



HomeShul



A GUIDE TO LEADING YOUR OWN HIGH HOLIDAYS

A project of the Rabbinical Council of New South Wales



אגודת הרבנים בסידני והמדינה
RABBINICAL COUNCIL OF NEW SOUTH WALES

A project of the Rabbinical Council of New South Wales.

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Introduction

High Holidays On The Home Front

An old Jewish adage comments that almost every Jew has two synagogues: the one he or she belongs to and the one he or she will never set foot in!

Dear friends, this year we might disprove this assumption! As our country grapples again with the ongoing fight against coronavirus, we will all be spending the High Holidays at home.

The inevitable question arises (almost incredulously): "How?"

How can one possibly celebrate the *Yamim Nora'im* - the High Holidays, without the magic of community; without sitting in a packed shul with other fellow Jews, raising one collective voice to the heavens?

Isn't that what it's all about? Isn't the coming together the whole point?

As turns out, no - it's not.

One of the earliest recorded prayers is that of Chana. She was a desperate woman hitherto deprived of the joys of childbearing. She entered the Temple in Shiloh to beseech the Almighty to grant her the blessing of a baby.

There was no minyan, no pulpit, no scripted siddur or songs. Just heartfelt words bathed in a generous dose of tears.

That is the heart of prayer.

This unexpected and unprecedented time is an invitation to return to the essence of what prayer and the High Holidays are all about. If during 'normal' years this subtle magic is overshadowed by the fanfare of gathering and the tunes of the season, this year it is the centrepiece of our Yom Tov.

Free from distractions, we can - from the comfort of our own homes - embrace intimate and personal introspection, allowing our souls to soar.

If we will be spending High Holydays 5782 at home, we invite you to see this time as a unique opportunity - G-d's intended Plan A, opposed to a sub-par Plan B.

It is our hope that this guide will enable you to make Yom Tov even more meaningful!

With wishes for a Shana Tova U'metukah, a happy and healthy sweet New Year!

How to use this guide

In compiling this Yom tov companion, we wanted to provide our community with:

- the **ability** to run a meaningful home Yom Tov
- the **empowerment** to include their families no matter the level of background knowledge
- provide a **structure** and **schedule** to these awesome days, something we naturally lack when we do not have the ability to attend shul
- provide the community with a feeling of **connectedness** as we all follow the same guide

With that in mind the following guide came to life. This guide is **not** meant as a substitute for your Machzor but as an **accompaniment** to your day.

As you go through the High Holidays, this guide will provide you with a general structure to follow as well as 3 different approaches to connecting to the day.



MEDITATION

The meditative sections will provide you with an experiential platform to engage with the day and the prayers. Designed to help you take this journey inwardly.



CONVERSATION

The conversation sections will provide you with something to think about, question and discuss. Designed to help you share the journey together with your family and to self-reflect.



INSIGHTS

The insight sections will provide you with some deeper insights into various sections of the davening. Designed to help you extend your knowledge.

We encourage you to either find your comfort zone in one of these styles or enjoy a mixture of them all.

Do your best to follow the schedule and feel a sense of responsibility on these special days. Know that you will be taking the same journey as so many other Jews here in Sydney.

This year, we are all going to one big shul: YOURS!

Shopping List

Being at home for Rosh Hashana is a first for many and will require extra planning. Here is a list of items to help you be prepared

- 1. Machzor:** They come in different formats and styles. This guide provides page references for the Artscroll, Birnbaum (combined), Kehos and Koren editions.
- 2. Tallit.**
- 3. Candles:** Both for candle lighting and a 24-hour candle.
- 4. Material:** There is a wealth of educational and inspirational articles on the web. We recommend that you print a few before Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur so you will be prepared.
- 5. Symbolic foods:** There are numerous customs with regards to Rosh Hashana foods. These may depend on your family tradition. Here are a few examples: Round challah, apples, honey, pomegranate, fish head and a new fruit.

