forces which would stand at the ready, able to fly out on short notice to rescue Jews wherever they may be, if a disaster like this should happen again.

When this emergency rescue force was organized, I called it "The Rebbe's Patrol for Rescuing Jews around the World."

Indeed, two years later — on July 18, 1994 — there was another bombing attack against the Jewish community in Buenos Aires, Argentina's deadliest terrorist attack to date, resulting in 85 killed and hundreds more injured.

Within a few hours a plane with the rescue force was dispatched and went to work extracting people from the building which the bomb had collapsed. They were able to save several Jewish



lives and did an incredible job, for which they received praise and international recognition.

Going back to my visit to the Rebbe during Simchat Torah of 1991, I have to say it was an extraordinary experience. I cannot describe what it feels like to walk into the huge synagogue and see thousands of people streaming in, hanging onto the walls, the poles and the windows, as special trucks bring cool air into the hall that is filled to maximum capacity. To see the Rebbe encouraging the singing with his hand motions, and the silence that falls when he is ready to speak. To feel the electrifying atmosphere, and the tremendous indescribable joy. All I can say is that the one who was not at this Simchat Torah with the Rebbe has never experienced true joy in his life!

**“YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE  
NOT JUST FOR THE WELL-  
BEING OF THE CITIZENS  
LIVING IN ISRAEL, BUT  
ALSO FOR THE WELL-  
BEING OF ALL JEWS  
WHEREVER THEY DWELL  
IN THE WORLD.”**

At the end of the holiday, I was present at the *kos shel brachah* ceremony, where the Rebbe distributed wine from his cup to the thousands that passed before him. I was the last in line, making me the last person in the world who received wine from the Rebbe’s cup, as this was the last time this event took place. A few months later — on the 27th of the Hebrew month of Adar, 1992 — the Rebbe suffered a stroke from which he never recovered.

Beyond being a great Torah genius, the Rebbe was first and foremost a Jewish leader. He concerned himself with the preservation of the Jewish people, even in the most remote places in the world. Few are those who did as much as he did, even in the past one thousand years of Jewish history. The Rebbe’s contribution was obvious and important, and for that he was admired and loved.

**MY ENCOUNTER with the REBBE** *An oral history project dedicated to documenting the life of the Rebbe, Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, of righteous memory. The story is one of thousands recorded in the 900 videotaped interviews conducted to date. Please share your comments and suggestions. [mystory@jmedia.org](mailto:mystory@jmedia.org)*

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# Celebration!

## HIGH HOLIDAYS

5782 / 2021



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& IN HONOR OF THE ISACOVICI FAMILY

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