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ROSH
HASHANAH

COVERED WITH CARE

Steps to the Throne with Joy by Rabbi Nosson Muller

Several verses are recited by the entire congregation immediately prior to shofar blowing, and the shofar is covered with a tallis while they are said (see *Mateh Efraim* 585:3).

Why?

The Sdei Chemed explains this custom with the following midrash (*Bereishis Rabbah* 56:5).

Scripture makes no mention of how Yitzchak occupied himself while his father exerted himself to build the *mizbei'ach* upon which he planned to offer his son. Where was he, and why did he allow his father to build it on his own?

Avraham did not allow him to help, the midrash answers. Preparing the altar and pyre involved cutting large pieces of wood. Avraham worried that splinters would fly as he worked and pierce his son's body, thus inflicting a blemish invalidating him for sacrifice. He covered him with a blanket to ensure that the ultimate *korban* would be properly offered.

We cover the shofar before it is blown, says the Sdei Chemed, to remember Avraham's dedication to ensuring that he would not be prevented from fulfilling his holy mission.

Our attempt to re-enact even a seemingly peripheral aspect of the *Akeidah*, like Yitzchak being covered, is notable.

It teaches an important lesson.

Pirkei Avos (5:23) compares the proper approach to *avodas Hashem* to the outstanding qualities of four animals: *Be bold as a leopard, light as an eagle,*

swift as a deer, and strong as a lion, to carry out the will of your Father in Heaven.

Deer are not the fastest animals on earth. A cheetah, for example, runs even faster. Why, wonders the Yismach Moshe, does the deer, specifically, show the speed needed to serve Hashem? He answers that while the deer runs, he always looks back at its young to make sure they aren't falling behind.

The Lev Aharon explains that the Yismach Moshe meant to highlight the responsibility we carry to our families as we grow. They cannot be forgotten. Even decisions made for holy purposes must account for our children's abilities to follow along. If they get lost along the way, we are doing it wrong.

Yes, we run forward as fast as we can, but like the deer, our children cannot be sacrificed on the way. They ride on our shoulders, and if they cannot hold on, we are doing it wrong.

A young student in Ponevezh, Meir Heisler, was once summoned by R' Shach on Rosh Hashanah.

"Where did you daven today?" asked the rosh yeshivah.

"In yeshivah, of course. Where else would I be?" young Meir replied, surprised at the question.

"But your background is chassidic, and the customs of shofar blowing in yeshivah sharply differ from your father's," said R' Shach.

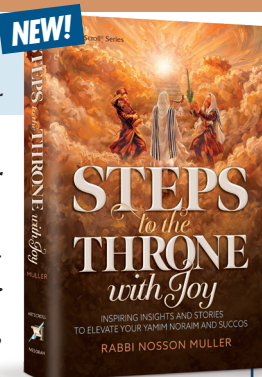
He wasn't finished.

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R' Elazar Menachem Man Schach

**WHILE THE DEER
RUNS, HE ALWAYS
LOOKS BACK AT
ITS YOUNG**





It's Erev Succos. The streets are alive with that unmistakable pre-Yom Tov energy — the air rich with the fragrance of freshly picked *esrogim*, the rustle of palm branches, and the hum of last-minute shoppers searching for the perfect *lulav*. Booths line every sidewalk, filled with men examining each *hadass* and *aravah* under the sunlight, comparing shades of green, feeling the textures, discussing *pitomim* and *balatos* with intensity and joy.

And then, in the midst of it all, something shocking happens. You notice a man approach one of the stands. He studies the table carefully, searching for that flawless *lulav*. Finally, his eyes light up — he's found it. It's magnificent, *mehudar*, *alef-alef* plus. But suddenly, without warning, he snatches it from the seller's hand and runs!

You stand there stunned. How could someone steal — for the sake of a mitzvah?! A *lulav hagazul*? A *mitzvah haba'ah b'aveirah*? Impossible!

And you are right. The *Shulchan Aruch* clearly rules that one cannot fulfill the mitzvah with a *lulav hagazul*, a stolen *lulav* (*Orach Chaim* 649). The same applies to matzah, tzitzis, or any other mitzvah item. If it's stolen, it's invalid. Hashem wants our mitzvos to be pure, not tainted by sin.

But here's where it gets interesting. What if someone, in a moment of absurdity, stole a shofar and used it on Rosh Hashanah to fulfill the mitzvah? Surely, we'd assume he cannot be *yotzei* — and yet, the *Shulchan Aruch* surprises us (*Orach Chaim* 586:2):

"Hagozel shofar v'tokei'a bo — yatza."

One who steals a shofar and

blows it — is *yotzei*!

Moreover, the halachah continues: Even if the original owner has not given up hope (*yei'ush*) and the shofar still technically belongs to him, the thief has still fulfilled his obligation (though, of course, it is not condoned — see *Mishnah Berurah*, *Orach Chaim* 586:9).

What's going on here? How could a stolen shofar be any different from a stolen *lulav* or matzah?

The *Mishnah Berurah* explains the key:

"*Veino domeh l'lulav u'matzah v'tzitzis hagezulum, lefi shemitzvas shofar einah ela hashmiah bilvad — v'ein b'shmiah din gezul.*" The mitzvah of shofar is fundamentally dif-



R' Yehoshua Frankenhuis

ferent. In *lulav*, matzah, or tzitzis, the mitzvah is the *object* itself — the taking, the eating, the wearing. But the essence of shofar is not the object — it's the *hearing*. On a deeper level, the inner awakening that the shofar creates within a person is something that cannot be stolen.

The Voice Within the Sound

The *Shulchan Aruch* (*Orach Chaim* 585:2) tells us something striking: Before blowing the shofar, we recite the *berachah* "*Lishmo'a Kol Shofar*" — to hear the sound of the shofar.

Not "*litko'a bashofar*" — not to blow the shofar.

Why? Because, as the *Mishnah*

Berurah (*Orach Chaim* 585:4) explains, "*delav bitkiyah talyah milsa, ela b'shmiah* — the mitzvah

is not in the *blowing*, but in the *hearing*". If one blows the shofar but does not hear it, he has accomplished nothing. The act itself is secondary. The experience, the message, the awakening — that is the mitzvah.

This teaches us something profound about the essence of *tekias shofar*. The shofar is not merely an instrument we blow. It is a *voice we*

HOW COULD A STOLEN SHOFAR BE ANY DIFFERENT FROM A STOLEN LULAV OR MATZAH

are meant to hear. It is the *kol shofar* — the *voice* of Hashem that reverberates within the heart of every Jew.

On this holy day, we come prepared — dressed in our Yom HaDin attire, focused, ready for the dramatic moments of *Malchuyos*, *Zichronos*, and *Shofaros*. We stand silently as the *baal tokei'a* raises the shofar to his lips. But we must pause and ask ourselves: Are we simply *hearing* the sound — or are we *listening* to its message?

The Rambam writes that the shofar's cry calls out to each of us: "*Uru yesheinim mishinaschem*" — Awake, you who slumber! Wake from your spiritual sleep, return to Hashem,

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In 2024, R' Yoel Rosenberg, the principal of Yeshiva Ketana of Philadelphia, stepped through the main exit of Thrillz, the indoor trampoline park where his students, a small group of about fifty boys, were enjoying a long-awaited trip. The school had booked the entire park for a few hours. R' Rosenberg was on his way to his car to retrieve something he had forgotten when he stopped short in shock. A large yellow school bus was rolling into the spacious parking lot, followed by another and then another. As he watched in astonishment, the buses pulled to a stop, their doors opened, and over five hundred young boys from Masores Avos, a chassidishe cheder in Lakewood, began pouring out of the vehicles. The boys lined up next to the building.

R' Rosenberg was confused. His own school had reserved the entire facility; there weren't supposed to be any other visitors that day. What had happened?

He hurried inside to speak to the manager, who looked mildly irritated. "This school has a booking for tomorrow," the manager said. "They haven't even realized it yet. I'm going to send them back."

The staff of Masores Avos remained amazingly calm throughout the ordeal, communicating with respect and dignity, even though the mistake was not their fault.

R' Rosenberg knew that the boys from Lakewood had traveled a great distance and had probably spent an hour and a half on their buses in the sweltering summer heat. They would surely be devastated to learn that their long-anticipated day of fun would not materialize. He could only just begin to imagine the cries of disappointment that would erupt if they were told to turn around and return home. Looking around the spacious facility, he made a snap decision. "Don't send them back," he said. "Let them have their fun along with my students."

"I'm afraid I can't do that," the manager replied. "I've already made the arrangements for tomorrow, and I booked a large male staff to supervise them here. There is only a small crew of workers here today, just enough for your group. This group is about eight times the size! There's no way that I can accommodate them now."

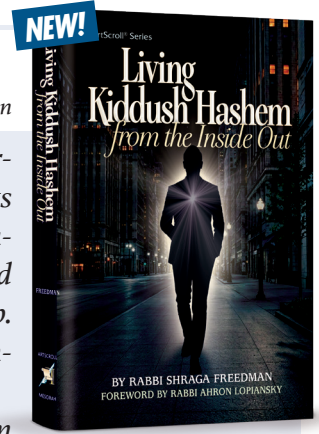
But R' Rosenberg was determined. "I'll speak to my students and tell them to share the park graciously with the other group, and I'll have my staff pitch in to help. We want to make this work!" he insisted.

With the promise of help from the Yeshiva Ketana staff, the manager gave his consent. R' Rosenberg then gathered his students together for a pep talk and explained the situation to them. "You have an opportunity to create a major kiddush Hashem," he said enthusiastically. "Are you willing to give up on having this park to yourselves; there will be longer lines, and it will be much more crowded? The mitzvah you will gain is infinitely more valuable. What do you say?"

The boys yelled "yes" in unison and they began to cheer. The faculty of Yeshiva Ketana of Philadelphia, together with the rebbeim of Masores Avos, worked hard to help the staff manage the unexpected volume of visitors, and the young boys were gracious and accommodating. At the end of the day, the manager complimented R' Rosenberg on the group's performance. "This was the best group that we have ever had. Your rabbis were helpful and kind, and they even cleaned up as they walked around the park," he said. "You all worked together beautifully, despite the difference in ages between the groups. Would you like to take over the other group's slot tomorrow? It will be on the house!"

R' Rosenberg declined the offer, but the manager insisted on rewarding the boys with free passes for another visit to Thrillz.

The boys' actions reflected many of the thirteen Divine middos. Their sensitivity and empathy toward the second group was a reflection of the middos of *rachum v'chanun*. The kindness that the rebbeim and children practiced was an emulation of Hashem's attribute of *chesed*. And the rebbeim demonstrated patience and respect in all their interactions with others, embodying the middah of *erech apayim*. All in all, this was a recipe for a genuine kiddush Hashem.

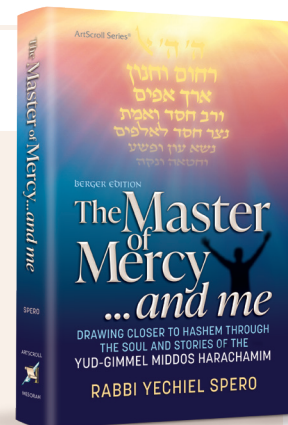


Delving Deeper

Q. We repeat the Yud Gimmel Middos over and over in Selichos and during the Yamim Noraim. It's a powerful tefillah that is always answered. What gives it this unique power?

A. R' Chaim Friedlander (*Sifsei Chaim*, Moadim, vol. I, p. 203) explains that the power of the Yud Gimmel

Middos is not just in reciting them, but in committing to live them. By internalizing and emulating these Divine traits of compassion, patience, and forgiveness, we draw down into the world Hashem's mercy. It's not magic words; it's about finding these middos within ourselves and mirroring Hashem's ways. 📖



We all know that *Akeidas Yitzchak* is the cornerstone of Rosh Hashanah, the moment we bring before Hashem in our *tefillos* over and over again. But why is this the act that carries us through every year, the foundation of our *zechus*? There were other acts of *mesiras nefesh*, other moments of courage and devotion; why is *this* one, the binding of Yitzchak, the one that stands above all?

Chasam Sofer, quoting Arizal, reveals something astonishing. Avraham Avinu is the embodiment of *chessed* — compassion, love, and kindness. Yitzchak represents *din* — strict justice, judgment, *gevurah*. By nature, these two *middos* are opposites. *Din* limits, demands, restrains. *Chessed* expands, gives, absolves.

And yet, at the *Akeidah*, we see something that should have been impossible. We see *chessed* binding *din*. Avraham, the living symbol of kindness, does not falter. He binds Yitzchak, the embodiment of judgment. He prepares to sacrifice him. It's the ultimate reversal. You would expect *chessed* to run away from *din*, to refuse to cooperate. Instead, *chessed* conquers *din*. Subdues it. Ties it down.

And that, says Arizal, is why this moment carries us forever.

Avraham's act set into motion a spiritual force in the world: the ability for Hashem's *Middas HaChessed* to be *koveish es HaDin*, to capture and conquer the strict Justice. Even when *Din* stands in front of us and says, "This is what is deserved, this is what the law demands," *Chessed* steps forward and says, "No, I will bind you. I will hold you back."

It's the reversal that becomes the *yesod* (basic principle) of Rosh Hashanah. Because every year, when we come before Hashem, when we know what we've done and we know what the *Din* could say, we still pray: "Avinu Malkeinu," asking Hashem to be our Father first, to let the *Chessed* overwhelm the *Din*.

That, says Chasam Sofer, is the broader meaning behind Yitzchak's question at the *Akeidah* (*Bereishis* 22:7). "Avi — Father? Is this really you? Aren't you the one of *chessed*? Aren't you the one who opens your tent to strangers, who davens for Sodom, who gives and gives?"

And Avraham answers: "*Hineni, v'ni*. Here I am, my son. Yes, it's me. But right now, *chessed* must do the unthinkable. Right now, I am the one who must take *din* and bind it. This act will plant something eternal. A force in the world that will one day protect *your* chil-

dren, when *they* come before Hashem, trembling about the Judgment they face."

Every Rosh Hashanah, this *zechus* reawakens. We're not always worthy. But our father Avraham taught us that *chessed* can hold back even the *din*. And the *Ribbono shel Olam*, in His ceaseless Compassion, chooses to do the same.

Now, we understand the impactful words we say on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur:

"*Kemo she'kavash Avraham es rachamav laasos retzonecha b'leivav shalem, kein yichbeshu rachamecha es kaascha mei'aleinu*. Just as Avraham Avinu wholeheartedly subdued his *rachamim* — his natural compassion, his entire essence as the pillar of *chessed* — and bound his son in complete submission to Your will, so, Hashem, we ask of You: Subdue Your *kaas*, Your anger, even when Justice demands it. Let Your *Rachamim* conquer Your *Din*."

The *Akeidah* constituted a turning point. A foundation for our future. A declaration that *chessed* can hold back *din*. And a promise that when we stand before Hashem in fear, we are not standing alone.

We stand enveloped in the *zechus* of Avraham, in the tears of the *Akeidah*, and in the hope that once more, "*Rachamecha yichbeshu es kaascha*," Hashem's Mercy will subdue His anger.

Just Like Mine

One day in the 1800s, a widow stepped into the study of R' Aviezri Zelig Auerbach, the *rav* of Halberstadt, Germany. He picked up his head from his *sefarim* and nodded. "Please," he said, gesturing to the chair across from his desk.

Though she'd buried her husband some time ago, there was a burden this woman hadn't been able to shake since the *levayah*. "I didn't have the money," the widow now admitted. "I couldn't afford a nice *matzeivah*, tombstone. Not even a proper one. Just a simple stone... a cheap one. Ever since then, I haven't slept. I feel like I failed him."

She stared down at her hands, twisting a corner of her *kerchief*. She couldn't even look the *rav* in the eye. But he didn't correct her or rush to comfort. He just listened.

Then he stood up, walked across the room, and opened a drawer. Inside was his official stationery, embossed with his name and title: Rabbi of Halber-

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THE SECRET OF THE AKEIDAH

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stadt. He sat back down, took a pen, and began to write.

It wasn't a letter of support. It wasn't a berachah. It was his will. In it, the rav instructed his children: no marble matzeivah, no granite, no polished stone. When his time came, he wanted a simple matzeivah, made from the same inexpensive stone this widow had used for her husband. He finished writing, signed his name, and handed it to the widow to read over.

"This," he said, "is my tzavaah, my final instructions. Your husband's matzeivah won't be alone. Mine will be just the same."

The woman was dumbfounded. She blinked once, twice, and then nodded.

No speeches, no lectures. Just one unassuming act of empathy, and the pain she carried for years... melted away.

When R' Auerbach passed away, his children followed his will to the letter. They placed a simple matzeivah at his kever — nothing fancy, just a modest stone. It stood there for years, weathered by the rain and wind, until eventually, the letters began to fade. The stone itself started to crumble.

By then, his great-grandson had grown up. When he saw the state of the kever, he decided it was time. Time to replace the stone. To honor the rav.

Before he could do anything, however, the phone rang. It was the mayor of Halberstadt. A German. Not Jewish.

But he'd heard the story. He'd heard what R' Auerbach had done for that widow, how he had written his own will just to ease her burden, how he had lifted her from shame with a single act of kindness.

The mayor was so moved, so taken by the nobility of it all, that he offered to pay for the new matzeivah — on behalf of the city. He even invited the rav's great-grandson to come to Halberstadt for a formal dedication. The city would honor the memory of a rav who had honored one woman's pain.

Thus, decades after that one meeting in a small study, the story came full circle.

That's what *chessed* looks like: a heart so full of compassion that it can see another person's pain... and noiselessly, humbly, step into it.

The matzeivah may have been simple. But the lesson is unforgettable. 📖

TAKEAWAY

When we perform *chessed* without any ulterior motives, with only the recipient's good in mind, that *chessed* has the power to hold back *din*, and to bring good to all involved.

THE CRY BEHIND THE SOUND

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repair your ways!" (Hilchos Teshuvah 3:4). The mitzvah is not just to hear the sound — it is to hear the cry, the plea, the voice of Hashem Himself calling out through the blast.

When the shofar pierces the air, Hashem is speaking to us — to every heart, every soul, every hidden corner of conscience. He is crying out: "My child, return to Me. I am waiting. Don't just hear the sound — listen to what I am saying."

That is the true mitzvah of shofar — not *litko'a*, but *lish-mo'a*. Not to make noise, but to make meaning.

So, as we stand in shul this

Rosh Hashanah, hearts trembling, eyes moist, surrounded by the echoes of those ancient blasts — let us make sure we don't merely experience the blowing of the shofar. Let us truly hear the kol shofar. Let us hear Hashem's call to awaken, to change, to live differently.

And if we do, then, when the final tekiah gedolah fades into silence, we will not walk away the same. We will leave uplifted, transformed — hearing still within our hearts the voice that never stops calling: "Shuvu eilai — return to Me — v'ashuvah aleichem — and I will return to you..." 📖

COVERED WITH CARE

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"Go find a chassidishe minyan and hear the shofar like you always heard it at home."

"Vizhnitz is the only minyan that still has not blown. If I walk all the way there, I will miss the seudah here. Is it still worth going?" Meir inquired.

"Yes," his rebbi answered without hesitation. "A Jew holds on to his heritage by holding on to what he was taught by his father. Nothing else is more important than that!"

Families are the backbone of Judaism, our safeguard to survival. When parents look back at their children as they travel, the children faithfully follow under their warm gaze. The chain stretching back to Har Sinai is safe.

It extends to yet another generation, fulfilling our most sacred responsibility. 📖

Rav Wolfson often related an original *gematria* regarding the days of Elul and Tishrei. The Gemara states (*Rosh Hashanah* 16b) that on Rosh Hashanah, three books are opened in Heaven: one for *tzaddikim*, one for *reshaim* (the wicked), and one for *beinonim* (those who are neither *tzaddikim* nor *reshaim*). On Rosh Hashanah, *tzaddikim* are inscribed in the book of life, while *reshaim* are inscribed for the opposite. The judgment for *beinonim* is held in abeyance until Yom Kippur. The *Zohar* states that the judgment that was “sealed” on Yom Kippur is not “delivered” to the *malachim* to be carried out until Shemini Atzeres.

Said the Mashgiach: This time of year we read the *parshiyos* of *Ki Savo*, *Nitzavim*, *Vayeilech*, and *Haazinu*. The thirty days from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Rosh Hashanah that *tzaddikim* need to achieve a good judgment are hinted to in the thirty *pesukim* of *Parashas Vayeilech*. The forty days until Yom Kippur that *beinonim* need are hinted to in the forty *pesukim* of *Parashas Nitzavim*. The fifty-two *pesukim* in *Parashas Haazinu* allude to the fifty-two days from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Shemini Atzeres.

Bas Ayin teaches that in later generations a “last chance” for *teshuvah* was extended until Zos Chanukah, the last day of Chanukah. The 122 *pesukim* in *parshiyos Nitzavim*, *Vayeilech*, and *Haazinu* combined allude to the number of days from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Zos Chanukah. *Parashas Ki Savo* also has this number of *pesukim*. *Ki Savo* contains the *Tochachah*, Admonishments. The Mashgiach remarked, “Woe to the person who needs until Zos Chanukah to do a

proper *teshuvah*.”

Regarding the custom to recite “*L'Dovid, Hashem Ori*” (*Tehillim* Ch. 27) twice a day from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Shemini Atzeres, the Mashgiach would quote the Arizal, who taught that saying it with *kavanah* is a *segulah* to merit a year of blessing and goodness. In *Emunas Yisroel*, it is said loudly and with great feeling.