Key Times

Rosh Hashana Day 1:

6th September
Candle lighting: Before 5:23pm

Rosh Hashana Day 2:

7th September
Candle lighting: After 6:18pm

8th September:

Yom Tov ends 6:19pm

Yom Kippur:

15th September
Light candles and fast begins at 5:29pm

16th September:

Yom Tov and fast ends at 6:24pm

HomeShul

Rosh Hashanah

6 - 8 SEPTEMBER 2021



Candle Lighting

הדלקת
נרות

ARTSCROLL 18 KOREN 11 KEHOS 22 BIRNBAUM 1

ACTION

Light Rosh Hashana candles and recite blessings.

CONVERSATION

It is customary for the women of the household to light the candles. This year presents a special opportunity for the entire household to be present during this important time.

Candle lighting before Rosh Hashana is considered an *eit ratzon* - a time of goodwill before our creator.

Gather the family together and encourage all to pray for a special blessing for the upcoming year.

If you are on your own, man or woman, light candles and connect with the entire Jewish people, lighting together with you. Your light adds to the collective light of Israel.



Ma'ariv Evening Service

תפילת
ערבית

ARTSCROLL 50 KOREN 53 KEHOS 29 BIRNBAUM 21

ACTION

Pray the *Ma'ariv* service.

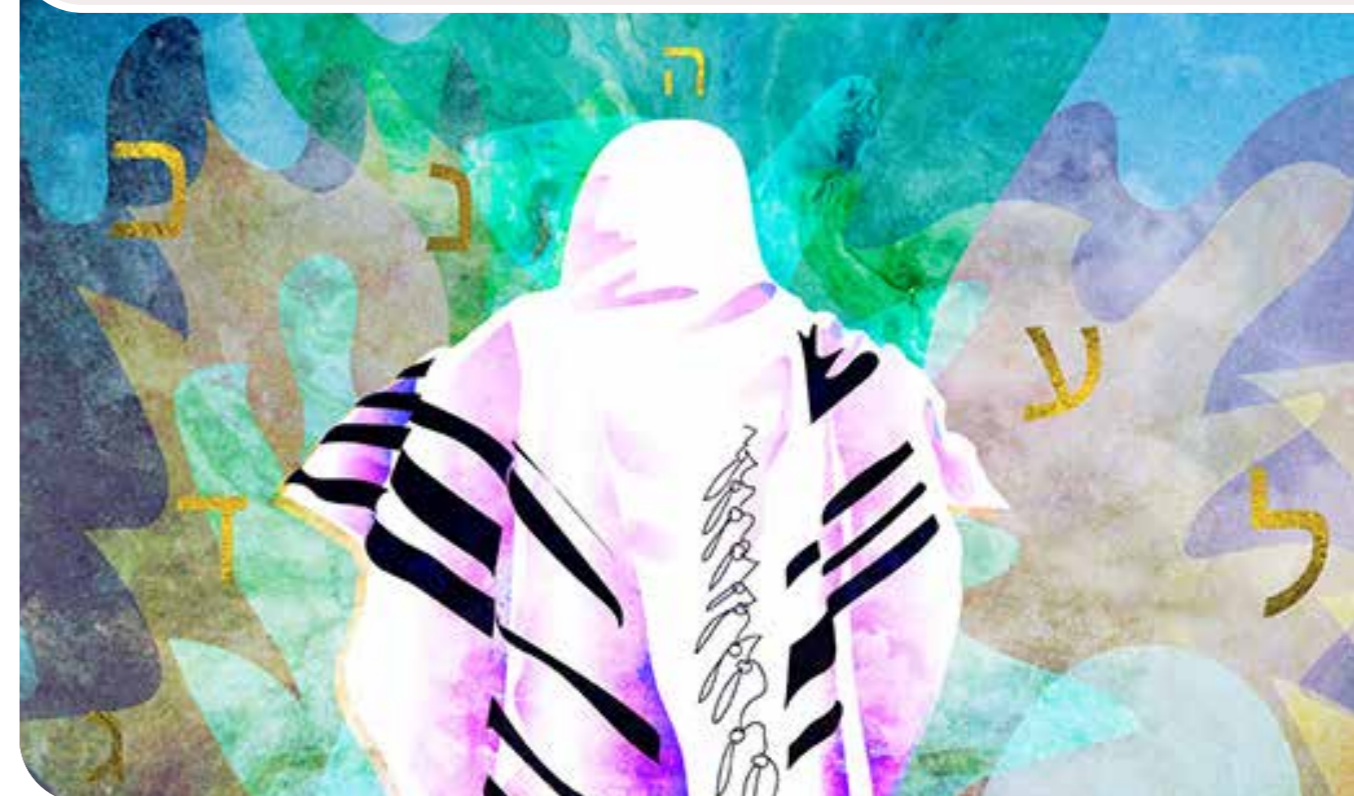
CONVERSATION

This evening service is unique because it is the first prayer service of the entire year.

Each service of Rosh Hashana consists of traditionally set prayers but should be infused with our personal prayers.

It is better to read less of the Machzor in a meaningful way, than to try and read more without any connection or understanding.

How are you planning to engage with prayer over Rosh Hashana?



Dinner

סעודת
יום טוב

ARTSCROLL 94 KOREN 105 KEHOS 46 BIRNBAUM 47

ACTION

Enjoy your Yom Tov meal. Make Kiddush, wash for challah, dip the apple in honey, enjoy the pomegranate and partake in the various dishes you are accustomed to.

Thought for Food

Round challah = the upward spiral

Some see time as a line, always progressing forward. Others see time as a circle, history always repeating.

Judaism sees time as a spiral.

It goes in cycles, but the same moment never returns. We climb up and up as time moves on.

The yearly festivals are checkpoints on the journey. We are a little older and hopefully a little wiser.

It's Rosh Hashana, the beginning of the year again, but we aren't back where we started. It is a new year, with new blessings and opportunities that have never been seen before.

It's a time to look back and measure our progress, and to look forward and plan our next move.

That's why our challahs are round, spiralling upwards. As you eat your challah, ask yourself:

**How did I grow as a person this year?
What new inner challenge do I want to take on in the coming year?**

Apple with honey = traditional modernity

There couldn't be two greater opposites than apples and honey.

Honey lasts forever. Leave a cut apple out and it begins to go brown very quickly.

Apples represent novelty, originality, keeping it fresh.

Honey symbolises preservation, tradition, keeping it the way it always was.

We dip apples in honey, to show that the two can work together. Our tradition is our anchor. Modernity presents us with new opportunities.

Our traditions give us clarity to face modern challenges. Modernity gives us new questions to deepen our understanding of tradition.

As Jews we are part of an ancient culture that is at the forefront of cutting-edge innovation. We embrace modernity, while celebrating tradition. We find new relevance in ancient wisdom. We dip our apples in honey.

As you dip raise the following question:

How can ancient traditions help us stay sane and give us perspective when facing the challenges of today?

CONVERSATION

MEDITATION



Shacharit

תפילת
שחרית

ARTSCROLL 136 KOREN 197 KEHOS 60 BIRNBAUM 133

ACTION

Pray the morning *Shacharit* prayer including the *Shema* and *Amidah*.

CONVERSATION

There is a seemingly elementary question regarding prayer: If G-d determined that we should undergo certain experiences, it would seem that nothing could alter that. What, then, is the purpose of prayer?

One answer provided by Jewish thinkers resonates profoundly on Rosh Hashanah, when we seek inner renewal.

If we pray in a mindful way, if we undergo a true introspection, we can experience a truly fundamental shift.

Our prayers can reduce our spiritual sloth and intensify our consciousness of and connection to G-d, so much so that, in a sense, we become a transformed person. G-d's original plan never pertained to the new person we become through prayer.

Accordingly, prayer should be an inner journey that can leave its mark on our identities.

What is a prayer that you resonate with? Do you prefer your own personal prayers or to explore the liturgy in the Machzor?

MEDITATION

The Shema Meditation

Finding peace when you have no control

Our life has been turned upside down. Most of us have never lived through such an uncertain time. Our plans have been

cancelled; our routines have been upended. None of us can know for certain what the future holds. We have lost our sense of control over our own lives.

How does that make you feel? Uneasy? Scared? Angry?

The first paragraph of the *Shema* commands us: 'You shall love G-d with all your heart'.

How is it possible to command an emotion? Is it a matter of choice? Do we choose whom we love?

Picture this: You are lost in thought, you remember something that happened years ago, somebody had insulted you. You start to ruminate and begin to feel hurt. You're angry, and your entire mood shifts.

Now, it's only a memory. It's just a thought. You are having an intense, negative experience because of something that's not actually happening.

A single thought can trigger a mood change.

Rabbi Dovber of Mezritch, thus explains the commandment to love.

Prior to this commandment we say *Shema* - listen, understand, internalise.

The mind has the power to control the heart. If we contemplate and study the greatness of G-d then it can lead us to the emotion of love.

In other words, 'You shall love G-d' isn't a command, it is a consequence. Do not read 'you must love'; rather read, 'you will love,' if you meditate on, and internalize the magnificence of G-d.

The mind is powerful, we can use it to ignite a love of G-d or other emotions we are seeking to experience.

INSIGHTS

What if we could feel liberated? What if losing our sense of control could actually set us free?

This is the main message of the Rosh Hashana prayers. G-d is in control. He created the universe, not we. What happens

to us is not in our control. We didn't lose control over our lives, because we never had it. All we can control is our own inner response to what happens.

Continued



Torah Reading

קריאת
התורה

ARTSCROLL 402 KOREN 467 KEHOS 164 BIRNBAUM 277

ACTION

We read the Torah portion from the book of Genesis: The birth of Isaac and the challenges with Yishmael.

We read the Maftir from the book of Numbers: Sacrifices of the day

We read the Haftorah from the book of Samuel: The barrenness of Chana and the eventual birth of the prophet Samuel.

CONVERSATION

On Rosh Hashana we commemorate the creation of the world. Yet the tradition is well known that the world was created 5 days earlier. Rosh Hashana is actually the anniversary of the creation of Adam and Eve. Whilst we talk about the genesis of the world, what we really mean is the birth of humanity.

This is a powerful reminder that the world was created with the intention for humanity to thrive in it.

The readings for Day One of Rosh Hashana reflect a similar theme. Rather than reading about creation we read about two births: Isaac and Samuel.

After reading these stories, discuss:

If the perpetuation of humanity is so central to Judaism, how are we educating our children to impact the world in a positive way?

With so much discussion about not having children:

What can we do to help those in our community who may be struggling with infertility? How can we raise awareness of this in a sensitive manner?

In the Haftorah we read how Chana enters the sanctuary to pray for a child. The verse (Samuel I 1:13) states 'and Chana was speaking in her heart: her lips were moving, her voice could not be heard.'

The Talmud uses this phrase to teach some fundamental laws regarding the *Amidah*. One should pray with concentration, utter the words but ensure they are only audible to oneself.

These are three fundamental concepts in prayer:

- 1) We must ensure that prayer is not just a recital but a meaningful process,
- 2) we must verbalise our thoughts, it is this verbalisation that crystallises the feelings and
- 3) we pray silently thus internalising the idea that since G-d is close, there is no reason to shout.

INSIGHTS

Continued

This is an empowering thought. Let G-d do His job of running the world. You do your job of bringing goodness to the world around you. Everything is going to plan, and all is as it is meant to be. We are here to do our bit – making the world a better place by doing good deeds. And we are in good hands. