

# Living Jewish

חב"ד  
כל הלב לכל אחר  
צעירי אגודת חב"ד

## Tell your Children

### Prayer from the Heart

In the first year after Perestroika became a reality, one of my friends was leading the Kol Nidrei services in the main synagogue of Kiev on Yom Kippur night.

Announcements of the services had been posted all over the city and Jews responded eagerly.

Old men who remembered accompanying their parents to shul as children, young families who wanted a taste of their heritage after more than a half-century of Soviet persecution, and youth in their teens who barely knew they were Jewish, flocked to the synagogue.

The chazzan chanted Kol Nidrei. The moving melody stirred the hearts of all those who had come.

### Becoming Bored

But as the service proceeded, my friend sensed feelings of disappointment beginning to surface. After all, most of the people had never been in a synagogue in their lives; none of them knew how to pray together with the chazzan.

Despite the best intentions, Hebrew-Russian prayerbooks, and explanations in Russian, he could sense that the people were becoming bored, and within their hearts a question was beginning to take form: Were these the prayers that they had yearned for so many years to be allowed to say?

In the middle of the services, after the Amidah prayer, my friend ascended to the lectern and began to tell a classic chassidic story:

The Baal Shem Tov was praying together with his students in a small Polish village.

Through his spiritual vision, the Baal Shem Tov had detected that harsh heavenly judgments had been decreed against the Jewish people.



*Sounding the Shofar on Yom Kippur  
"Man Blowing Shofar" by Aliza  
Marton, AlizaFineArt.com*

He and his students were trying with all the sincerity they could muster to cry out to G-d and implore Him to rescind these decrees and grant the Jews a year of blessing.

This deep feeling took hold of all the inhabitants of the village and everyone opened his heart in deepfelt prayer.

### A Simple Shepherd Boy

Among the inhabitants of the village was a simple shepherd boy. He did not know how to read; indeed, he could barely say the letters of the *alef-bet*, the Hebrew alphabet.

As the intensity of feeling in the synagogue began to mount, he decided that he also wanted to pray. But he did not know how. He could not read the

words of the prayer book or mimic the prayers of the other congregants. He opened the prayer book to the first page and began to recite the letters *alef, bet, vet* — reading the entire alphabet.

He then called out to G-d: "This is all I can do. G-d, You know how the prayers should be pronounced. Please, arrange the letters in the proper way."

This simple, genuine prayer resounded powerfully within the Heavenly court. G-d rescinded all the harsh decrees and granted the Jews blessing and good fortune.

### Alef, Bet, Vet...

My friend paused for a moment to let the story impact his listeners. Suddenly a voice called out: "*Alef*." And thousands of voices thundered back *Alef*.

The voice continued: *Bet*, and the thousands responded *Bet*.

They continued to pronounce every letter in the Hebrew alphabet, and then they began to file out of the synagogue.

They had recited their prayers.

*by Eli Tougher. "Prayer from the Heart" and "Yom Kippur Today" reprinted from Keeping in Touch with perm. from Sichos in English*

### Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	5:56	7:13
Tel Aviv	6:18	7:14
Haifa	6:07	7:14
Beer Sheva	6:18	7:14
New York	6:35	7:32

Chabad of Israel  
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Published by M.L.S. Kfar Chabad (03) 3731777  
Editor: Aharon Schmidt  
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## When Distance is a Virtue

*Listen, O heavens, and I will speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. (Devarim 31:1)*

Chassidus interprets the heaven and earth in this verse as an allusion to two components of our Divine service: Torah study and mitzvah observance (see Likutei Torah, Ha'azinu 74b).

The heavens allude to the study of the Torah, which was given from the heavens—"From the heavens I have spoken with you" (Shemot 20:19).

The earth alludes to the practical observance of the mitzvot, the fulfillment of which largely involves physical objects and "earthly" deeds.

### Close to Heaven

We find, however, that when Moshe addressed the heavens, he said - *שמעו ה' אלהים* - "listen, O heavens", whereas when he addressed the earth, he said - *והארץ תשמע* - "Let the earth hear".

"Hearing," which can be from afar, denotes distance, in comparison to "listening."

As the Sifri explains, "since Moshe was close to heaven he said, 'Listen, O heavens', and since he was distant from earth he said, 'let the earth hear the words of my mouth.'"

### Accepting the Yoke

How do we reconcile Moshe's "distance" from the earth (which is portrayed here as a value to aspire to) with the Chassidic interpretation that the "earth" refers to observance of the mitzvot?

Evidently, "distance" in this context is not detachment; it describes a mode of Divine service that is positively characterized by a sense of "distance."

To serve G-d with a sense of "closeness" means to recognize and appreciate G-d's greatness, to love and feel attached to Him.

In contrast, to serve G-d with a sense of "distance" means that even if you do not feel intellectually or emotionally attached, you dutifully abide by His will with a spirit of *kabolat ol*—accepting the yoke of Heaven.

### Torah and Mitzvot

In light of this distinction, we can understand the difference between Torah study

and mitzvah observance, and the virtue of "distance" with regard to the mitzvot.

To study Torah is to endeavor to absorb G-d's wisdom in your mind, to unify your intellect with His—an experience of closeness and intimacy like no other.

The observance of mitzvot, conversely, is primarily an exercise in obedience. Even the meanings behind the mitzvot, which help us to somewhat understand and appreciate their value, are only secondary to actually fulfilling them, i.e., dutifully carrying out G-d's commands.

We are therefore encouraged to be "distant from the earth," to devote ourselves to fulfilling G-d's mitzvot with *kabolat ol*, regardless of how close we feel to Him.

*Adapted from the teachings of the Rebbe, Likutei Sichot, vol. 34, pp. 204-205*

*reprinted from Ohr HaChassidus*

## Total Forgiveness

The *tanna* (a sage from the times of the Mishna) Rabbi Abba was once sitting near the entrance of Lud and witnessed the following scene.

A weary traveler sat down on a boulder protruding from the edge of a mountain, and fell asleep. As he was sleeping, a snake crept out and was making its way towards him, when suddenly another creature attacked the snake and killed it, saving the man's life.

When the man woke up, he walked away, and at that moment the protruding boulder broke off the mountain and tumbled down the cliff.

Rabbi Abba approached the man and said, "tell me what special deed you have done to merit these two great miracles. They must have been *earned*."

The man replied, "When anyone wrongs me, I immediately make up with him. At any rate, I do not go to bed before forgiving him. I then try to be extra kind to them in the future."

Rabbi Abba said: This man's actions are greater than those of Yosef, for this man forgave people who were not his brothers, on whom one is inclined to have mercy.

It is for this reason that before the Bed Time Shema, we recite *Ribbono shel Olam*, forgiving anyone who may have hurt us throughout the day.

*זהר מקץ רא ע"ב וראה מגילה כח ע"א*

*reprinted from The Weekly Farbrengen by Merkaz Anash, on-line at TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com*

## From our Sages

*Of the Rock that bore you were you unmindful; and you forgot the G-d Who bore you (Deut. 32:10)*

When G-d created man He gave him the gift of being "unmindful" - the ability to forget and allow time to heal the wounds which would befall him in this world. But, G-d claims, what did you do with this gift? You misused it, and forgot about Me!

*(Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Kotzk)*

*...He, and Hoshea the son of Nun" (Deut. 32:44)*

Why was Joshua referred to here by his original name, Hoshea? To inform us that although he was being given a position of greatness as the successor of Moses, he did not become egotistical or overbearing. He remained the same as always.

*(Rashi)*

*"...because my G-d is not in the midst of me, that these evils have overtaken me" (Deut. 31:17)*

The Baal Shem Tov used to say that if

one sees something bad in someone else, it is a sure sign that an element of the same negative trait exists in the person finding fault. It is as if one is looking into a mirror, and will see only that which is reflected.

Rabbi Dov Ber, the second Lubavitcher Rebbe, added his interpretation on this verse: "Because my G-d is not in the midst of me -- because my own face is dirty and my own connection to G-d and holiness is flawed, have these evils overtaken me -- that is why I find fault in others.

*And He said, I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end shall be (Deut. 32:20)*

G-d assures us: "Even though I will hide My face and subject the Jewish people to the laws of nature, it will only be a temporary situation. For even in their exile I am mindful of their 'end,' and will always protect their eternity."

*(Shem Mishmuel)*

*From our Sages & Moshlach Now! reprinted from LchaimWeekly.org - LYO / NYC*

# Chassidus page

## Yom Kippur Today

On Yom Kippur, we fast. He realizes that a lightning bolt will not strike him if he eats, but he is not concerned with reward or punishment. He doesn't eat because he understands that G-d does not want him to. He knows that a Jew does not do that on Yom Kippur. A day before, he may not have felt this way. He may have been lax in the observance of one mitzvah or another. But on Yom Kippur he feels that he has to do what a Jew should do.

Why? Because there is something special about this day. Our Sages explain the idea using gematria, Torah numerology. The Hebrew word for "the Satan" is numerically equivalent to 364. On 364 days of the year, Satan has the power to tempt the Jewish people. On one day, Yom Kippur, he has no power. A Jew is simply not interested in what he has to offer. On Yom Kippur, he has other things on his mind. Yom Kippur is a day for being Jewish.

### No Separation

What would happen on Yom Kippur? The High Priest entered the Holy of Holies and was alone with G-d. No human or spiritual being was permitted to intrude upon his connection with Him. Each year this sequence is replayed in our own hearts. The essence of the Jewish soul is one with the essence of G-d. This bond is constant; it is not the product of our efforts. Consequently, neither our thoughts, our words, nor our deeds can weaken it. At this level of essential connection, there is no existence outside G-dliness, no possibility of separation from Him.

This connection exists above time. But

within time, it is revealed on Yom Kippur. On this day, we each "enter the Holy of Holies," and spend time "alone with G-d."

### Locked Inside with Hashem

This is the heart of the Neilah prayer, the final service recited on Yom Kippur. Neilah means "locking." There are some Rabbis who interpret the name as meaning that the gates of heaven are being locked and there are a few short moments left in which our prayers can enter. According to Chassidic thought, the meaning is that the doors are locked behind us. Each one of us is "locked in", alone and as one with G-d.

At this level of essential connection, there is no existence outside G-dliness, no possibility of separation from G-d, no possibility that the soul could be affected by sin. The revelation of this level of connection removes the blemishes that sin causes. This kind of cleansing is a natural process, for the revelation of our inner bond with G-d renews our connection with Him at all levels.

This is the meaning of the saying of our Sages that "the essence of the day atones." On Yom Kippur, our essential bond with G-d is revealed, and in the process, every element of our spiritual potential is revitalized.

This spiritual experience also renews our lives within the material sphere, endowing us with blessing, and causing each one of us to be granted a good and sweet year in all our material and spiritual concerns.

*based on the teachings of the Rebbe*

## R. Reuven the Sofer

R. Reuven Hasofer of Yanovitch was the Alter Rebbe's personal sofer. The Alter Rebbe taught R. Reuven how to write the letters and also how to manufacture the ink, and he would only use scrolls written by R. Reuven.

The scrolls written by R. Reuven are the primary source for the Alter Rebbe's script.

Someone once tried to slander R. Reuven to the Alter Rebbe by saying that he mixes some ingredient into his ink to make it shine.

The Alter Rebbe replied, "indeed, I know about that. He mixes yirat Shamayim (awe of Heaven) in his ink, nothing else!"

## Not a Cloudy Day

The Alter Rebbe once sent a messenger to bring a mezuzah from R. Reuven. The messenger came to R. Reuven and asked for two mezuzot: one for the Rebbe and one for himself.

When the sofer gave him the mezuzot, he told him which one to give to Alter Rebbe. The messenger figured that the Rebbe's mezuzah was better, so he switched them and took the Rebbe's mezuzah for himself.

When the Alter Rebbe received the other mezuzah, he looked at it and expressed surprise that this is what the sofer had sent him.

The messenger was ashamed and told the Rebbe that indeed the sofer had sent another mezuzah.

The Rebbe took one look at that one and said, "this is a mezuzah!"

Seeing the messenger's disappointment with his inferior mezuzah, the Alter Rebbe reassured him that they were identical aside from one difference: at the Alter Rebbe's request, his mezuzah was not written on a cloudy day.

*reprinted from The Weekly Farbrengen by Merkaz Anash, on-line at TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com*

## Moshiach Now

### Eating on Yom Kippur?!?!?

If Moshiach should appear during the days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, it is conceivable that we will eat and drink on Yom Kippur if it falls during the seven-day dedication of the Third Holy Temple.

This was the case with the First Temple, whose dedication began on the eighth of Tishrei, and the people of that time ate and drank on Yom Kippur.

*(Sefer HaSichot of the Rebbe, 5749)*

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## Human Interest

### Meet AGM

"I was born in a non-observant family, but after my father's death 20 years ago, I found solace in returning to my Jewish roots. A Lubavitcher friend invited me to the Ohel, the Rebbe's resting place, where I felt a connection and warm embrace. Chassidut has been my daily inspiration."

Meet Abraham-Gerard Meyer (AGM), a French physio-psychologist who embarked on a thirty-year U.S. career before moving to Israel's Beit Shemesh Lubavitch community with his wife Sarah Debora five years ago.

In 2000, AGM secured \$18 million in congressional funding for a top Driver Training and Safety Institute at Carnegie Mellon. This laid the basis for MindfulChoice™, AGM's Decision-Making work, inspired by the Torah portion Shelach, advocating against following the heart and eyes (15:39).



AGM was instrumental in creating Meta-Daat, based on Positive Psychology, guided by the Rebbe's advice: "Think good and things will be good!" Amidst Covid, they established The Mental Wellness Society, aiding burnout and physician distress, expanding to train psychologists in Ukraine and evolving globally with 9,000 experts across 73 countries.

AGM also developed Mind EVOKE iconic flashcards and Resonance Therapeutics. Collaborating with Havana Cuba and Haifa Israel Universities, they validated handheld devices for anxiety, PTSD, panic, obsession, stress, burnout, and pregnancy distress. Another device addresses headaches and menstrual pain.

While juggling teaching, research, patient care and managing multiple organizations, as a Chassid of the Rebbe, AGM perceives his role as a conductor shaping performance, recognizing the Divine hand in optimizing outcomes.

AGM can be contacted at:  
meyer@bestmindsassociates.com

### Cooking Tip of the Week

#### Great Challah Topper:

One of my favorite toppings is popular in America. Here is my Israeli home-made version. Keep in closed jar and it will last at least 3 weeks. Mix together sesame seeds, Himalayan coarse salt, dried minced garlic, dried minced onion and poppy seeds (if you like). After you egg your challah use this as a topping.

Alizah Hochstead,  
alizahh@hotmail.com

### Halacha Corner - Kapparot—Handling the Chicken

A chicken is the best way to practice Kapparot. Kapparot on a chicken earlier in the 10 Days of Teshuvah is a preferable option to waiting for crev Yom Kippur and using money. Carry the chicken gently, and avoid grabbing it by its wings, as it may cause damage to the bones or joints, which would render it treif. If the chicken falls while you are holding it, let the shochet know, so it can be checked carefully.

If a line forms while waiting to have your chicken slaughtered, stand back and position yourself so the shochet is not in the (live) chicken's line of sight—it is possible that such trauma can cause damage to its lungs, which would render the chicken unkosher. This is all in addition to the general prohibition of tzaar baalei chaim—causing pain to a living creature.

By Rav Yosef Yeshaya Braun, shlit'a, member of the Badatz of Crown Heights; Day-To-Day Halachic Guide, from crownheightconnect.com

## Farbrengen

**Question:** My wife is so hypocritical. She gets upset at me for something when she does the same thing. She will complain that I make a mess, when she makes more of a mess than me. She will complain that I come home late from work, yet whenever she goes somewhere she always comes home late. The other day she said I was such a hypocrite. It is like, whatever she is, she claims I am.

**Answer:** Rav Chaim Shalom Deitch, Rosh Kollel of the Tzemach Tzedek in the Old City of Jerusalem, shared an interesting teaching from the Rebbe Rashab that relates to your letter. To paraphrase:

A man is analogous to the Hebrew letter Yud and a woman to the Hebrew letter Hei. The form of the letter Yud is similar to a small point. It represents hidden potential; before the potential is actualized and revealed. The form of the letter Hei has height and width. It represents expression, the actualization of the hidden potential.

One of the ways this dynamic expresses itself is within marriage. A wife has the inherent ability to bring what is concealed - the potential of her husband - into revelation. She enables her husband to tap his latent capabilities and strengths.

However, just as this can be for the positive, it also has a flip side. The negative character traits and behaviors that lie concealed within the husband can find expression in the wife. A wife's seemingly problematic behavior might be reflecting a similar tendency in the husband. Thus, once the husband changes for the better, this will also be reflected in the wife.

I am sure there are husbands that upon reading these words are thinking, "okay, but my case is different...My wife really is problematic and it is not because of me!" Actually, when I walk to shul on Shabbat morning I meet, from time to time, a very nice gentleman who reads this column. And, what does he usually say to me: "You always take the women's side!"

Yet, the fact remains that we can't control anyone's behavior except for our own. None of us are perfect and there are always things we can do better. When we change, very often our spouse will also change.

When our spouse complains, rather than defend ourselves, it helps to listen. What they are saying is true from their perspective. When we think objectively (not emotionally) about our spouse's claim, we can usually find some truth to their words and areas where we can improve. And, even if we still disagree, there is nothing wrong with changing our behavior for the sake of shalom bayit (marital harmony).

Aharon Schmidt - marriage & individual counseling; coachingandcounseling1@gmail.com

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