

LIFT



Issue	Lift Magazine
03	תשרי 'תשפ"א - Tishrei 5781

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**DESIGN, ILLUSTRATION
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PUBLISHED BY



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From The Editors

Chassidism places a large emphasis on serving Hashem with joy, for the manner in which we perform a mitzvah is just as important as the mitzvah itself. At first glance, our avodah in the month of Tishrei seems to focus on sombre repentance. But the truth is, Tishrei is perhaps the most joyous month in the Jewish calendar. On the 15th of Tishrei, we celebrate Sukkos, which the Torah refers to as “Zman Simchosanu” - the time for (our) happiness. Of course, one need not wait until Sukkos to be happy. The anticipation of the holiday itself creates a festive atmosphere at the start of the month. This excitement permeates our avodah during the Yomim Noroim, giving us extra motivation to properly do teshuvah.

Although we currently find ourselves in a difficult situation, it is more important than ever that we embrace the simchas Yom Tov

and truly rejoice. Positivity is contagious. All it takes is one small initiative and Hashem will certainly react in kind.

Our sages teach us, “Simcha poretz geder” - happiness breaks all boundaries. We hope that the thoughts shared in this month’s expanded edition of LIFT will help bring the community together in a spirit of achdus and simcha. Ushering in a year of physical and spiritual success.



Cover Photo

Rabbi Groner, Moshe Zalmen Feiglin, Reb Nochum, Reb Mulik Gurevitch, and Herschel Klein. At a wedding, circa 1956.


Letters to the Editor

For any questions, comments, suggestions, or corrections, please contact the editors at liftdownunder@gmail.com

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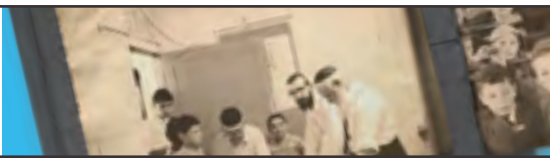
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Celebrating the High Holidays In Lockdown



Written by David Werdiger

Comedians, politicians, and *Yomim Noro'im*. At first glance, three very different things. But if we look deeper, they all contain a common thread, and one particularly relevant to this year.

One of my favourite joke books is *Isaac Asimov's Treasury of Humor*. It is the only joke book I've ever read that includes notes about the jokes – why they are funny and how to tell them. It's almost as if Asimov is writing a *pirush* on the jokes, studying and classifying them.

Comedians, like any artist or performer, take their work seriously. A well-constructed and delivered joke is a work of art, and it takes much effort and preparation to make them seem spontaneous. The best jokes (for me) are the ones that speak a deep truth about us – our values, our relationships. In that way, comedy is a device for social commentary: it can force us to confront aspects of ourselves, softening the blow with humour.

Effective comedy needs sharp punch lines and a degree of shock value. Some comedians get up on stage and tell their stories through a litany of obscenities, to roars of laughter. But sometimes the swear words become the story itself instead of the device, and that is where it goes wrong. Comedy has two elements: the theatre and the content. To convey the message, there needs to be just enough theatre to couch the deeper message. Knowing that balance separates the clever comedians from the crass ones.

At times, politicians may seem like comedians, although often we laugh *at* them rather than *with* them. Politics also has its theatre – the public face particularly visible during election campaigns or through times of crisis. They make promises and bold statements that seek to play on our aspirations and fears. There is the bluster and rhetoric in parliament – a place where anything goes and one not for the faint-hearted.

But beneath that façade, politicians and the political system are there to govern and make important decisions on behalf of the people – their constituents. Their decisions impact so much of our lives: our finances, our health and wellbeing, and our security. As much as we denigrate them, stable and effective government is an essential part of the society we live in. Without them, there is anarchy. But most of the time, we only see the theatre.

Some politicians are all bluster and no substance – the equivalent of a potty-mouthed comedian. The good ones use just enough theatre and rhetoric to get themselves elected, and then focus primarily on their main purpose – to serve the people.

That brings us to the upcoming *Yomim Noro'im*, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Jewish ritual practice. For months, we have not been able to daven with a *minyan*, hear *laining*, go to *mikveh*, or eat *Shabbos* meals with friends and family. Some people may not have even benched with a *mezuman*. These daily and weekly rituals are deeply embedded in our lives and we feel a void without them. Judaism is not a religion designed to be observed on a desert island,

or on a mountaintop in Tibet (that said, there are only a small number of *mitzvos* that cannot be observed on a desert island – *mishloach manos* is a prominent example).

During the *yom tov* season of *Tishrei*, our ritual practices crank up to another level. Some are mandatory, like *shofar*, fasting, *sukkah* and *arba minim*; many are only observed when we are actually with a *minyan*. It will be very challenging and the restrictions will leave a huge void in our lives.

A well-constructed and delivered joke is a work of art, and it takes much effort and preparation to make them seem spontaneous

For many people, without these things it won't *feel* like *yom tov*.

But what are the *Yomim Noro'im* really about? Are they about sitting in *shul* for hours? Inspirational *chazonus* and singing together? Actually, no. *Rosh Hashana* is about renewing/refreshing *Hashem* as King of the world, and *Yom Kippur* is about forgiveness and cleaning our slate. At their core, they are about our relationship with *Hashem*. These special days ask us for a deep examination of our place in the world, how we live a meaningful life and our connection to the Divine. The five *tefilos* on *Yom Kippur* are a progression through the five layers of our souls, culminating in the intimacy of *ne'ilah*, when the deepest part of us can commune with the deepest part

of *Hashem*.

Like comedy and politics, our *avodah* during the *Yomim Noro'im* has two elements: the theatre: the rituals that establish the appropriate setting, and the substance: the work on our relationship with *Hashem* as our King, understanding both our human frailties and the immense power of our souls, and therefore our place and purpose in this world.

This year, the theatre aspect will be seriously curtailed. Being unable to *daven* with a *minyan* does not detract from any of the substance whatsoever. However, it does pose a serious personal challenge: without the comfort and support of communal ritual, how do we get into 'the zone' to approach the substance? There are no simple answers to this question. The first step is to understand the two elements of our *avodah*, as I've explained. The second step is for each person individually to find their alternative pathways to help them through the spiritual journey of the *Yomim Noro'im*. Without the constraints of a *minyan* (which is inevitably too fast or too slow), we may choose to spend time learning prior to *davening*, or to pause and meditate on particular sections that touch us.

Chassidus explains that every year with the blowing of the *shofar*, an *ohr chodosh* – a fresh spiritual energy – enters the world. This year more than most, we need something new and special to help us navigate the current challenges.





Speaking from Experience



Stay Focused

Written by

Rabbi Berel Light



I had the privilege to learn in Kollel from Tishrei 2007 until January 2009. I still have fond memories of those years and maintain the friendships that were formed. Indeed, it was here that I had the opportunity to learn with a variety of people from all walks of life and pursue my learning of *Dayanus*. For me, the greatest aspect of the Kollel was its interconnectedness with the community. Every morning and night, the “buzz” of learning emanated from the halls of the Kollel.

There is a famous story with my great uncle, Rabbi Lebiel

Kaplan, the Rav of Tzfas, who was also part of the first group of Shluchim sent to Australia in 1968. During the early years of Chabad in Tzfas, Rabbi Kaplan assumed the position of Rosh Kollel, which the Rebbe insisted he kept, despite his constantly increasing responsibilities. In 1974, the *mazkirus* sent a list of questions on Halacha to various Kollels around the world. Rabbi Kaplan got wind of this and was surprised that it hadn't been sent to his Kollel.

Upon investigation, it became clear that these questions had indeed originated in his Kollel. As he later recounted, the Rebbe took a keen interest in everything that he and the Kollel did. For the Rebbe, the Kollel was the energy that charged the city, kindling the fire of Torah and Mitzvos. My experience shows the truth of this sentiment.

Message in the field?

Although the month of Elul does not have any official Yom-Tov in it, nonetheless it is inundated with important Chassidic events and themes that bring this month to life. Indeed, the Friediker Rebbe famously quipped that “Though summer still lingered, and the day was bright and sunny, there was a change in the air. One smelled already the Elul-scent; a teshuvah-wind was blowing. Everyone grew more serious, more thoughtful...all awaited the call of the shofar, the

first blast that would announce the opening of the gates of the month of mercy.”

I would like to present three ideas that occur in this month, that together outline a path on how to prepare ourselves for the upcoming “Days of Awe.” The first one is the idea of the ‘king in the field’ which is the novel teaching by the Alter Rebbe referring to the uniqueness of the month of Elul. Second is Chai Elul, the day that the Chassidus luminaries brought Chassidus to the fore; both in a collective manner as well as in a specific manner (through Chabad Chassidus). The third idea is the notion of “making a fence to a new house,” from the Torah reading of Parshas Ki Seitzei, which is read in the month of Elul, and has a direct connection to Kollel.

Before developing the interconnectedness of these seemingly disparate ideas, I would like to add one more personal reflection. Rosh Chodesh Elul is the Yartzeit of my Elter Bubbe, Chaya Tzirla Plotkin, wife of the famous Chossid Avraham Eliyahu Polotin (*).

This is the story that has been passed down that occurred between her and the Rebbe. Although I didn't verify the authenticity of this story, the theme is definitely valuable. In 1954, my Elter Bubby Chaya went into the Rebbe's office and said,

דער אלטער רבי האט געמאכט
חסידים פון גאונים

דער מיטעלער רבי האט געמאכט
חסידים פון יונגעלייט

דער צמח צדק האט געמאכט חסידים
פון רבנים

דער רבי מהר"ש האט געמאכט
חסידים פון בעלי בתים

דער רבי רש"ב האט געמאכט חסידים
פון בחורים

דער פריערדיגער רבי האט געמאכט
חסידים פון קינדער

דער רבי מאכט חסידים פון פרויען

*“The Alter Rebbe made
Chassidim from Torah Geniuses.*

*The Mitteler Rebbe made
Chassidim from newlyweds.*

*The Tzemach Tzedek made
Chassidim from Rabbonim.*

*The Rebbe Maharash made
Chasidim from established
businessmen.*

*The Rebbe Rashab made
Chasidim from Bochorim.*

*The Frierdiker Rebbe made
Chasidim from children.*

*The Rebbe made Chasidim from
women.”*

When the Rebbe heard this, he
smiled.

So, what indeed is the message of
this story?

The Working Class:

In the ma’amer of Ani Ledodi
(1984), the Rebbe explains the
two main features that govern
one’s day; food and clothing, and
how these two ideas are reflected
in Torah and Mitzvos. In the
course of the Ma’amer, the Rebbe
delves into the parable of “the
king in the field” and points out
the relevance of the **people** in this
parable. Specifically, this refers
to the working class in today’s
society, those who are invested
in their work with every fiber of
their being; in Chassidic terms,
with their ‘thoughts, speech and
action.’ It is precisely this class, to
whom the king is now accessible.

On a similar note, when it
comes to Chai Elul, there is a
common theme that pervades all

the Rebbe’s sichos. For example,
in a talk on Chai Elul (1970),
the Rebbe explained that the
reason why learning Chassidus
heralds the coming of Moshiach
is because Chassidus will enable
the revelation from a very high
internal source (*). Within this
talk, the Rebbe articulates the
difference between internal
and external actions: when one
enacts something purely for
external approval or purpose,
the person and the action are
detached and viewed as two
distinct parts. However, when
a person performs an activity
with inner conviction and
passion (*pnimiyut*), not only is
the action more comprehensive,
it is representative of the person
himself, thus unifying the
person with the action. Thus, it
is through Chassidus that one
can cultivate his true energy
(his neshamah), and indeed
unify it with Torah and Mitzvot
(Hashem’s reality). This teaching
was addressed to everyone, even
the “simple” Jew, to reinforce
the message that through the
prism of Chassidus, a person can
internalize his Yiddishkeit.

The message of the ‘King in the
field’ and that of Chai Elul is
that it is precisely the ordinary
person, who does ordinary
activities, within an ordinary
month, that has the ability to
become extraordinary. When
a person can direct his energy
(*pnimiyut*) towards the king (a

G-dly pursuit), then the status of
that person actually changes.

This is perhaps what my Elter
Bubby was expressing. The Rebbe
focused on her contemporary
society, being uncultivated and
lacking equal roles in society,
and their connection to Hashem
and metaphorically flipped it
on its head – such as the Rebbe
demanding that women study
Torah. Likewise, in the outreach
arena, women had a unique,
vital role to play. Thus, every
feature within this world, even
something that society views as
ordinary at best, has and can
cultivate a deep and rich
connection to Hashem. It is
just a matter of how to direct
this passion, not a matter of
changing who we are.

How does one stay focused?

In a Sicha from Ki Setzei
(1953), the Rebbe deals with
the problematic words, “when
you build a new house, you
should erect a fence for the
faller will fall (Devarim, 22:8);”
this is confusing, as the need
to erect a fence is seemingly
applicable even when it is not
for a new home. As well, the
idea that a ‘faller will fall’ seems
incongruous if they haven’t yet
fallen. The answer is that a
house is a reference to the
foundation of one’s home, a
wife. As well, this can be a
reference to the body (as
opposed to the soul, as the body

houses the soul). When a person
enters into a new stage of life,
in our case, after he has finished
his formal years of Yeshiva and
he is ready to enter the workforce,
it is this ‘new’ stage that presents
challenges (hence the word
‘faller’), unless he accepts the
advice of the verse and creates a
spiritual fence. This is achieved
by adding preventative measures
into his lifestyle, to make it more
conducive to direct his passion
towards holy pursuits.

To illustrate, you have a keen
interest in politics and you just
got your first offer to work in
the city, for a firm that analyzes
political trends. Your job starts at
8:30 am and it takes 45 minutes
to commute there. This means
you need to daven and be ready
to leave home by 7:45 am. This
is no small feat. Since it is your
first job and you love this field,
it is natural that you will want
to immerse yourself with any
political piece of information
available. Thus, if you turn on
your computer or smartphone
prior to davening in the morning,
it is clear – you have fallen. You
will be somewhat distracted and
that will negatively impact your
davening. The message is, keep
it off. Create more preventative
measures and you will gain.

Mr. David Weiss received his Ph.
D. in biological sciences and was
appointed assistant professor in
the Department of Immunology
and Bacteriology at the

*It was here that I had
the opportunity to learn
with a variety of people
from all walks of life and
pursue my learning of
Dayanus.*

University of California in Berkley.
During his time there he befriended
Rabbi Shlomo Cunin. On one
occasion when he went to visit the
Rebbe, he mustered the courage and
asked, “Who can call himself one of
your chassidim?”

The Rebbe responded, “It’s very
simple ... Somebody who can say
at the end of the day that he has
advanced a small step higher than
he was at the beginning of the day,
I would be happy to call that person a
chassid of mine.”

Indeed, this is the message of
Elul to us, the working class. If we
want to maintain our focus, we
need to create preventions that will
eliminate some of the challenges we
face, but simultaneously it needs to
be equally tempered with the ability
to grow. For changes to occur, we
need to not only remove challenges
but to redirect them into positive
action that comes from within the
person – their internal compass.
This will enable one to truly add
‘*chayos* – life’ into their day.📧



A Story for the Soul

המעשה הוא העיקר



The Power of Dancing



Told by

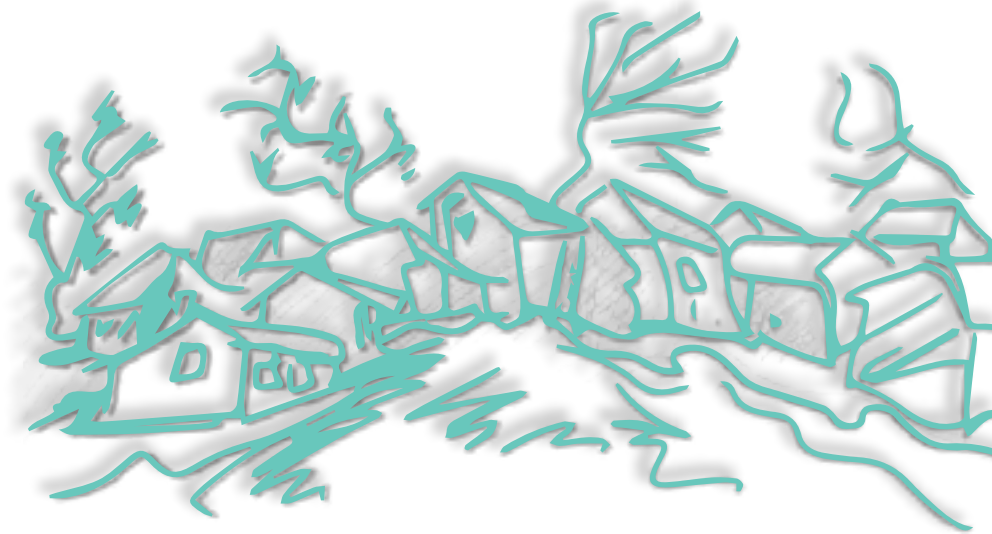
Rabbi Yossi Gopin

Reb Yisroel's journey to his Rebbe had been a long and arduous one. He had carried with him a terribly heavy burden that had weighed him down and slowed his way. However, it was not a physical load that was the deadweight on his shoulders and the cause of his prolonged trip.

It was a deep, inner anguish, one that couldn't be described or even understood by someone who had never felt such pain. It was the heartache of a father, whose precious son—Yaakov was his name—lay in bed, pale faced and weak, unable to move. A severe malady had stricken the young

boy, and no doctor had been able to find a cure for it so far. As the sickness drew out longer and Yaakov's strength drained, Reb Yisroel knew that there was only one place left to turn, one person in whom he could still trust. That place was Lubavitch. And that person was Reb Shmuel, the Rebbe Maharash.

Reb Yisroel knew that during the month of *Tishrei* almost no one was received for *Yechidus* (private audience) with the Rebbe. But he nonetheless made the trip, hoping that the Rebbe's attendant would make an exception for the sake of Reb Yisroel's son, whose very life was hanging in the balance.



The attendant wasn't easily persuaded. Only after much persistence were Reb Yisroel's efforts finally rewarded, and he was notified that the Rebbe would see him in the middle of the festival of *Sukkos*. As he prepared for his *Yechidus* in the *Beis Midrash* of the Rebbe, he recited *Tehillim* with every fibre left in his broken heart. Reb Yisroel knew that this was his last chance to secure a *Refuah Shelaima* (complete recovery) for his beloved son.

With bated breath, Reb Yisroel waited to be called upon for his *Yechidus*, whereupon he would finally be able to beseech the Rebbe to pray for his young, sweet child. The joy of *Sukkos* (which is known as "the Time of our Rejoicing") had not managed to penetrate the thick web of Reb Yisroel's sorrow that year, and understandably so. His thoughts had not left the bedside of his son, even as he had travelled so far. The longer the night grew, the more anxious Reb Yisroel became. Every few *Pessukim* he found himself looking at the clock. His mind began to drift, and he began contemplating the potential outcome of his *Yechidus*.

Reb Yisroel knew only too well that the sign as to whether the Rebbe would be able assist the person in need lay in the first few seconds of the *Yechidus*. You see, anyone who would walk into the Rebbe's holy room would have in his hand a small note, upon which he had poured out his heart, asking the Rebbe for assistance, help or guidance in whichever area of his life that he was in need. Upon entering, the visitor would place his note down on the Rebbe's desk, and the Rebbe would read his note. But herein lay the difference between those destined to be blessed and those destined otherwise. If the Rebbe picked up the note with his hand and read the note, it was known that the Rebbe would bless the entrant, and all would be well. If, however, the Rebbe read the note as it was, sitting there on his table, the entrant knew that his request was beyond help, even by the Rebbe himself.

The time for the *Yechidus*

Your joy tore up the terrible decree. Your son has been granted life

the protective wall of melancholy that he had built around himself slowly began to crack and cave in

finally arrived. Drenched in perspiration, Reb Yisroel held tightly onto his note, his eyes filled with tears. His feet almost refused to walk. Somehow, he arrived at the table of the holy Rebbe and placed the note down, hoping . . . hoping. As he stepped backwards and watched his note remain untouched on the Rebbe's desk, his eyes could no longer contain his tears. It was all clear now. His son's fate had been sealed. There was no chance of recovery. Who knew if he would even see his son alive again?

As these dreadful thoughts threaded elusively through Reb Yisroel's head, his eyesight blurred, and he hardly managed to keep himself from fainting, right there in front of the Rebbe. Reb Yisroel staggered out of the Rebbe's room, and as soon as the heavy door swung close, he fell to the floor in a swooning delirium. Reb Yisroel cried and cried, his sobs wracking his entire body. In despair, he envisioned his sick son ailing in bed, and his heart was shredded to pieces. Who even knew if.. dare he think the

words.. but.. had the worst already occurred? Reb Yisroel found no solace nor comfort. A broken man was the *Chossid* Reb Yisroel.

The holidays passed and *Simchas Torah* arrived, although one wouldn't have noticed it in Reb Yisroel anyway. Hundreds of *Chassidim* had come to Lubavitch for the special *Yomtov*. The great joy of *Simchas Torah* itself, compounded with the special *Simcha* of being by their Rebbe, gave the atmosphere an electrifying kick, elating the already joyful *Chabad Chassidim*. As the Rebbe entered for *Davening*, the joy intensified, and continued to do so during *Hakofos*.

Reb Yisroel gazed lifelessly at the *Chassidim* dancing before him. There was Reb Aizik the Elder--a man so weak that even during the week he could barely manage to carry himself--dancing with the joy of a youth, his eyes closed and his arms tightly wrapped around the *Sefer Torah*. And look, there was Chaim the beggar, his clothes all torn. Chaim barely managed to eke out enough to keep himself and his children alive--but there he was, dancing with the joy of the *Torah*

with all his might; his face was different, almost shining, and his feet moved so quickly they looked like they were barely touching the floor.

It was as if there were waves of joy, vibrating, reverberating and vitalizing the innermost consciousness of every person in the room, and these waves were not lost unto Reb Yisroel. As these massive waves crashed again and again, the protective wall of melancholy that he had built around himself slowly began to crack and cave in... and Reb Yisroel soon found himself drifting in, until eventually he was dancing in the centre of all the dance circles, rejoicing with his entire being in the joy of the *Torah*, his *tzoros* (worries) put on the side. Reb Yisroel danced that day like he had never before, his entire being resounding, radiating "שישו" ושמחו בשמחת תורה". It was a joy he would never forget, and not just for one reason.

As Reb Yisroel readied himself to depart back home after the *Chag* (festival), he again went into the Rebbe Maharash, this time to bid farewell. Reb Yisroel had made peace with his lot and

prepared himself to accept the decree of heaven with joy, come what may.

As Reb Yisroel walked through the door, the Rebbe Maharash's face shone and a warm smile lit up his holy face. The Rebbe blessed Reb Yisroel with a successful return trip. As Reb Yisroel turned to go, he heard the Rebbe's voice directed at him once more. "Last time we met, before *Yomtov*, when you came and asked for a blessing for your son, I saw no chance of saving his life. The decree had been made in heaven and there was no way to rescind it. But then came *Simchas Torah*. You forgot about your personal problems and pain and truly rejoiced with the *Torah*. Your joy tore up the terrible decree. Your son has been granted life."

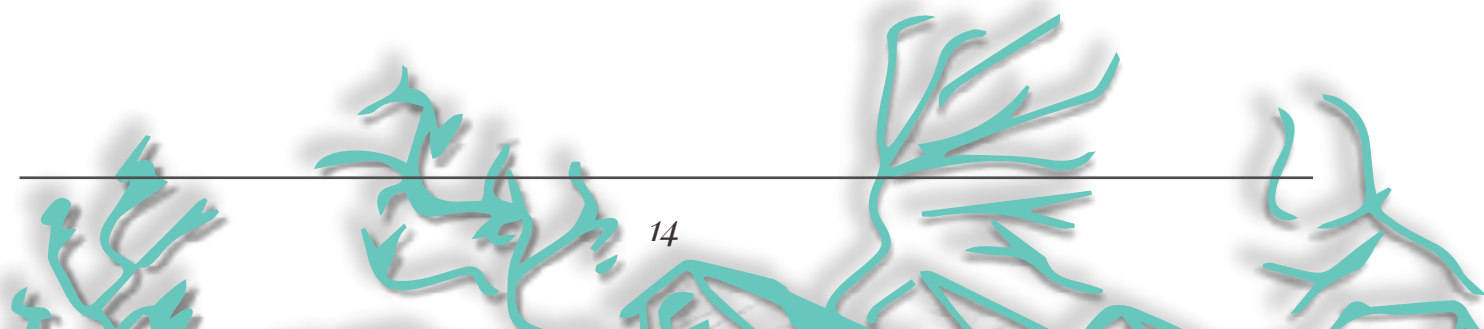
When the Frierdiker Rebbe concluded recounting this story to ten of his *Chassidim* who had gathered in his holy room, he said: "By this *Chossid* was indeed fulfilled the adage; 'שמחה פורץ גדר' - 'Joy breaks (all) boundaries'."



FEATURED SHETLACH IN THIS STORY
 ליובאוויטש,
 Russia/Ukraine



IMPORTANT PERSONALITIES
 Rabbi Shmuel Schneerson
 Born: 2 Iyar 5594/29 April 1834
 Passed Away: 13 Tishrei 5643/14 September 1882



A TEHILLAH GUIDE

The Rabbis of Kollel Menachem present
a collection of short, inspiring
'vertalach' on davening. We hope
that these thoughts will help
the reader have a deeper
understanding of the
special prayers we say
during the High
Holidays.

Rosh Hashana



"היום הרת עולם"

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

Rabbi Shlomo Kluger (1789-1869) in his work *Chochmas Shlomo*, writes a beautiful *derush* on the meaning of *Hayom Haras Olam*;

Our sages teach that *Teshuvah* preceded the creation of the world. Were it not for *Teshuvah*, *Hashem* would not have created the world as man would sin, and He would have to destroy it. Therefore, the creation of the world depends on *Teshuvah*. The time which is most conducive to *Teshuvah* is *Tishrei*. When we say *Hayom Haras Olam*, it is as though the world was created today because *Hashem* foresaw this day as the time of *Teshuvah* and decided to create the world.

The *Gemara* records a debate between the sages about when the world was created. Rabbi Eliezer teaches that the world was created in *Tishrei*. (The first of *Tishrei* marks the creation of man, the pinnacle and actualisation of the intent of Creation. Man was created on Day Six. The first day and beginning of Creation took place on the 25th of *Elul*).

Rabbi Yehoshua however, is of the opinion that the world was created in *Nissan*. (Man was created on the first of *Nissan* and creation began on the 25th of *Adar*).

Rabbi Kluger explains that this debate is not about when the world was created, but rather, it is a debate over whose service is greater; the perfect *Tzaddik*, or the *Baal Teshuvah*? The question discussed is for whose sake was the world created and whose service is the ultimate purpose for Creation.

The month of *Nissan* reflects the *Tzaddikim*. *Chometz* represents the *Yetzer Hora*, whereas *Matzah* represents the *Tzaddikim* who have conquered their *Yetzer Hora* and have no impulse for sin. Rabbi Yehoshua, who says that the world was created in *Nissan*, maintains that the world was created for *Tzaddikim*.

Tishrei, as a time of *Teshuva*, reflects the *Baalei Teshuvah*. Rabbi Eliezer, who says that the world was created in *Tishrei*, states that the world was created in the merit of, and for the service of, the *Baal Teshuvah*.

When we say *Hayom Haras Olam*, we confirm that the world was created for the *Baal Teshuvah* in accordance with Rabbi Eliezer. This is why *Hayom Haras Olam* follows the sounding of the *shofar*, which is the call to arouse us to *Teshuvah*.

Yom Kippur



"כל נדרי"

Rabbi Mendel Gurkov

The *Kol Nidrei* prayer discusses the annulment of vows we took upon ourselves throughout the past year. It seems like a strange topic to talk about as we usher in the holiest day of the year. Shouldn't we discuss more spiritual matters? Why are we focusing on an abstract law about vows?

An oath ties you to the item in which you swore. For instance, if you swore you would drink wine, then you are now connected to the wine, and you can only free yourself from this connection by annulling your vow.

Every year we unknowingly connect ourselves with worldly pleasures. By investing our time and effort in physical matters, we tether ourselves to a life of bodily delights, which prevents us from allowing spirituality into our lives.

Our soul begins the journey of returning to G-d by declaring "*Kol Nidrei*... - I am detaching myself from all of the connections that I have forged with corporeal desires this past year."

Once we have finished the *Kol Nidrei* prayer, we can then spend the rest of the day recommitting to our

relationship with G-d. Free from worldly constraints, spirituality can now shine through, allowing us to truly repent and return to G-d.



"זכרנו לחיים"

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

The *Eitz Yosef* writes in his *Pirushon* the *Siddur* that there are two very different types of life. The first life is one lived in pursuit of worldly pleasures such as eating fine delicacies and chasing after honour. The *Zohar* says that those who ask *Hashem* to fulfil their physical desires are like brazen dogs who call out 'Give! Give!' with no shame.

The second type of life is one lived to fulfil the will of *Hashem*. One can only serve *Hashem* and work on perfecting themselves and correcting their deficiencies while they are alive in this world, as it says in *Pirkei Avos*, יפה שעה אחת, בתשובה ומעשים טובים בעולם הזה, - מכל חיי העולם הבא - *One hour of Teshuvah and good deeds in this world is worth more than all of the World to Come*.

In "זכרנו לחיים", we are asking *Hashem* to remember us for this latter type of life. That is why we conclude with *למענך אלקים חיים*. We ask *Hashem* for life, not to pursue physical pleasures, but 'for Your sake O Living G-d', to live our lives for *Hashem* and give Him *Nachas Ruach* from our service of *Torah* and *Mitzvos*.



"זכרנו לחיים"

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

In a fascinating *Reshima*, the *Friediker Rebbe* describes how his father, the *Rebbe Rashab* (who

had passed away) appeared to him in a vision on the first night of *Rosh Hashana*, 5685. The *Rebbe Rashab* was wearing *Shabbos* clothing, and his face was shining. He said an explanation on "זכרנו לחיים":

זכרנו לחיים מלך חיים - The fact that *Hashem* remembers us for life, is a pure act of (unearned) kindness and benevolence because טובע הטוב להיטיב - it is the nature of one (*Hashem*) who is good to do good to others.

However, - וכתבנו בספר החיים - *Hashem* writing us in the Book of Life, that it should translate into a good and peaceful life, is dependent on our *Avodah*. That *Avodah* is למענך, אלקים חיים, that through *Torah* and *Mitzvos* we transform *Elokim*, a name which represents *Tzimtum* and *Din* (concealment of the Divine light in the world) into *Chaim* - open revelation of G-dliness.



"ונתנה תוקף"

Rabbi Yossi Gopin

The story is told of Rabbi Amnon of Magentza, one of the great leaders of his generation. Rabbi Amnon was a wealthy man of distinguished lineage, and had a special charisma about him, together with a fine reputation.

Of course, as was common in those days, the Christians that lived in Magentza were no friends of the Jews and they were quick to pick up on the unique qualities of Rabbi Amnon. Wanting to rid themselves of such a successful, influential Jewish leader, the cruel bishop and his ministers began to harass Rabbi Amnon to convert to Christianity, heaven forfend. After years of pestering, wanting to alleviate their relentless pressure, there was one particular occasion when he unthinkingly blurted out, "Give me three days to think about it".

Only after Rabbi Amnon walked out of the Bishop's court did he realise what

he had said. As if he, Rabbi Amnon, would reckon for even a second the possibility of Chas V'Sholom converting to Christianity! The entire three days that followed, Rabbi Amnon fasted, unable to forgive himself for the terrible words he had uttered. His family and friends all came to comfort him, but he rejected all their consolation.

"For such a sin, there is no repentance" cried Rabbi Amnon. "Mine will be a death in both worlds for falling so short in my commitment to the Almighty, for allowing such words to cross my lips".

After the three days passed, Rabbi Amnon was dragged into the room of the bishop. Rabbi Amnon cried out, "Allow me to pass judgement on myself for my wickedness! This tongue, that spoke such untruth to you, suggesting that I would even entertain the notion of conversion - this tongue deserves to be cut off!" Rabbi Amnon wanted to sanctify the name of Heaven for his unforgivable words.

But the bishop had other ideas. "I will not cut your tongue, which finally spoke so righteously, giving room for your soul to finally be cleansed through conversion to the true faith!" The tyrannical bishop instead commanded for each of Rabbi Amnon's fingers and toes, to be cut off at their joints. After each one was cut, they would ask him again, "Are you sure, dear Amnon, that you don't want to convert?" And each time he would shout, "No! I will never convert to the Christian faith!"

Alas, the name "Amnon" was truly befitting this saintly Rabbi, who had been dealt such terrible torture for his "Emunah" - his steadfast faith in G-d.