Before Rosh Hashanah, the Mashgiach would travel to New Square to receive a *berachah* from



R' Moshe Wolfson blowing shofar at the Kosel during the month of Elul

the Skverer Rebbe. He would also ask for a *berachah* from the Rachmistrivka Rebbe in Boro Park.

Citing the Chasam Sofer, Rav Wolfson would say that if someone engages in proper *teshuvah* during Elul, though he feels the awe on Rosh Hashanah as the Day of Judgment, it is greatly tempered by the joy of celebrating the renewal of Hashem's dominion over this world. That is why the overriding theme of the Rosh Hashanah davening is our fervent hope that Mashiach will soon arrive and Hashem's reign over this world will be revealed to all.

On the first night of Rosh Hashanah, after wishing everyone *L'shanah tovah*, the Mashgiach

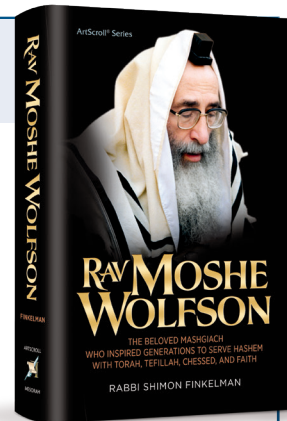
would make his way to Rachmistrivka to receive the Rebbe's *berachah*. As he aged and the walk became too difficult, he would go to his neighbor R' Yosef Rosenblum and seek his *berachah*.

In most communities, the greatest emphasis in the *tefillos* is on the special *yotzros* said in *chazaras hashatz* on Rosh Hashanah. The Mashgiach, however, maintained that *Pesukei D'Zimrah* and other parts of *Shacharis* that are said throughout the year are the most important.

For decades, the Mashgiach was *Emunas Yisroel's baal toke'ia* on Rosh Hashanah. He would deliver words of *hisorerus* on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, prior to *tekias shofar*. Generally, rather than deliver words of *mussar*, he would focus on the greatness of the day and its *tefillos* and the greatness of *mitzvas tekias shofar*. When the day fell on Shabbos, when there is no *tekias shofar*, the Mashgiach spoke of the awesome combination of Rosh Hashanah and Shabbos.

During the break between *Shacharis* and *tekias shofar*, the Mashgiach wanted to be alone. It was a very serious and spiritual moment as he prepared for the mitzvah that, he would say, blows new life into the world.

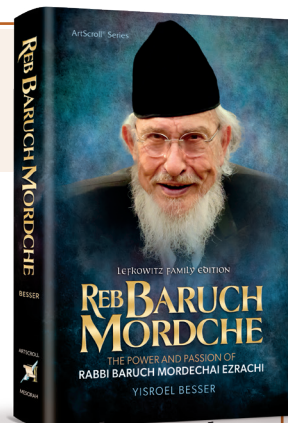
One year, a young man who had been among the founders of the shul passed away. The following year, prior to reciting *Lamenatzei'ach*, the Mashgiach called over the young man's young son. *Nusach Sefard*



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ROSH HASHANAH: THE NIGHT CHEVRON WAS REBORN

Rav Baruch Mordche by Yisroel Besser



In 1924, R' Nosson Tzvi Finkel, the Alter of Slabodka, established Yeshivah Knesses Yisrael of Slabodka in Chevron. For a few idyllic years, its *talmidim* embodied his ideal of *gadlus ha'adam* — the majesty and grandeur of the human being — until the dream was suddenly shattered.

On a beautiful day in the summer of 1929, the local Arabs in Chevron, stirred into a rage by Hajj Amin al-Husseini, the mufti of Jerusalem, stormed the yeshivah and surrounding community, murdering sixty-seven Jews — including twenty-three *talmidim* of the yeshivah.

It was assumed that a yeshivah in which every *talmid* was in some way a victim would not reopen, but in Elul, a few short weeks after the massacre, the new *zman* started at the Slabodka Yeshivah's rented quarters on HaNevi'im Street in Yerushalayim.

They forged on, this group. In 1939, they purchased a building on Chaggai Street in Geulah, and Chevron Yeshivah settled into its new home. Yeshivas Chevron would come back with resilience and spirit, adapting the message of Slabodka to the needs of a new generation.

Just forty days after the massacre, Rosh Hashanah arrived. The Chevron Yeshivah was in its temporary home on HaNevi'im Street, a group of shattered survivors struggling to find strength to go on. The time for Maariv arrived, and there was no one ready to stand before the *amud* and usher in the new year. It didn't feel like the Slabodka Yeshivah; it seemed that its splendor

and spirit were gone.

The *mashgiach*, R' Leib Chasman, stood up and approached a *bachur*, Betzalel Shakovitzky. "Please lead us in Maariv," said the *mashgiach* but the *bachur* demurred, feeling that he was too young and unworthy.

R' Leib repeated the request, and the *bachur* hesitantly approached the *amud*. He donned a tallis and, in a voice filled with emotion, he called out "*Barchu es Hashem hamevorach*" in the traditional *nusach*. The voices of the *talmidim* joined in, everyone making an effort to bring in the atmosphere of the holy day, but the anguish was too overwhelming.

Then, in the second *berachah*, *Ahavas Olam*, the chazzan, young Betzalel, reached its conclusion, "*V'ahavascha al tasir mimeinu l'olamim* — May You not remove Your love from us forever." Choked with tears, he sang out the words, the plea, the hope. The dam burst, and the entire *tzibbur* sang along. Again and again, they sang the words, investing them with the pain and grief of the previous forty days. *Talmidim* had a sense that it was at that moment that this yeshivah, Chevron, was reborn, on the strength of that *tefillah*, of those sublime minutes.

After Maariv, the *mashgiach*, R' Leib, grasped the hand of the *baal tefillah*, young Betzalel, and shook it warmly. "*Doss hub ich gemeint*," he whispered. *That was my intention.*

Chevron Yeshivah would live on! 📖

TALMIDIM HAD A SENSE THAT IT WAS AT THAT MOMENT THAT CHEVRON WAS REBORN, ON THE STRENGTH OF THAT TEFILLAH.

ELUL AND ROSH HASHANAH

continued from page 6

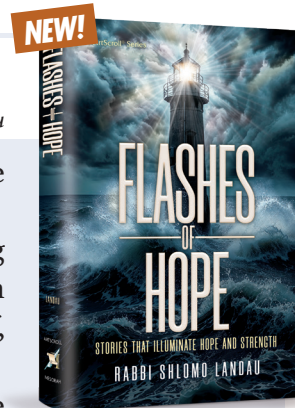
blows shofar during the silent *Shemoneh Esrei*. Until that year, the Mashgiach would give a *klap* on his *shtender* as a signal for everyone to pause their *Shemoneh Esrei* and listen to the shofar. That year and in succeeding years, this boy davened Mussaf next to the Mashgiach, who would signal to the boy when to *klap*.

Rav Wolfson served as *baal*

tokei'a until he was well into his eighties. Then he decided that it was time to give this mitzvah over to someone else. He once said, "A *shochet* has to know when it's time to give up the *chalif*, and a *baal tokei'a* has to know when it's time to give up the shofar."

When the *baal Mussaf* would ask the Mashgiach for a *berachah* that his davening should be *b'hatzlachah*, the Mashgiach would request a *berachah* for his *tekios*.

The Rosh Hashanah davening in Emunas Yisroel is long and beautiful, with much singing. Almost all the *niggunim* are the same from year to year, but the Mashgiach insisted that each year a new *niggun* be used for *Melech Elyon* in Shacharis and *V'ye'esayu* in Mussaf. Those pieces speak of crowning Hashem as our King; for this coronation it was appropriate to use a march that had never before been sung in Emunas Yisroel. 📖



R' Chaim and his wife were a young couple who set out to build a home founded on Torah living and learning, and on quiet *tefillah* that never stopped even when words became hard to find. They dreamed of raising a family filled with Torah, warmth, and *simchah*. Like every young couple, they assumed that dream would unfold naturally with time.

But time passed differently than they had imagined.

At first, they counted the years the way everyone does. One anniversary, then another. They watched friends announce good news, siblings celebrate *simchos*, and families around them fill nurseries and fold tiny clothing. They watched new parents learn the rhythms of sleepless nights and busy mornings, and they waited for their turn.

For R' Chaim and his wife, however, each passing year carried a quiet ache.

Seven years after their wedding, their doctor gave his conclusion that there was nothing further medicine could offer.

They left the office in silence, a burden heavier than the words they had just heard. But for them, that silence was never the end of the story. Children were never only in the hands of doctors. They were in the hands of the *Ribbono shel Olam*.

R' Chaim decided to go to R' Yaakov Edelstein.

He poured out everything: the years of waiting, the disappointments, the endless cycle of hope and heartbreak, and the finality of the doctor's words.

R' Yaakov listened carefully. He did not rush to reassure him or search for comforting phrases. When R' Chaim finished speaking, the room fell silent.

Then R' Yaakov asked him to bring a Gemara *Bava Kamma*.

He opened the volume and slowly turned its worn pages until he reached a familiar passage. Placing his finger on the text, he pointed to the well-known Gemara of "*Kol hamispallel be'ad chaveiro*," which teaches that one who davens for another person who needs the very same thing is answered first.

Then he closed the Gemara and looked directly at R' Chaim.

"This is not a *segulah*," he said. "It is a Gemara. It is reality."

He then gave R' Chaim a simple instruction.

"Find another couple carrying the same burden. Daven for them exactly as you daven for yourself, and leave the rest to Hashem."

R' Chaim left carrying those words with him.

He searched until he found a couple in Kiryat Herzog with the last name Amosi. They had been married for twenty years without children, nearly three times longer than he and his wife had been waiting.

He called R' Amosi and offered a partnership in *tefillah*. At first, the answer was an immediate refusal. They had heard everything already: every *segulah*, every

promise, every *kever*, every *mekubal*. Nothing had changed their reality.

R' Chaim did not argue or attempt to convince them with stories and guarantees. He simply repeated what he had heard from R' Yaakov Edelstein.

"This is not a *segulah*. It is a Gemara. It is reality."

Something in his certainty caused R' Amosi to pause.

"How serious are you?" he finally asked.

"Very serious," R' Chaim answered.

There was a brief silence on the line. Then R' Amosi agreed.

The next morning, R' Chaim did something unexpected. He ordered a *paroches* for a large yeshivah at a cost of fifty thousand *shekalim* and placed on it a dedication for *zera shel kayama* for R' Amosi and his wife.

When the rosh yeshivah heard what he had done, he was astonished and asked why he was investing so much in another couple instead of himself.

R' Chaim smiled.

"I know what I am doing."

Back in Kiryat Herzog, R' Amosi and his wife accepted the commitment with remarkable seriousness. They left their home in Bnei Brak and rented a small apartment in Teveriah for forty days. The apartment was simple and the conditions modest, but none of that mattered.

Every morning they traveled to Meron and stood at the *tziyun* of R' Shimon bar Yochai, pouring out their



R' Yaakov Edelstein

hearts in *tefillah*. Visitors who passed by would have assumed they were davening for themselves.

They were not.

They were davening for R' Chaim and his wife.

Day after day, *tefillah* followed *tefillah*. Forty days passed.

Within a year, everything changed.

R' Amosi and his wife were blessed with a son, whom they named Elyashiv, while R' Chaim and his wife were blessed with a healthy baby girl, whom they named Shira.

The joy in both homes was indescribable. Years of waiting had suddenly given way to cries from cribs, sleepless nights, tiny fingers wrapped around their parents' hands, and tears of gratitude.

At some point that year, somebody snapped a photograph that became part of their shared history. R' Chaim stood holding baby Elyashiv, while R' Amosi held baby Shira. Two fathers, two mothers, two children, and a story that only Hashem could have written.

On the back of the photograph, R' Chaim wrote a powerful sentence taken from the words of Chanah:

"*El hanaar hazeh hispalalti*, I davened for this child, *vayiten Hashem li es she'eilasi*, and Hashem gave me my request: a beautiful baby girl."

The picture was tucked away, and life moved forward as it always does. The connection between the families softened with time and distance. Baby bottles became schoolbags. Schoolbags became *sefarim* and notebooks. The children grew, and the years quietly accumulated.

Shira eventually reached twenty-two years old and had not yet found her *shidduch*.

By then, R' Chaim had become a well-known rav and speaker, traveling frequently for *kiruv* work around the world. One evening, after delivering a speech in Los Angeles, he glanced at his phone and immediately felt his heart skip.

There were twenty-two missed calls from his wife.

He stepped aside and called her back immediately. Before he could ask what was wrong, she began telling him about a *shidduch* suggestion.

Relieved, he asked why she had called so many times.

There was excitement in her voice.

"The boy suggested is Elyashiv from Kiryat Herzog."

For a moment, R' Chaim could barely process what he had heard. The little boy from the photograph? The child whose parents had davened for him? The child for whom he had davened all those years ago?

He nearly dropped the phone.

He thought of an old photograph, tucked away somewhere, of two fathers holding two babies who were never meant to be strangers.

R' Chaim and his wife made the necessary inquiries, and the reports came back glowing. Elyashiv had grown into an exceptional young man, a top *bachur* learning in Yeshivas Nachlas HaLeviim in Haifa.

The *shidduch* moved forward.

A short time later, R' Chaim found himself standing once again beside the Amosi family. Years earlier they had stood together as strangers connected only by a shared pain and a shared commitment. Now they stood together beneath a *chuppah*.

THE JOY IN BOTH HOMES WAS INDESCRIBABLE. YEARS OF WAITING HAD SUDDENLY GIVEN WAY TO TEARS OF GRATITUDE.

Elyashiv and Shira smiled as they began building a home that none of them could have imagined all those years before.

As R' Chaim watched the *chassan* and *kallah*, his thoughts drifted back to an old photograph. He remembered holding baby Elyashiv in his arms. He remembered the words he had written on the back.

"*El hanaar hazeh hispalalti*."

At the time, he thought he understood exactly what they meant.

I prayed for this child.

The child in my arms.

The son born to the Amosi family.

And Hashem answered me with a daughter of my own.

But standing beneath the *chuppah* decades later, the reality was that he had understood only half the story.

Hashem had indeed answered him with a daughter. But He had also given him a son, not through birth, but through a *tefillah*, through an act of selflessness, and through a promise between two couples who chose to carry each other's pain.

He looked at the *chassan* standing beneath the *chuppah* and felt the words take on an entirely new meaning.

"*El hanaar hazeh hispalalti*."

For this child I davened. 📖

BRIS MILAH OR SHOFAR?

What If... on Yamim Tovim Adapted by Rabbi Moshe Sherrow from the works of Rabbi Yitzchok Zilberstein

Q All the townspeople in the village of Gapel had waited impatiently the entire day of Rosh Hashanah for the shofar to arrive from the neighboring city. At long last, the messenger was seen in the distance, and by the time the shofar arrived everyone had assembled in the shul to hear the tekios. Suddenly, Shmuel breathlessly ran into the shul holding his eight-day-old son. The baby had been “yellow” for most of the day and was therefore unable to have a *bris*, but just now his color had improved and Shmuel was sure that now he would be able to have his *bris* on time. The problem was that Reb Shimon, the only *mohel* in town, was also the only *baal tokei’a* in town, and due to the lateness of the hour, Reb Shimon had only enough time for one task: either to perform the *bris milah* on Shmuel’s baby, or to blow the shofar for the entire community. Which mitzvah has priority?

A It would seem that the *Nachal Eshkol* (cited in *Da’as Torah* 584:4) who ruled that the mitzvah of *bris milah* takes precedence over the mitzvah of shofar, was referring to the case of a father who must choose between one of these two mitzvos. When the question pertains to an entire congregation, the many mitzvos of shofar of every individual may very well outweigh the singular mitzvah of *milah* that belongs only to the father and the *mohel*.

One could argue that when the *baal tokei’a* is also the *mohel* and he must choose between the two mitzvos, since the mitzvah of *milah* is a higher priority for him, the mitzvos of the *tzibbur* cannot counterbalance that which is greater to his personal service. Despite the fact that he has a responsibility as their agent to ensure that the congregation fulfills their mitzvah of shofar, he is required to perform the *milah*, which is imperatively binding on him.

On the other hand, the *Sha’ar HaTziyun* explains that when my fellow Jew has not fulfilled his mitzvah, it is as if I myself have not done the mitzvah either, due to the charge of *arvus*, the concept that all Jews are guarantors for each other’s mitzvah observance. This mutual responsibility is the reason why one Jew can make *Kiddush* for another, as they share

the obligation to ensure each other’s performance of mitzvos. Accordingly, the *mohel* has multiple obligations to hear shofar, as many as there are members of the congregation. Hence, the *mohel*’s personal service may require him to fulfill his multiple obligations of shofar at the expense of his mitzvah of *milah*.

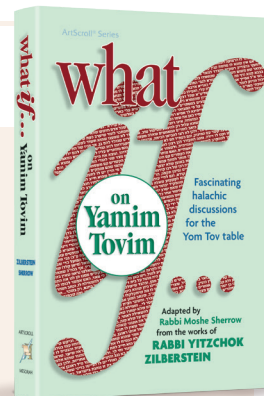
In practice, a mitzvah that one must do because of *arvus* is less obligatory than a personal mitzvah. For example, someone has an *esrog* for Succos, and he also owns a second one that can be given either to his son, who is under bar mitzvah age, or to the father’s friend, who also needs an *esrog*. Rav Elyashiv ruled that the second *esrog* should be given to the son. Although the son has to take an *esrog*

only due to the Rabbinic enactment of *chinuch*, and the friend has an obligation *mi’d’Oraisa*, the father’s personal obligation to train his child to do mitzvos takes priority over his responsibility to ensure that his friend perform the mitzvah of *esrog*. This can be compared to someone who borrowed money and also signed as a guarantor on his friend’s loan. If both loans come due at the same time, he should certainly pay off his own loan first, before paying off his friend’s

loan. Similarly, in the case of the *esrog*, he should first satisfy his obligation of *chinuch* before he helps his friend perform his mitzvah.

In the case of Shmuel’s baby, even though the *mohel/baal tokei’a* has multiple obligations of shofar that are merely due to *arvus*, they would still outweigh his fulfillment of his personal mitzvah of *milah*. Although the mitzvah of *milah* certainly ranks higher than each person’s mitzvah of shofar and the *mohel*’s *arvus* for each of them, the sheer quantity of less-weighty mitzvos will outweigh the single mitzvah that is more significant.

The *Nachal Eshkol* himself writes that when the *mohel/baal tokei’a* is enabling others to fulfill their obligation of shofar, that would take precedence even over the mitzvah of *milah*. Shmuel and his baby will have to wait until tomorrow. 



THE BABY HAD BEEN “YELLOW” FOR MOST OF THE DAY, BUT JUST NOW HIS COLOR HAD IMPROVED AND HE WOULD BE ABLE TO HAVE HIS BRIS ON TIME.

The Gemara (*Berachos* 6b) says that *tefillah* is something that stands at the height of the world (meaning it reaches the highest places in *Shamayim*), yet people treat it lightly and do not give it proper respect. It is not uncommon to hear people say, “I tried *tefillah* and it didn’t work, so I stopped,” or “It doesn’t seem like Hashem is answering my *tefillos* anyway, so why should I invest so much time and effort into them?”

While that might sound like a logical deduction, it belittles the true value of *tefillah*. The source of *tefillah* in the Torah comes from the words *ul’ovdo b’chal l’vavchem*, to serve Hashem with all your heart (*Devarim* 10:13). First and foremost, *tefillah* is called an *avodah*, a service to Hashem. We must understand that through the act of *tefillah*, we are fulfilling a great mitzvah.

How does one serve Hashem with his heart? We come and stand before the *Mel-ech* with all our wants and needs and desires, fully understanding that everything we have, and everything we want and need, comes from Him and only Him. No human being has the power to give us anything unless it is Hashem’s will.

Our complete nullification before Hashem, and our recognition of His absolute control to the point where we feel it in our hearts, is considered a great *avodah* to Hashem. *Tefillah* is not merely a means to get things from Hashem; it is a wondrous *avodah* that raises us to the highest spiritual levels.

R’ Chaim HaLevi Soloveitchik (on Rambam, *Hilchos Tefillah* 4:1) writes that one of the main and most basic *kavanos* a person must have when he gets up to pray is to know with clarity that he is standing right in front of the *Melech Malchei HaMelachim* HaKadosh Baruch Hu. He must imagine that he is literally being elevated to the highest places in *Shamayim* and being brought into a private room with just Hashem and him. And for as long as he is reciting the Amidah, that is how long that private meeting lasts. Hashem is there, listening to every word.

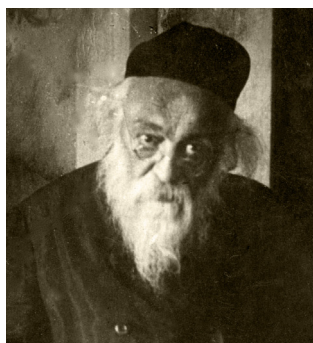
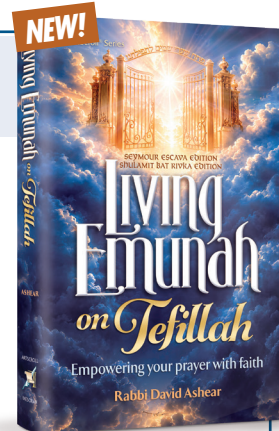
In *Alei Shur*, R’ Shlomo Wolbe writes that if someone can perform the mitzvah of *tefillah* properly each time — truly imagining that private meeting with Hashem — he will never need any proofs about Hashem. He will never have questions in *emunah*. The more he practices recognizing that he is actually standing before Hashem, the more he will genuinely feel it.

A private meeting with the Creator of the world — telling Him what we want and need, with the recognition that only He can provide it — is a very holy endeavor. And that is besides what we accomplish spiritually by just saying the holy words of the Amidah.

R’ Chaim Volozhiner writes (*Nefesh HaChaim*, *shaar* 2, *perek* 13) that our understanding of the words of the Amidah, composed by the *Anshei Knesses HaGedolah*, is not even a drop in the ocean compared to the true depth of their meaning. Every time a person says the words of the Amidah — even with just their basic meaning — he is effecting *tikkunim* in both the

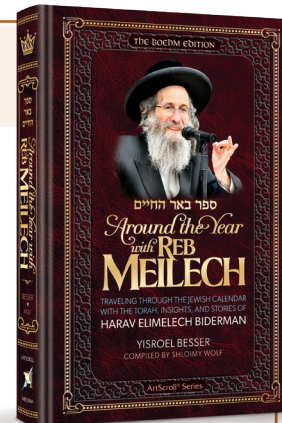
Upper and lower worlds. And every time we pray, we create brand-new *tikkunim*. From the time people began saying the Amidah until Mashiach comes, there has never been — and never will be — two identical *tefillos*. Each person accomplishes different spiritual rectifications in his own way with every single *tefillah*.

The greatest thing we can do for ourselves is to invest more time, more energy, and more thought into our *tefillos* — so that they become the *avodah* they are meant to be. Yes, it is true that Hashem also gives us our needs through *tefillah* — that is a bonus — but the main part of *tefillah* is the part that comes from us. It is a mitzvah like no other, and the more *kavod* with which we treat it, the greater the *avodah* will be. 📖



R' Chaim Soloveitchik

	SHABBOS SEPTEMBER 12 א תשרי	SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 13 ב תשרי	MONDAY SEPTEMBER 14 ג תשרי	TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 15 ד תשרי	WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 16 ה תשרי	THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 17 ו תשרי	FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 18 ז תשרי
BAVLI	Chullin 135	Chullin 136	Chullin 137	Chullin 138	Chulin 139	Chulin 140	Chulin 141
YERUSHALMI	Yevamos 35	Yevamos 36	Yevamos 37	Yevamos 38	Yevamos 39	Yevamos 40	Yevamos 41
MISHNAH	Oholos 1:2-3	Oholos 1:4-5	Oholos 1:6-7	Oholos 1:8-2:1	Oholos 2:2-3	Oholos 2:4-5	Oholos 2:6-7
KITZUR	133:16-21	133:22-26	133:27-134:1	134:2-6	134:7-12	134:13-135:2	135:3-6
ORAYSA	Yevamos Chazara 104a-105a	Yevamos 105b Chazara 105a	Yevamos 106a Chazara 105b	Yevamos 106b Chazara 106a	Yevamos 107a Chazara 106b	Yevamos 107b Chazara 107a	Yevamos Chazara 105b-106a



HaMelech!

Reb Meilech echoes the cry of the chazzan, the opening word of Tefillas Shacharis.

In most places, the baal tefillah calls out the word from his place in the shul, and then he approaches the amud to continue. Why is that?

Because the essence of Rosh Hashanah is being mamlich Hashem, to coronate Him king, specifically from your place!

Reb Meilech looks around at the people lining the tables around him.

"I know, I know," he says with a laugh, "this one makes too much noise by davening; the other one cries too loud by Shemoneh Esrei; on that side, the air conditioning doesn't work and you can't hear the chazzan from the back of the shul. There will always be minor issues that make it harder to daven, to find the menuchas hanefesh necessary for tefillah, but being mamlich Him also means recognizing and accepting that He is in charge. He placed you wherever it is you find yourself, and wants you to proclaim His majesty from there."

In truth, this itself, the acceptance and serenity, is a portent of a good year.

Rav Yehuda Fetaya, the great Sephardic chacham, was sitting at the seudah on the first night of Rosh Hashanah when one of the guests shook the table and inadvertently caused the candles to go out.



R' Meilech Biderman

**HIS REBBETZIN
CAME IN
CARRYING A TRAY
OF FISH, BUT
SINCE THE ROOM
WAS DARK, SHE
SLIPPED AND FELL.**

It was suddenly dark in the room.

The tzaddik was ecstatic, "Shetamlichuni aleichem," he proclaimed. "The point of this day is to be aware that He rules over us and that this is precisely what He wanted, so let us rejoice. Only good can come of it."

His rebbetzin came in carrying a tray of fish, but since the room was dark, she slipped and fell. He jumped up to help her, his white kaftan becoming soiled by the spreading liquid. He was overjoyed at this "calamity," repeating again and again that this was all a good sign, indications that Hashem wanted something from them, and complete and total acceptance would only bring more bera-chah.

He writes that the year that followed was especially blessed, the chiddushei Torah flowing, mazel shining its face at every juncture.

Because Leil Rosh Hashanah is about simanim, and this tzaddik had seen a siman, a sign — a sign regarding Who is in charge, and that recognition alone had

brought more blessing.

Acceptance of His will is a good siman, and joy brings more joy. 📖

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וַיִּשְׁמַע אֱלֹקִים אֶת נַאֲקָתָם וַיִּזְכֹּר אֱלֹקִים אֶת בְּרִיתוֹ אֶת אַבְרָהָם אֶת יִצְחָק וְאֶת יַעֲקֹב

And G-d heard their groaning, and G-d remembered His covenant with Avraham, with Yitzchak, and with Yaakov. (Shemos 2:24)

As the slavery, oppression, and torture in Mitzrayim intensified, the king of Mitzrayim died, and the Bnei Yisrael groaned from the work and cried out. Their outcry went up to Hashem, Who heard their groaning and remembered His promise to their Forefathers, in which He had said He would redeem them.

The *pasuk* does not say that Hashem heard Klal Yisrael's prayers; rather, He heard their groaning.

The *Sifrei* lists ten terms for prayer, one of which is *ne'akah*, groaning, using this verse as the source. In *She'arim B'Tefillah*, *Gates of Prayer*, R' Shimshon Pincus adduces the ten terms of prayer and also notes that there is no mention of prayer in this verse. Rather, he explains, *ne'akah* is the moan and sigh that emanates from suffering. It is a cry of pain, an involuntary reaction.

Why then is this term considered a form of prayer?

R' Shimshon explains that a person has the ability to take any groan of pain and direct it toward Hashem — and that becomes prayer. Prayer does not have to be with words. A groan that's focused in Hashem's direction is a prayer.

To illustrate, he shares a story.

When R' Baruch Ber Leibowitz, the rosh yeshivah of Yeshivas Kamenitz, was about seven or eight years old, he did something wrong. In those days, corporal punishment was the norm and his father smacked him for his misdemeanor. As the tears rolled down his cheeks, Baruch Ber went to the bookcase, took out a siddur, and got ready to daven Minchah.

His father asked him, "Why are you davening now?"

Young Baruch Ber replied, "I'm crying anyway. Let me at least turn the crying into prayer."

Already then, he understood this concept: Why

waste a cry?

We, too, can take any groan, any tear, and direct it toward Hashem and turn it into a prayer.

When I was young, if a child was crying, the old-timers would say, "Cry over the Beis HaMikdash." That was their way of looking at things — that if you're crying or groaning, you may as well focus on something that you *should* cry about.

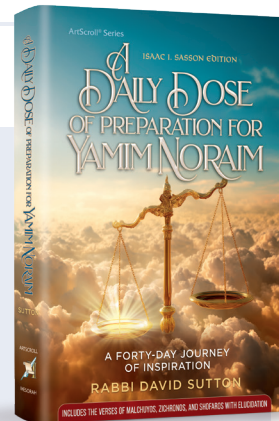
Beis Yosef (*Orach Chaim* 112) quotes *Shibbolei HaLeKet* to explain that every *berachah* of *Shemoneh Esrei* is based on a historical event. The first *berachah*, *Magen Avraham*, Shield of Avraham, is based on the event in which Avraham was saved from the fiery furnace, and the *malachim* proclaimed, *Magen Avraham*, that Hashem is the Shield of Avraham. The second *berachah*, *Mechayei HaMeisim*, Who resurrects the dead, was recited by the angels at the time of *Akeidas Yitzchak*, when Yitzchak Avinu's soul departed and he was resurrected. And so on.

When was the *berachah* of *Shomei'a Tefillah*, Who hears prayer, first said?

Says Beis Yosef: *Vayishma Elokim es na'akam* — Hashem heard their groaning. When Hashem heard the moans and groans of Klal Yisrael in Mitzrayim, the *malachim* proclaimed, *Baruch Atah Hashem Shomei'a Tefillah* — Blessed are You, Hashem, Who hears prayer. It is from here that *Shomei'a Tefillah* is derived.

This is fascinating. *Shomei'a Tefillah* did not come from a prayer. It came from hearing the moans, the groans, the cries of pain.

Yes, crying out in pain can be considered prayer! 



THE WEEKLY QUESTION

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Which three women were remembered by Hashem with children on Rosh Hashanah?

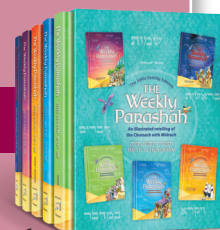
Kids, please ask your parents to email the answer to shabbosquestion@artscroll.com by this Wednesday to be entered into a weekly raffle to win a \$36 ARTSCROLL GIFT CARD! Be sure to include your full name, city, and contact info. Names of winners will appear in a future edition.

The winner of the question for Shoftim is: GITTY GREENFELD, Brooklyn, New York

Question for Shoftim was: Give an example of an animal whose zeroa, lechayayim, and keivah are given to a kohen.

Give an example of an animal whose zeroa, lechayayim, and keivah are NOT given to a kohen.

Shoftim Answer: Zeroa, lechayayim, and keivah are given only from farm animals like sheep and cows. It is not given from a chayah, or "wild" animal such as a deer.



Precious Moments with Rav Chaim

No Honors

If you went to daven at Lederman's Shul, you would probably look for Rav Chaim. Where would you look? You'd think he'd be sitting by the *mizrach* wall, where the important personages generally sit.

You'd be wrong. Rav Chaim would sit at the side, as if he wasn't an honored *rav*. The only thing that mattered to him when he chose a place to daven was that there be a pillar in front of it. That way, there wouldn't be a space between him and the wall when he davened *Shemoneh Esrei*.

Those who davened with him would see the attention he paid to every detail. They would learn how to put on tefillin. They would learn how to say *Pesukei D'Zimrah*. And so on. Every detail had its own halachos, and they would learn them. Everyone was watching his every move, but he would feel that he was just one of the minyan.

Even on Rosh Hashanah, when thousands of people would come to ask him for a *berachah* for a good year, he wouldn't see himself as anyone special. "People want *berachos*. Everyone is giving *berachos* for a good year," he would say.

Every free moment of Rosh Hashanah was spent saying *Tehillim*; he would read the whole *Sefer Tehillim* every day of Aseres Yemei Teshuvah.

He never showed any pleasure in the great honors given to him when he went to *simchahs* or to gatherings. The honors made no impression on him. He may never have even noticed them.





*R' Chaim davening in his seat
at the side of Lederman's shul*

PART 27: DECODING THE MACHZOR

Of the five most impactful titles in ArtScroll's fifty years of publishing, the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur Machzorim undoubtedly rank among them. They became classics that transformed the Yamim Noraim for untold numbers of Jews of every stripe. But why *did* thousands buy our Machzorim, when other English-translated Machzorim were already available?

To understand why, we must return to the pre-ArtScroll era, when large portions of the Selichos and Yamim Noraim Machzorim seemed almost encrypted. Even with the literal translations then available, many struggled to penetrate the profound meaning and depth of the *piyutim*.

The success and broad acceptance of the ArtScroll Siddur told us that we had found a formula that worked, so R' Scherman authored the Ashkenaz Rosh Hashanah Machzor in 1985, followed by the Yom Kippur Machzor a year later. The translation was designed to make the liturgy meaningful. The commentary brought its messages to life. The Overviews provided perspective on the significance of the days, the Laws presented the halachos briefly and clearly, and the instructions guided the user through every step of the *tefillah* — when the Aron Kodesh is opened and closed, how the responsive *piyutim* are recited, and when to sit and stand.

The impact of the Machzorim was immediate and electrifying. More and more people began using them, and many came to consider them indispensable. In countless shuls and yeshivos, the ArtScroll Machzor became the volume from which most of the congregation davened.

Following that success came the release of our Succos Machzor, and those who were of age in 1987 may well remember its arrival, when thousands streamed to purchase the massive, more-than-1,300-page volume.



But there was a problem. Mistakes were found in some of the *tefillos* and instructions, and we started researching ways to address the problem.

We were advised to simply print a page of corrective stickers, with instructions showing readers where to place them. It was the cost-efficient solution most publishers would have chosen, and it would have technically solved the issue just fine.

But R' Zlotowitz would not hear of it. It was the *easy* way out — but it was not the *perfect* way out.

Though ArtScroll could scarcely afford it at the time, R' Meir made a decision that was virtually unheard of in the publishing industry. A revised, corrected edition would be printed. ArtScroll paid for advertisements in all the major newspapers announcing a recall, and anyone who had purchased the original edition could exchange it for the corrected one. R' Meir then had the flawed Machzorim buried as *sheimos*.

"A siddur and machzor is a person's best friend," he would say. "It must be perfect!"

And he was right — imagine if he had chosen the sticker solution. Nearly forty years later, people would still be opening their cherished Machzorim and finding correction stickers pasted across many pages.

New safeguards were put in place to prevent such mistakes from happening again. It was an enormously costly lesson — but one that was never forgotten.

And rather than damaging ArtScroll's reputation, as some feared it might, the recall demonstrated something more important: We took our mission — and our responsibility to our readers — seriously enough to pay the price for getting it right.

Today, as ArtScroll marks fifty years, the lesson of the Succos Machzor still guides every volume we publish: When it comes to serving Torah and our readers, getting it right is worth any price.

UP NEXT: ArtScroll Reads Between the Lines: The Interlinear Series