As Rosh Hashana of that year approached, Rabbi Amnon asked his family to carry his bed to Shul, together with all of his amputated limbs, and to bring him right up to the front of the Shul, next to the Chazzan. When the Chazzan reached Kedusha, Rabbi Amnon requested that he wait for a minute, as he would now like to sanctify G-d's holy name. "And thus, to You ascends all holiness!" meaning to say that I, Amnon, have sanctified Your name with my sacrifices to stay true to Your faith. Rabbi Amnon went on to say an entire Tefillah that he had composed, starting with the words, "Unesane Tokef Kedushas Hayom".

"True! You are He who is a Judge of retribution!" intending with this that his fingers and toes lying next to him should ascend before the Heavenly throne as a penance for his Aveirah. He concluded "and You remember the soul of every living thing," and last Rosh Hashana you decreed this to be my fate, and I accept it with love. When he concluded his entire composition, Rabbi Amnon returned his pure, holy soul to his Maker.

It was three days after Rabbi Amnon was buried and ushered into the heavenly Yeshiva that he came in a dream to Rabbi Klonimos the son of Rabbi Meshulam and taught him this piece of our Machzor. He instructed him to send it to all the communities of Israel, as an everlasting remembrance for his memory. Thus, was this most sombre paragraph, added to our Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur liturgy.

"את יום השבת הזה ואת יום הכיפורים הזה"

Rabbi Boruch M Broh

The Chiddushei Horim asks if it is permissible to make a cheshbon hanefesh (an account on one's soul) on Shabbos? In order to properly make a cheshbon hanefesh, one must remind themselves of all of their past sins; wouldn't that prevent one from fulfilling the mitzvah of oneg (pleasure) Shabbos? He answers with a play on words: it is written in the Possuk, "Umaltam Es Orlas Levavchem" - And you shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart. Meaning, that a reckoning is sometimes referred to as a 'circumcision', and the law states that Milah is doche (overrides) Shabbos.

"איה מקום כבודו"

Rabbi Boruch M Broh

Harav Hakodosh Mikotzk asked the following question; How come the Bnei Yisroel complained about the Mon and asked for meat instead? Seemingly, the Mon would taste like whatever food they desired. He explained that the Yidden were not satisfied with taste alone; they wanted the actual 'Mamoshes', they wanted to experience the physical food itself.

**"בזאת יבא אהרן אל-הקדש
בפר בן בקר לחטאת ואיל
לעלה..."**

Rabbi Yossi Moshel

The posuk in Vayikrah, in reference to Aharon performing the Avodah of the Karbanos in the Kodesh HaKadoshim on Yom Kippur, states בזאת יבא אהרן אל-הקדש - With this shall Aaron enter the Kodesh.

The word זאת in the posuk numerically adds up to 408.

The three words צום/ fasting, קול/ calling out and מומון/ money, which we bear in mind at the end of the Unesana Tokef prayer as we cry out ותשובה ותפילה וצדקה מעבירין את רוע הגזרה, each adds up to the numerical equivalent of 136, totalling 408- זאת. Therefore, the possuk is teaching us that בזאת means that with all this, צום, מומון, קול, shall Aaron enter the Kodesh (יבא אהרן אל-הקדש).

**"והכהנים והעם העומדים
בעזרה כשהיו שומעים את
השם הנכבד והנורא מפורש
יוצא מפי כהן גדול..."**

Rabbi Shlomo Barber

The use of the word יוצא (emanating from the mouth of the Kohen Gadol) is puzzling here. In what way is it possible for a mortal being, of flesh and blood, to utter this exalted name of Hashem through his lips? Moreover, how is it possible for the Kohen Gadol to utter this name on Yom Kippur?

The truth is, the mentioning of this name is enabled by the holy day of Yom Kippur itself. At the time of the holy 'Avoda', when in the Kodesh HaKadoshim, the Kohen Gadol had sanctified himself with such holiness and purity that he was ready to release himself from all physicality. As a result, when he came to utter this holy name, he merely opened his mouth, and the holy name left his mouth on its own accord, due to the holiness and preparation of the utterer.

**"אין כאלוקינו אין
כאדונינו - מי כאלוקינו מי
כאדונינו..."**

Rabbi Shlomo Barber

Seemingly, these phrases should be in the inverse order, with us first asking מי כאלוקינו who is like our G-d, our master etc.? Then, we should answer אין כאלוקינו: there is none like our G-d, our master etc.

The explanation given why this is not the case, is that we have to first establish our fundamental belief in Yichud Hashem - the unity of G-d, and only after this is taken to heart, may we begin to expound on how there is none like Him.

"נעירה"

Rabbi Mendel Gurkov

Neilah is the final prayer of Yom Kippur. It is unique to the holiest day of the year; no other day has a fifth prayer service.

Neilah literally translates as 'locking'. Meaning, that the day is waning and G-d is locking the gates of heaven; therefore, we try to squeeze in one more prayer.

However, is this not a negative way of looking at things? Why are we focusing on being locked out of heaven?

The truth is that Neilah is the perfect name for the holiest of prayers. We are not being locked out of heaven; rather, we are being locked inside of heaven. G-d is locking the door behind us and throwing away the key. For the final moments, on the holiest day of the year, we have His

undivided attention. No one else can enter, it is just us and G-d. This allows us to truly unite with our maker, ushering in a year of spiritual and physical success.

"תקיעה גדולה"

Rabbi Yossi Moshel

What is the significance of the single Tekiah blast that is sounded at the conclusion of Yom Kippur?

The Maharal explains that when a person sins, the sin ties him down. However, when Yom Kippur comes along, and the Jew asks to be pardoned for his wrongdoings and is subsequently forgiven, he feels free once again.

This, explains the Maharal, is why we sound the Tekiah at the end of Yom Kippur. To signify our freedom and the victory of our Neshama that was once bound and stuck by its wrongdoings, but is now joyous and relieved with its regained autonomy and independence.

The Chiddushei Harim once said: "The reason Chassidim dance on Motzei Yomtov, is that when many Yidden do a mitzvah, it is a propitious time in the heavens, so we dance."



Written by

Rabbi Yonason Johnson

When the Shofar was (almost) blown on Shabbos

This year, the first day of Rosh Hashana falls on Shabbos. The accepted Halacha is that when this takes place, we do not sound the Shofar. This has been the almost unanimous practice throughout the Jewish world for hundreds of years.

On Rosh Hashana 5665 (1904), one of the great scholars of the Old Yishuv sought to change this status quo. The ensuing debate raged from Yerushalayim to Hungary and beyond.

We start with a Mishna; [1]

When the Yom Tov of Rosh Hashana fell on Shabbos, they would blow the Shofar in the Mikdash but not in the Medinah. After the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai enacted that it should be blown in every place where there was a Beis Din. Rabbi Elazar said: Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai only established this in Yavneh. They said to him: both Yavneh and any place where there is a Beis Din.

The Talmud Bavli [2] explains that the reason the Biblical Mitzvah of Shofar is suspended when Rosh Hashana falls on Shabbos is because of a Rabbinic safeguard referred to as 'the Gezeira of Rabbah'. The Rabbis forbade the blowing of Shofar lest a person come to carry it a distance of four Amos in the Reshus Harabim, which would be a Biblical desecration of Shabbos.

The Gezeira was not applied in the Mikdash based on the principle אין שבות במקדש - Rabbinic Gezeiros of Shabbos do not apply in the Temple.

Blowing in the Beis Din

When the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed, Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai enacted Takanos to address the new reality. Many of these were a Zeicher LeMikdash, to remember how things were done in Temple times. One of these Takanos was to blow the Shofar in the Beis Din on Shabbos.

The Mishna records a three-way dispute on what this Takanah was. The Tanna Kamma says that the Shofar would be blown in any place that there was a Beis Din. Rabbi Elazar limited the Takanah to Yavneh, the seat of the Great Sanhedrin. The third opinion, referred to as 'אמר לו' (They said to him), say that the Shofar could be blown in Yavneh or anywhere there is a Beis Din.

Whilst the opinions of 'אמר לו' and the Tanna Kamma seem identical, the Gemara teaches that there is a difference between them. The Tanna Kamma would permit blowing the Shofar even in a Beis Din 'Akrai'. According to the opinion of 'אמר לו' this would not suffice[3]. The Halacha follows the Tanna Kamma.

Rashi explains that both opinions require a Beis Din of twenty three members. However, unlike 'אמר לו' who require a Beis Din Kavua, the Tanna Kamma does not require a Beis Din Kavua.

The Ran writes the Beis Din 'Akrai' of the Tanna Kamma can be a Beis Din of three as long as it is a Beis Din Kavua[4]. This is in contrast to 'אמר לו' who require a Sanhedrin Ketana of 23 members.

The explanations of the Rif, Rambam and Tur are discussed below.

The rationale of permitting the

Shofar to be sounded in the Beis Din is since people fear Beis Din, they will not carry[5].

After the destruction of the Temple

The Rosh writes that when Rosh Hashana fell on Shabbos, Rav Alfasi – the Rif (Morocco 11th Century), blew the Shofar in his Beis Din. He understood that the Tanna Kamma allowed the Shofar to be blown in any Beis Din Kavua which is Muflag Bedor (the most outstanding Beis Din of the generation).

Rabbeinu Manoach[6] quotes Rav Baal Haeizer that the Jewish community in Damascus sounded the Shofar on Shabbos.

A letter from 4922 (1162) was found in the Cairo Geniza, indicating that in Eretz Yisroel they would blow the Shofar on Shabbos. In the letter, the head of the community in Bavel, warns the community in Eretz Yisroel that those who blow the Shofar on Shabbos, even in the Beis Din, are desecrating Shabbos.

The Rosh notes that the Rif's own Talmidim did not continue his practice.





The Tur[7] references the practice of the Rif, but concludes that we do not follow him because “all of the commentators explain that we require *Beis Din* of 23 members”. The Shulchan Aruch[8] simply rules that when *Rosh Hashana* falls on *Shabbos*, we do not sound the *Shofar*.

The Rambam[9] writes that the *Shofar* can only be blown in a *Beis Din Kavua*. He adds that the members of the *Beis Din* must have received *Semicha* in Eretz Yisroel[10] and must ‘sanctify the new moon’. Since we have neither the direct line of *Semicha* nor a *Beis Din* that declares *Rosh Chodesh*, we no longer have an eligible *Beis Din*.

19th Century in Yerushalayim

In 5631 (1870), Rabbi Akiva Yosef Schlesinger moved to

Yerushalayim. He was born in Hungary and studied under the great Hungarian giants, Maharam Shik and the Ksav Sofer.

The year after his arrival, *Rosh Hashana* fell on *Shabbos* and he was keen to blow the *Shofar*. He was met with opposition and deferred. In 5642 (1881), *Rosh Hashana* again fell on *Shabbos*. Rabbi Akiva Yosef authored two dissertations, arguing that the *Shofar* can and should be sounded in Yerushalayim. Once again, his arguments were not accepted and he was unable to blow the *Shofar*.

The controversy reached a boiling point twenty three years later. *Rosh Hashana* 5665 and 5666, fell on *Shabbos*. Rabbi Schlesinger presented



his argument in the bi-monthly Hungarian Torah periodica, *Tel Talpios*.

His proposal was to blow the *Shofar* at a set time in the Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai *Shul* in the presence of the *Batei Din* of Yerushalayim. He wrote that it would be fitting to blow the *Shofar* in the *Shul* which bears the name of the sage who instituted the *Takanah* to sound the *Shofar* in the *Beis Din* on *Shabbos*.

Rabbi Schlesinger’s initial article was published in the issues of Av 5664. He submitted additional articles in 5665. What follows is a presentation of his primary arguments.

First he references the practice of the Rif who blew the *Shofar* on *Shabbos* in *Chutz Laaretz* in a simple *Beis Din* of three members.

Rabbi Schlesinger then addressed why this had not been done before, suggesting that perhaps they did not have enough sages to constitute a *Beis Din* of twenty three as required by the Radbaz and others. He wrote that now, Yerushalayim has been blessed with many sages. “If required, we could even gather 71 sages like the number of the Great Sanhedrin”.

Rabbi Akiva Yosef also addressed an apparent contradiction in the Rambam:

The Rambam states that we need a *Beis Din* with *Semicha* which will sanctify the ‘new moon’. However, in the very next *Halacha* he writes, “Nowadays... when the first day falls on *Shabbos* and they are not in a place that was worthy to blow the *Shofar*, they only sound the *Shofar* on the second day.” This implies that nowadays there could still be a *Beis Din* that could blow the *Shofar*, even though we no longer ‘sanctify the new moon’.

The Kesef Mishna explains that the previous *Halacha* refers to when *Rosh Chodesh* was sanctified by the *Beis Din*. In those times, only the *Beis Din* that sanctified the new moon could know with certainty that the day was *Rosh Hashana*. Any other *Beis Din* would not be able to blow *Shofar* on *Shabbos* as they could not be sure the day would be declared as *Rosh Hashana*. In the next *Halacha*, the Rambam refers to ‘nowadays’ when we have a fixed calendar and this risk no longer applies. The only concern is that one may come to carry. Any *Beis Din* is sufficient to warn against this.

Rabbi Akiva Yosef wrote that it is necessary to reconcile the Rambam like this, so that he is not at loggerheads with his

Rebbe - the Rif.

Rabbi Schlesinger also drew on the view that we no longer have a Biblical *Reshus Harabim*[12] with 600,000 passers each day. Since carrying would only violate a Rabbinic prohibition, the *Gezeira* is not as strong.

Even though the Rambam does not maintain this lenient definition, Rabbi Schlesinger’s proposal was to blow in Yerushalayim. The *Gemara* teaches that Yerushalayim does not have the status of a *Reshus Harabim* as the doors are closed at night[13].

Therefore, our concern of carrying the *Shofar* is at worst a *Safeik Issur D’rabbanan*. Further, he writes that the concern of carrying is only on the *Baal Tokea*. The *Baal Tokea* can choose to blow the *Shofar* in order to enable everyone to fulfil the *Mitzvah* of *Shofar*,



especially as a public *Mitzvah* (מצוה דרבנים) can be grounds to override individual prohibitions[14].”

Rabbi Akiva Yosef proves that the sages never wanted to nullify the *Mitzvah* of *Shofar* completely: We do not take the *Lulav* on *Shabbos* due to the same “*Gezeira* of Rabbah”. But whilst the *Shofar* is permitted in the *Beis Din*, *Lulav* remains forbidden. Tosfos [16] explains that because the *Shofar* causes Hashem to remember the Jewish people favourably, the sages did not want it to not be blown at all.

Rabbi Akiva Yosef made an emotional appeal, writing, “The

Jewish people are suffering physically and spiritually... The Jews in Russia have been ravaged by Pogroms and Jewish blood was spilled like water. We have suffered exiles, harsh decrees and the difficulties of *Parnasa*... On *Rosh Hashana* when the world is judged, we need the merit of the *Shofar* which blocks the accusations of the Satan.”

In a later response, he wrote that the *הקול קול יעקב* - the voice of Yaakov (the *Shofar*), removes the *הידיים ידי עשו* - the hands of Eisav. He also quoted the teaching of the sages that any year where they do not blow the *Shofar* at the beginning of the year, they will suffer evil at the end of the year[17].

He rationalised that being lenient in applying the *Gezeira* would be akin to Mordechai and Esther, who, in order to avert danger, declared three fast days that coincided with *Pesach*. They did so even though it would remove the Biblical *Mitzvah* of *Matzah* from the entire Jewish people. Here we are only facing a Rabbinic *Gezeira*.

Rabbi Schlesinger's campaign

In Elul 5764, Rabbi Schlesinger presented his original *psak* to the recently installed Ashkenazi Rov of Yerushalayim, Rabbi Eliyahu Dovid Teomim Rabinowitz (the Aderes).

The Aderes encouraged the idea, especially as the upcoming *Rosh*

Hashana would also be on *Shabbos*. The Aderes personally worried that he might not live to hear the *Shofar* blown on the first day of *Rosh Hashana* again (he passed away in Adar 5665). Rabbi Tukachinsky[18] relates that the Aderes said that if Rabbi Schlesinger would sound the *Shofar* on *Rosh Hashana* 5665, he would stand behind the door to listen.

The Aderes sent his son with Rabbi Schlesinger to the *Rishon*



Letzion Rabbi Yaakov Shaul Elyashar. Rabbi Schlesinger presented his plan to have the *Shofar* blown on *Shabbos* in the Rabban Yochanan ben Zakkai Shule in the presence of the Sefardi and Ashkenazi *Batei Din*.

The *Rishon Letzion* did not support the initiative, saying that Rabbi Shmuel Salant, the elder and most senior *Ashkenazi* authority, was against it. When

Rabbi Schlesinger went to ask Rabbi Salant the reason for his opposition, he responded that on the contrary, when the matter was first raised in 5642, he had hoped to hear the *Shofar* himself.

Rabbi Shmuel Salant offered a strong argument in support of sounding the *Shofar*:

“For hundreds of years, the custom in Eretz Yisroel was to observe only one day of *Rosh Hashana*[19]. In the Twelfth Century, there was an influx of Rabbis from Provence, France. They imposed their position and changed the custom to observe two days of *Rosh Hashana*, in line with the view of the Rif[20].

If we do not rely on the Rif's opinion to blow *Shofar* on *Shabbos*, how can we rely on his opinion to observe two days of *Rosh Hashana* and also push off the *Mitzvah* of *Tefillin*? How can we ‘pull the rope at both ends?’”

With this support, on *Rosh Hashana* 5665 Rabbi Akiva Yosef planned to sound thirty *Tekiyos* after *Krias Hatorah* in the Tiferes Yisroel *Shul* (the *Churva*) in the presence of the two *Askenazi Batei Din*. They would ensure that at least twenty three great Rabbonim were present.

Rabbi Akiva Yosef realized that internal politics and threats from the *Kollelim* were fierce. In the interest of peace and preventing *Machlokes* from erupting in the Shule, he decided to stand down.

In anticipation of the following



Rosh Hashana he wrote to the *Gedolei Haposkim* in *Chutz Laaretz*. Hoping that they would concur with his opinion.

Ultimately their efforts failed and the *Shofar* was not publicly sounded on the first day of *Rosh Hashana* 5666. It is rumoured that Rabbi Akiva Yosef shuttered his windows and sounded the *Shofar* on his own[21].

In this article, we have presented the arguments of Rabbi Schlesinger. These arguments were strongly challenged by the Hungarian Talmidei Chachamim and debated in numerous editions of *Tel Talpios*.

Rabbi Akiva Yosef noted that the *Shofar* is connected to *Shabbos* - the first letters of the words *תקעו בחודש שופר* spell *Shabbos*. Our sages teach that if the Jewish people would keep two *Shabbosos*, they would be redeemed. Combining *Shofar* and *Shabbos* by blowing the *Shofar* on *Shabbos* would hasten the Redemption.

Whilst we will certainly not be sounding the *Shofar* on *Shabbos* if we are still in *Golus*, may we merit the coming of *Moshiach* and be able to hear the sounding of the *Shofar* in the *Mikdash* once more.



teaches that the *Shofar* could only be sounded at the time of the *Beis Din*. Only a *Beis Din Kavua* has a set time.

- [5] Ran
- [6] On Rambam Hilchos Shofar chapter 2
- [7] OC 588
- [8] OC 588:5
- [9] Hilchos Shofar 2:9. The Vilna Gaon rules like the Rambam.
- [10] In a Chassidic Maamar in Likutei Torah explaining Kabbalistically why the *Shofar* is not sounded on *Shabbos* outside of the *Mikdash* or the *Beis Din*, the requirement of a *Beis Din Semuchin* is brought.
- [11] Alternatively, the Rambam is only advising the order of preference, that if there is *Beis Din* with *Semicha* who sanctify the new moon, the *Shofar* should be blown there. In the absence of these qualities, one should go to the next best option.
- [12] See OC 345 and the Taz and Magen Avraham
- [13] Eruvin 7
- [14] According to some authorities, even a Rabbinic public *Mitzvah* can override a Biblical *Mitzvah* of an individual. See Brachos 47b and Rosh there.
- [15] See also Rabbeinu Chananel that only in the *Gevulin* they require a *Beis Din*, but not in Yerushalayim.
- [16] RH 29
- [17] Rosh Hashanah 16b. He argues that this would apply if we could blow the *Shofar* and fail to do so.
- [18] Ir Hakodesh VehaMikdash volume 3 p284
- [19] As evidenced from a letter sent to Rav Hai Gaon. This is the opinion of Rabbeinu Efraim and Baal Hamaor.
- [20] This is also the view of Rav Hai Gaon and is the established Halacha in the *Shulchan Aruch*
- [21] *Hamoamid Behalacha*. Based on the view above that the *Gezeira* never applied to Yerushalayim.

ENDNOTES

- [1] Rosh Hashanah 41
- [2] Rosh Hashanah 29b. In contrast, the Yerushalmi (4:1) learns that not blowing the *Shofar* on *Shabbos* is a Biblical scriptural decree
- [3] This follows the explanation of Rashi.
- [4] This is derived from the Talmud which



Humans Of Melbourne: *Emmanuel Althaus*



Interviewed & Transcribed by
Rabbi Boruch Moshe Broh

Emmanuel Althaus was born in 1946 and immigrated to Australia from Europe at the age of 3. He has spent decades as a respected businessman and a leader in communal affairs. Having grown up in Melbourne and raised a family here, he provides a unique insight into the growth of the Melbourne Jewish Community

In part one of this interview we spoke to Emmanuel about his family's origins, growing up in Australia, his experience in yeshiva in Israel, and his first Yechidus with the Rebbe in 1964.

What are your memories of Rebbetzin Chana?

During my stay in New York (in Elul of 1964) I wanted to visit Rebbetzin Chana (the Rebbe's mother), as my family in Europe had been close to *Beis Harav*. I rang the Rebbetzin and when she answered I said, "Hello Madame Schneersohn" (my father once told me that those who are close to *Beis Harav* should address female members of the Rebbe's household with the French title of 'Madame'). Rebbetzin Chana asked, "Who is this?" I answered, "Emmanuel Althaus." "From where?" "From Australia." "Shmuel Bezalel is your father?" When I answered, "Yes," she said that she would love to see me. Rebbetzin Chana then asked me what time I wanted to visit. Knowing that the Rebbe visited his

mother every night, I decided to be a smart alec. I asked if I could come by in the late afternoon/evening, hoping that I would 'bump' into the Rebbe. The Rebbetzin gently refused my request, telling me, "That time is booked." We eventually made up that I would come the next day early in the afternoon.

When I arrived, there were biscuits, cakes and drinks prepared on the table. Rebbetzin Chana wanted to know all about my family. She asked about our life in Australia, and about her cousin Rabbi Isser Zalman Kluwgant. During our conversation, Rebbetzin Chana relayed the following story: "After my husband was arrested in 1939, people were afraid to visit my house in Yekaterinoslav. There were KGB agents stationed around the house and people were worried that if they came for a visit they would be arrested. One night, I heard a rustling sound by the window. I was frightened and exclaimed in Russian, 'Who is there?' 'Madame Schneersohn, it's me,' came the reply. At once, I knew it was 'an *aigener*' (a family friend). It was your father, Shmuel Bezalel. As he climbed into the house through a window I said to him, '*Shmulik, men zucht doch far dir!* - Shmulik, why did you come? The authorities are searching for you!'" (In order to survive, my father was a black

There were KGB agents stationed around the house and people were worried that if they came for a visit they would be arrested



Left: Reb Arel Serebryanski and Reb Lazer Herzog.

Top: Rabbi Groner Riding a horse and buggy in Kfar Chabad.

Right: Lag Bomer trip. Binyomin Althaus is the Madrich

The Althaus family has an ingrained love for Beis Harav, and my father did anything he could for them.

marketeer, as were many others. Those who were caught dealing on the black market were either shot or sent to Siberia). “Your father answered that he had come to see if I needed anything.”

Finishing the story, Rebbetzin Chana turned to me and said, “*Ich vet keynmol nisht fargesen as dayne tate Shmilik hot gekumen zen vos tutzoch bay a poshiter yidener*”- (I will never forget that your father came to check how a simple Jewess was doing). Her words remain etched in my memory. I remember them clearly as if she had spoken to me today.

I was surprised that I had never heard this story from my father. Later on, when I went back to Australia, I asked my father why he had never told me the story. He replied, “Eh, it wasn’t anything to talk about.” Now, you have to consider that my father was not a man full of bravado. In fact, he was what we would call a ‘chicken’ when it came to being physically tough. Once, while on a date with my mother in a wooded area, he heard a howling sound. My father upped and ran away, leaving his date, my mother, alone (While this story may be a slight exaggeration, we used to tease him about it all the same). Despite all this, my father risked his life to provide the needs for *Beis Harav*. To him, the episode with Rebbetzin Chana wasn’t a big deal. If you truly love someone, you would jump into a fire in a split second for them. The Althaus family has an ingrained love for *Beis Harav*, and my father did anything he could for them.

Three weeks after my visit with the Rebbetzin, on Vov Tishrei, 1964,

Rebbetzin Chana passed away. I count myself lucky to have had a chance to speak with this magnificent woman.

You were quite the world traveller, when did you settle down?

A week after *Sukkos*, in October 1964, I returned home to Melbourne. I was eighteen years old. I started teaching evening *Torah* classes in Caulfield *Shul* to cover my rent. I also taught afternoons in the Elwood *Talmud Torah*. Eventually, I got a full time job in the rag industry on Flinders Lane. In December of 1968, at the ripe old age of twenty-two, I married my long-suffering wife, Eva. Ten months to the day of my *chasunah*, my daughter Esther was born. Naomi came a year and a half later, followed by Alex and Avi. I left the rag trade and began working in blinds. In 1973, I started my own window furnishing business. Years later, in 1986, Reb Yossel Gutnick offered me an opportunity to join him in a business venture, and *Boruch Hashem* we were successful. Eventually, after receiving Reb Yossel’s blessings, I went out on my own and in 1994, I successfully floated a public company.

You have put on tefillin with countless Jews, how did this come to be?

As you can no doubt see, I do not have a beard. This was because, for some unknown reason, I physically cannot grow a decent beard. In 1974 I made an appointment with a specialist and he confirmed that I would never be able to grow a full beard. The specialist did offer me a new medication that might be able to help me grow a beard

somewhat, but with the caveat being that as this medication was relatively untested and new on the market, there was the potential for various aggressive side effects. The specialist, therefore, could not recommend that I take it. The decision was then left up to me. Such was the state of medicine in those days.

I didn’t feel that I needed to ask anyone for a *psak din*, as I had already looked up all the relevant sources in *halacha*. Of course, as a *chassid*, I wanted to run it past the Rebbe. I took the letter from the specialist and sent it to the Rebbe. I did not attach any of my own questions. Two weeks later a telegram arrived transliterated into English. The telegram read, “*Legabai Chabad un hafatza es iz nisht shayuch oib mir trogt a bord oder nisht*. - regarding Chabad and Jewish outreach it is not relevant if one has a beard or not.” I wasn’t sure what the Rebbe meant, so I went to *shul* to ask Reb Zalman Serebryanski. I found Reb Zalman standing in front of the *shul* and showed the telegram to him. After reading the telegram, Reb Zalman put his head in his hands and thought about it for five minutes. Finally, he responded, “The Rebbe is telling you that although you cannot grow a beard, it does not mean you are exempt from doing outreach!”

The Rebbe’s response has stayed with me throughout my life. The Rebbe understood me well from my letter. From then on, I would always have *tefillin* in my office and offer to put *tefillin* on any Jew that I would come in contact with. These were people who otherwise would not have had

the opportunity to put on *tefillin*. Often, people would tell me that I do not look like a *chabadnik* and were surprised to see me doing *miztvoim*, I would respond, “I’m undercover!” Or alternatively, “The Rebbe has *Tzivot Hashem*. In every army there are uniformed soldiers and undercover soldiers, I am part of the latter. Besides, I have a misspent youth and I need as many brownie points as possible.” These lines have never failed me!

What was your relationship with Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka?

Every time I travelled to Crown Heights, whether alone or with my family, I would drop in to see Rebbetzin Chaya Mushka. In February 1987, I took my eldest son Alex to the Rebbe for his *Bar Mitzvah*. While there, we were privileged to visit the Rebbetzin in her home. Amongst the many things we discussed, I asked her if she remembered the first time we had met. When she replied in the negative I told her about when I first came to the Rebbe in 1964: There was this fancy car parked outside 770 and the *bochurim* didn’t tell me whose car it was. As a

although you cannot grow a beard, it does not mean you are exempt from doing outreach!

Emmanuel and his son. Avi’s Bar-Mitzvah trip to the Rebbe. Circa 1990.



With the broadest smile in the world, he looked me straight in the face and said “Good Shabbos!”

young and naive Aussie boy, I excitedly climbed up onto the car and sat on its bonnet. A lady exited the upstairs apartment of 770 and shooed me off the car (the lady was the Rebbetzin). The Rebbetzin said she didn't remember the story, but she thought it was very possible.

During our conversation, I injected a throwaway line in jest and told the Rebbetzin, “*Men zogt in der gas az der Rebbe iz a kluge Yid*” - the word in the street is that the Rebbe is a clever man.” The Rebbetzin smiled and asked, “What do you mean?” I answered, “It is quite *hefker* in Crown Heights right now. There's a lot of *bochurim* running around who do not seem to have anything to do. To keep them occupied, the Rebbe came up with the concept of having Chabad houses all over the world so that they can employ the *bochurim!*” The Rebbetzin laughed and then said, “*Altz vos ir zogt mir ich geb iber tzu mayn man*” - (All that you say I will repeat to my husband). I was horrified. I had meant it as a silly joke, and now the Rebbe would hear about it! I wished I could have sunk through the floor.

When I went to 770 the next *Shabbos*, I was very nervous. After Friday night *davening* the Rebbe used to leave 770 by ascending the narrow staircase at the rear. Rabbi Bistrizky and Rabbi Binyomin Althaus (a first cousin of mine) would stand by the stairs and be the last people the Rebbe would see on his way out. Rabbi Bistrizky took a liking to me and let me take his spot. When the Rebbe came up the stairs with his *siddur* he nodded and said good *Shabbos* to Rabbi Binyomin. Then the Rebbe looked at

me, nodded, and continued walking. After about three meters the Rebbe did a u-turn and walked back to me. With the broadest smile in the world, he looked me straight in the face and said “Good *Shabbos!*” I knew then that all was forgiven. Phew! It was one of the sweetest moments I have ever experienced.

The next day Alex and I attended the Rebbe's *Shabbos farbrengen*. After a few *Sichos*, Alex needed to go to the bathroom. Alex was a small boy and after leaving to go to the bathroom, he couldn't push his way back to where I was sitting. The Rebbe must have noticed this and said, “*Es is doh faran ah Bar Mitzvah yingele foon Australia men zol em gefinen un araynbrenge*” - (there is a kid from Australia whose birthday is today. Whoever finds him bring him here). When people realised that the Rebbe was referring to Alex, they grabbed him, pushed him through the crowd and brought him to the Rebbe. The Rebbe gave Alex some *l'chaim* from his cup and cake to eat. For the rest of the *farbrengen*, Alex sat under the Rebbe's table. Afterwards, the Rebbe said *l'chaim* to both Alex and me several times.

What was your involvement in communal affairs?

Between 1978 and 1981 I sat on the *Yeshiva* executive board. Throughout the years I was constantly involved with the community and its progress.

I became *gabbai* of the 7:30 am *shacharis minyan* in 1998, taking over from Rabbi Yekusiel Broh. I am still the *gabbai* of this *minyan* today and I have been actively encouraging younger people to

take over, but so far, there have been no takers. Their standard answer is, “We'll let you know when you're over the hill.”

In 2005, I started ‘Emmanuel's email list’. This came about because I was annoyed that we couldn't get *zmanim* for *Shabbos* on time (the *zmanim* were always released only a few minutes before *Shabbos*). Knowing a person or two, I arranged that I should receive the *zmanim* earlier on during the week. I then sent this information to a few people who I thought would want it. Sure enough, more and more people requested to receive these *Shabbos* emails. As the email list kept growing, I began to include other relevant community information, like job opportunities, things for sale, *mazal tovs*, death notices and more. Eventually, the email list grew to over four thousand people. My ‘clientele’ ranged from reform temple goers to the most religious of people. I made sure to vet everything coming in before publishing. It was quite the project. I was spending many hours on it every day and it was difficult to maintain, especially when I was travelling overseas. Although I felt a responsibility to keep it going, it finally became too much, and in 2015, I decided to close it down. A couple of people heard about this and wanted to buy it from me as a business concern. This did not sit well with me; I had done this project as a free service to the community and I refused to sell it. Instead, I gave it to them for free so that it would keep on serving the community. I suggested they use a new name, but they insisted on leaving it as is.

Any concluding remarks?

Obviously, there are many more stories to be told. What I have said here is only the tip of the iceberg, and *b'ezrat Hashem* one day I will tell them all.

I feel extremely lucky to have known the previous generation, the pioneers of the *Yeshiva* Centre. I have been fortunate to witness the fulfilment of the *brachos* of both the Rebbe Rayatz and our Rebbe. Admittedly, we are living in difficult times today. However, I assure you that the previous generation gave their *etzem* to carry on the ethos of Chabad here in Australia, enabling us to continue in their ways. After all, we are the *Dor Ho'acharon*, and as our Rebbeim have said, “We can hear the footsteps of the imminent coming of *Moshiach*.”

“*Tracht gut vet zein gut*” (promoted by the *Tzemach Tzedek*) blended with “*Lechatchila ariber*” (by the Rebbe Maharash) is more relevant today than ever. 🇺🇸

Left: Reb Isser Kluwgant, Reb Leizer Herzog, Eli Sylow, and Yossel New. *Yeshiva* Matza bakery, circa 1960.

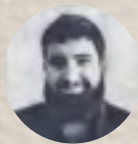
Right: Lag B'omer trip. Binyomin Althaus is the *Madrich*





A BUBBE MAASE

*“it’s my opinion,
if you don’t like it
then fuggedaboutit!”*



Written by
Mendel Gurkov

Oh, New Zealand, Where art thou?

Throughout my life, I have used humour as a defence mechanism (as I am sure you can tell from past columns). Just ask my wife, when a conversation gets too serious, I will insert a corny joke that undoes any progress I’ve made. I just can’t help it. For me, laughing at life makes even the hardest of challenges bearable. Otherwise, I fear I’ll become a cynic.

With the first wave of corona, I hit my joke stride. After the second wave, it was a bit more challenging, but have no fear, a litany of horrible corona puns quickly prevailed. The lockdown extension though, coinciding with the month of *Tishrei*,

finally hit home, the joker in me fizzled at long last.

I am not going to lie, *minyán* was never my strong suit. Growing up on *Sblichus*, I did not attend a daily *minyán*, and my observance of *Yiddishkeit* was always stronger in other areas. But to not have a proper service for the *Yomim Noraim*? It just doesn’t feel right and it has subsequently been a real struggle to get in the right headspace for the High Holidays.

I am surely not alone in this, so I wanted to share a personal story with you.

The first plan that COVID-19 disrupted was my vacation to New Zealand. My wife and I had planned

to go right after *Pesach*, figuring it was a great chance to see this beautiful country. Of course, the trip never happened.

Interestingly enough, this wasn’t the first time my travels to New Zealand had been cancelled. A few years ago I was learning *semicha* in Sydney. When *Pesach* came around that year I figured, hey, when am I ever going to get another chance to see New Zealand? So I endeavoured to get there. In the past I led *sedarim* around the world (Italy, Ecuador and Rwanda to name a few). I had seen firsthand the wonderful impact one can have on far-flung Jewish communities.

I contacted a *Sbliach* in New Zealand and offered to run a *Pesach seder*, hoping to have the best of both worlds; an inspiring *seder* in a beautiful location.

After a few phone calls, it was all set up. All we had to do was book the tickets. A few days before *Pesach*, in the eleventh hour so to speak, complications arose and it soon became clear that I was not going to New Zealand for *Pesach*. I was very disappointed, but hey, what are you gonna do about it? I quickly pivoted and arranged a trip with a friend to Thailand.

My Thailand trip was meant for sightseeing purposes only. After New Zealand fell through, I wasn’t in the mood of planning and leading any *sedarim*, and I figured I would just enjoy myself. And enjoy myself I did. I travelled around Thailand and had a blast.

We arrived in Koh Samui, Thailand, close to *Yom Tov* and settled into a hotel. It felt weird to be sipping Mai Thai’s instead of peeling potatoes. As I soaked in the sun, I received a phone call from a friend of mine who had come to Koh Samui to lead the English speaking *seder*. “Hey Mendel, I am really not feeling well. Do you think you can help me run the *seder*?” And though I tried to weasel out of it, “I didn’t prepare anything!” In the end, I had to agree. As I said, what are you gonna do about it? I quickly messaged my dad (my in-house Rabbi), asking for stories that I could share at the *seder* table. That’s how I ended up having one of the strangest *Erev Pesach*’s ever; sitting at the beach in my bathing suit and reading stories and *vertelach* about the *Haggadah*.

That night the *seder* went well. We had a crowd of people from all nationalities. I told a story about a silver *seder* plate. We sang songs and danced deep into the night. After our *seder*

was finished, we joined the Hebrew speaking *seder* across town, which happens to be the largest *seder* in the world. It was quite a sight. Thousands of people singing and dancing, the air was electric. The rest of *Yom Tov* was pleasant, the *Sblichim* were amazing hosts and treated us wonderfully.

On *Motzei Yom Tov*, the *Sbliach* shared an email he received. It was from a lady who had been at our *seder*. The gist of it was as follows:

“Dear Rabbi, you don’t know me very well, so I will provide a little backstory. The past few months have been very challenging for me. I went through a bitter divorce, and I am still in the midst of a custody battle for my kids. I needed to clear my head, so I took some time off from work and came to Thailand. However, it didn’t work. After spending a few days here I became depressed, even suicidal. I phoned a close friend of mine who told me that I should get in touch with people who would care for me. But who could I turn to in a foreign country for help? I remembered that *Pesach* was approaching, so I went online and found the website for the Chabad House. You invited me to the English speaking *seder* and I hesitantly agreed to come.

When I arrived that evening I was in bad shape. The young Rabbis leading the *seder* were nice, but it wasn’t doing it for me. At one point I went to the bathroom and seriously contemplated ending my life right then and there. Ultimately, I decided I would go back to my hotel, unsure if I would make it to the next day. I went back into the room where the *seder* was being held to retrieve my purse and I stopped for a minute to hear one last story from Rabbi Mendel before leaving.

He was telling a story about a silver *seder* plate that had been passed down for generations in one

family. The story illustrated how much our parents gave up in order to pass Judaism on to the next generation. As I listened to the story a warm feeling washed over me. Here was my answer. I must soldier on through my difficulties. My life would not end here in Thailand; my kids needed me to form the next link in the chain of Judaism. A new perspective took hold of me and I promised myself I would start anew.”

Needless to say, I was glad that I ended up in Koh Samui for *Pesach* and the rest of my *Yom Tov* was quite inspired.

I don’t have all the answers and I cannot tell you G-d’s master plan. What I can say for certain is that we never know why we are placed in specific situations. My past New Zealand trip cancellation set in motion a series of events that ended up saving someone’s life. Who knows what this year’s cancelled New Zealand travels will bring?

So while it’s true that this lockdown is stifling and *Yom Tov* this year will be quite different, let’s work with what we have. Call a friend in need. Offer help to one another. Blow *Sbofar* in the streets. Make a *Yom Tov* dish for someone else. You never know which simple acts of kindness will positively affect someone else’s life. When we look back at this *Tishrei* in a few years we might see this time in a different light.

Usually, I would insert a joke here to lighten the mood, but I think I’ll stay serious for a change. Because the impact you can have this *Yomim Noraim* is no joking matter, it can be as serious as life or death.

What are you gonna do about it?

-Mendel Gurkov



His skill at understanding the nuances of Talmud Bavli was unparalleled and his breadth of knowledge was astounding

Akiva wrote *hagahos* (notes) to *Shulchan Aruch* as well as some of his most famous *Teshuvos*.

A few years later, in 1796, tragedy struck; Gilkel Eiger passed away. After a few years, Rabbi Akiva remarried.

In 1812, tragedy struck once again when Akiva's son-in-law passed away, leaving his daughter, Sara, a widow with two children. Rabbi Akiva wrote to the Chasam Sofer in Pressburg asking if there is an appropriate widower to marry his daughter. In an interesting turn of events, Sara Eiger married the Chasam Sofer himself. Rabbi Akiva ended up becoming a father-in-law to one of his close contemporaries who was only one year younger than him. The Chasam Sofer and his wife Sara had eleven children. Thus, the members of the illustrious Sofer, Rabbinic dynasty are also descendants of Rabbi Akiva Eiger.



greatest *Torah* personalities of the past two hundred years. His *seforim* are acknowledged as the works of a genius, and any rabbi worth his mettle is well versed in them.

The following is a collection of short stories and anecdotes highlighting the impact Rabbi Eiger had on the *Torah* world:

Rav Chanoch Padvah of London once said, "in the *Gilyon Hashas* (the most famous work of Rabbi Akiva), Rabbi Akiva concludes most thoughts with a '*tzarich iyun*' (needs in-depth analysis) or '*tzarich iyun gadol*' (needing a great deal of in-depth analysis.) Seemingly, today there are numerous answers for every question. One should know that Rabbi Akiva Eiger could also have come up with the answers that we give, but he wanted to teach us that

From a very young age, Akiva was known as a child prodigy. At the age of twelve, Akiva left home for Breslau to learn under his uncle, Rabbi Binyomin Wolf Eiger, the Rosh Yeshiva of Breslau. During his years learning in *Yeshiva*, Akiva exhibited extraordinary intelligence. His skill at understanding the nuances of *Talmud Bavli* was unparalleled and his breadth of knowledge was astounding.

When Akiva turned twenty, he married Glikel, the daughter of a wealthy resident of Lisa. Gilkel's father supported Akiva and provided him with a large house, including a rich library of *seforim*. While living in Lisa, Akiva befriended Rabbi Meir Posener, the author of *Beis Meir*.

In 1790, a large fire destroyed the Eigers' house in Lisa. Akiva was forced to find a new place to live, and in 1791, he accepted a rabbinical post in Markisch Friedland, Germany. While in Markisch, Rabbi

In 1841, Rabbi Akiva became the chief Rabbi of Posen, a position he held until the end of his life.

Rabbi Akiva Eiger passed away at the age of seventy five on the 13th of Tishrei, 5638 (1837).

Rabbi Akiva's greatness

Rabbi Akiva Eiger is widely considered as one of the

SPOTLIGHT

Reb Akiva Eiger זצ"ל



Written by
Rabbi Michael Stern

This article is based on the book
"Chut Hameshulash"
Written by Shlomo Sofer.
Published by Machon Daas Sofer.

A brief biography

Akiva Ginz' was born on the 1st of Cheshvan, 1761, in the city Eisenstadt, Hungary. He was the first-born son to Moshe Ginz and Gitel Eiger. Akiva was named after his mother's father, Rabbi Akiva of Halberstadt, who was a highly regarded Rabbi in Germany and the author of *Mishnas Rabbi Akiva Eiger*. Later on in life, Akiva adopted his mother's maiden name, and became known as Rabbi Akiva Eiger.



although many times during learning one has questions, one should not sit on a question for too long. Write the *kashya* (strong question) down on the side of the *gemara* and continue learning. Someone will eventually come and answer the question.”²

The Klausenberger Rebbe once related during a *shiur* that when Rabbi Akiva Eiger would answer the *kashya* of *Tosfos*, he would never say “With this explanation we can answer the *kashya* of *Tosfos*.” Rather, he would say with humility, “*Ribono Shel Olam*, I have not merited to understand the *kashya* of *Tosfos*. I have not fully comprehended their holy words, for according to the way I have learned, their question is not a question.” The Klausenberger Rebbe concluded, “This is a different approach to learning. One must understand that *Tosfos* is definitely correct and it is I who does not understand his words.”³

The Chazon Ish is quoted as saying, “Rabbi Akiva Eiger could have been in the generation of the *Rashba*, however the *Aibershter* had *rachmonus* upon us and placed him in our generation.”⁴

When the great scholar Reb Boruch Ber would mention Rabbi Akiva’s name during a *shiur* he would say, “*Der heiliger Rabbi Akiva Eiger*.” In Reb Boruch’s eyes, mentioning Rabbi Akiva was like referring to one of the *Rishonim*; “*Der heiliger Rashba*.”⁵

Reb Boruch Ber once said a *sevara* (Talmudic reasoning) in the name of Rabbi Akiva Eiger. Rabbi Boruch’s son heard the *sevara* and immediately raised a question. Instead of answering the question, Rabbi Boruch admonished his son and refused to listen. Rabbi Boruch’s reasoning was that his son had not paused momentarily with *simcha* (joy) and *hispaalus* (excitement) when hearing the novel *sevara* by Rabbi Akiva. Rabbi Boruch then told his son, “Anyone who does not dance from *simcha* after hearing such a *sevara* is not a *mentch*.”⁶

The Anvnei Nezer often spoke very highly of Rabbi Akiva Eiger. He once said, “One can tell from the way Rabbi Akiva Eiger explains things that he never had a *nidnud* (iota) of an evil thought, even during his youth.”

The story is told that Rabbi Shlomo Heiman once saw a young *bocher* in *yeshiva* holding the *sefer Chidushei Rabbi Akiva* in a disrespectful way. He called the *bocher* over and said, “*Yingel* come over here, let me teach you how to hold a *sefer* of *Chidushei Rabbi Akiva Eiger*; with two hands, writing up and close to the heart.”⁷

It is well known that the Rogatchover Gaon did not suffer fools gladly. In many instances he was *mevatel* the words of *Acharonim*. On one occasion, a *bocher* came to

Rabbi Akiva ended up becoming a father-in-law to one of his close contemporaries who was only one year younger than him.

the Rogatchover to discuss learning. Assuming that the Rogatchover did not hold of Rabbi Akiva Eiger (as he was an *Acharon*), during the conversation, the *bocher* spoke in a disrespectful manner regarding a *halacha* of Rabbi Akiva Eiger. To the *bocher*’s surprise, the Rogatchover immediately stood up and gave him a *patch*, saying, “Stop being *mevaze* (embarrassing) a *Talmid Chochom!*”⁸

Connection with Chabad

Rabbi Akiva had a unique connection to the Chabad Rebbeim throughout the generations.

In the summer of 1826, the Mittlerer Rebbe travelled to the health spas of Karlsbad. On the way, he stopped off in Posen and met with Rabbi Akiva Eiger. Later on, the Mittlerer Rebbe wrote a letter to his son-in-law, the Tzemach

Tzedek, describing his trip:

“Rabbi Akiva Eiger is an *ish tam v’yashar* (wholesome and just man) and knows nothing about this physical world. He received us with great honour. He is an *onov*, *shoful*, and a *pashtan* (a humble well received man) with everyone. During our conversations, he asked that I tell him about the *mahus* (essence) of my father, the Alter Rebbe, and the plight of the Jews in Russia. I told him about the *sinas chinam* of the *Misnagdim* to the *Chasidim*. I then gave him two volumes of the Alter Rebbe’s *Shulchan Aruch*, the *Tanya*, and my *seforim*. He accepted them happily and we parted.” The Mittlerer Rebbe concluded, “*Halevai* that all *Rabbonim* from Volen and Lita would be like him.”⁹

(An interesting anecdote: In 1975, Rabbi Yehoshua Mondshine published the Mittlerer Rebbe’s *maamar*, “*Al tatzter es Moav*”, which is an extremely lengthy *mammar*. In the introductory page Rabbi Mondshine wrote, “This *mammar* was said before Rabbi Akiva Eiger in Posen, Parshas *Devarim*, 5685.” After sending a draft to the Rebbe for approval, Rabbi Mondshine received a *ma’ane* (response) from the Rebbe, “*Tamuah* the *arichus* before Rabbi Akiva Eiger.” This meant that the Rebbe did not think it was *mistaber* (probable) that the Mittlerer Rebbe would say such a long *maamer* before Rabbi Akiva Eiger.”)¹⁰

Years later, when mentioning Rabbi Akiva Eiger in a *teshuva*, the Tzemach Tzedek referred to him as, “*Hagaon Rabbi Akiva Eiger naro yair* (his light shines forth)”¹¹

The Rebbe had great respect for Rabbi Akiva Eiger. In one instance, when asked by an Israeli rabbi about using the date of the secular calendar, the Rebbe responded, “I don’t know the custom in Yerushalayim; however, in America the practice is to use the secular date if there is a necessity. We do not have anyone greater than the Rama, Rabbi Akiva Eiger, and the Chasam Sofer, who allowed the use of secular dates when necessary.”¹²

Rabbi Aharon Chitrik published the *sefer Chiddushi HaRid* in 1962. Shortly thereafter, the Rebbe asked him in *yechidus* if there were any comments about the *sefer*. Rabbi Chitrik answered that Rabbi Feldman of Baltimore had sent him a letter saying that according to the *Rid*, we can answer one of the *kashyas* of Rabbi Akiva Eiger in *Gilyon Hashas*. After hearing Rabbi Chitrik’s response, a look of great satisfaction could be seen upon the Rebbe’s holy face.

Rav Moshe Tzvi Neria relayed, “During my first visit to the Rebbe in 1957, I told the Rebbe a saying from Rav Kook that Rav Izak Homler is ‘the

Rabbi Akiva Eiger of Chabad.’ The Rebbe responded, “Maybe even more.”

Rabbi Akiva Eiger’s name is synonymous with *geonus* and the study of *Talmud Bavli*. More than just another commentator, Rabbi Akiva Eiger’s *derech halimud* is his most endearing quality. Many *Rabbonim* were blessed with sharp intellect, but few manage to raise questions on the *pirushim* of the great *rishonim*, while simultaneously remaining humble.

May we be blessed that next time we open a *gemara*, we should not only be able to learn Rabbi Akiva Eiger’s commentary, but also have the proper respect for the holy words of our ancestors. Only then will we be truly following in the footsteps of the *gaon*, Rabbi Akiva Eiger.

ENDNOTES

- 1 עיין בספר חוט המשולש תולדות רע"א
- 2 ספר הליכות חנוך עמ' רמה
- 3 זכרונם לברכה תשרי עמ' עו
- 4 זכרונם לברכה עמ' עד
- 5 זכרונם לברכה עמ' עה
- 6 ספר ברכת שמואל ב' עמ' 7
- 7 ספר אמרי ספר עמ' שצד
- 8 ספר אמרי ספר עמ' שצד
- 9 ספר התולדות אדמו"ר האמצעי עמ' 98
- 10 התקשרות גליון 917
- 11 שו"ת צ"צ י"ד סי' נ"ו
- 12 אגרות קודש יא עמ' תכ

Loch in KOP



Presented by
Rabbi Yossi Moshel

Riddle me this

Q. A rich Arab sheik is getting older and must leave his fortune to one of his two sons. He makes a proposition: Both sons will ride their camels in a race, and whoever's camel crosses the finish line LAST will win the fortune for its owner. During the race, the two brothers wander aimlessly for days, neither willing to cross the finish line. In desperation, the brothers approach a wise man for advice. The wise man gives the brothers advice; then the brothers leap onto the camels and charge toward the finish line. What did the wise man say?

Q. How can we interpret the last four words of the Torah as a possible allusion to the Zohar's teaching that, "neshama shares a connection to Moshe Rabbeinu's neshama." ולכל היד החזקה ולכל המורא הגדול אשר עשה משה לעיני כל ישראל

Q. A man was walking in the rain in the middle of nowhere. He had nothing and nowhere to hide. He came home drenched, but not a single hair on his head was wet. How is that possible?

Q. Name two pesukim found in the siddur (other than "gad ged yegududenu") which the second pasuk is read in the opposite order to the first (hint: this prayer is recited monthly).

Answers: From Kiddush Levana: וְיָמֵינוּ יִשְׁמְרוּנוּ וְיִשְׁמְרוּנוּ וְיִשְׁמְרוּנוּ וְיִשְׁמְרוּנוּ. The final letters of those four words spell הלא. The rules of the race were that the owner of the camel that crosses the finish line last wins the fortune. The wise man simply told them to switch camels. The man is bald.

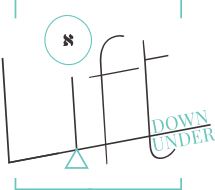
WORD FIND

THE MONTH OF TISHREI

T	R	H	A	V	U	H	S	E	T	T	V	H	G
E	A	H	R	D	I	H	A	U	E	U	A	I	N
F	N	C	S	I	N	A	O	I	P	R	L	S	I
I	D	I	H	T	T	U	E	N	O	H	U	K	T
L	A	L	E	Y	R	D	O	T	E	I	L	C	S
L	N	H	V	E	L	U	S	R	P	Y	T	Y	A
A	C	S	A	I	T	A	A	T	T	S	N	O	F
H	I	A	R	O	H	A	E	H	L	C	F	N	K
S	N	T	I	C	P	K	H	L	E	L	L	A	H
U	G	A	M	T	I	P	E	S	R	O	G	H	U
C	I	E	A	F	S	S	H	O	F	A	R	F	
C	S	N	H	R	Y	O	M	K	I	P	P	U	R
O	T	E	A	P	P	L	E	I	C	R	I	I	A
S	T	N	U	R	I	L	S	C	H	A	C	H	K

ESROG
SHEVARIM
YOM KIPPUR
YONAH
SINCHAS TORAH
DANCING
HONEY
TEFILLAH
SCHACH
APPLE
HALLEL
T'RUAH
FASTING
TESHUVAH
LULAV
TASHLICH
SUCCOS
SHOFAR
TEKIAH
ROUND



This month's edition of  is dedicated by



KOLLEL MENACHEM SHIURIM FOR THE MONTH OF TISHREI

Daily Mon-Thu

10 am

Gemara shiur with Rabbi Szmerling

10:45 am

Kitzur Shulchan Aruch with Rabbi Mendel Gurkov

Sunday evenings

with the Kollel Rabbis

Monday evenings

with the Rosh HaKollel Rabbi Y Johnson

Tuesday evenings

parsha with Rabbi Leor Broh

Wednesday evenings

Nach with Rabbi Yossi Gordon

Thursday evenings

Halacha with Rabbi Mottel Krasnjanski

Thursday evenings

Sefer Hachinuch with Rabbi Binyomin Cohen

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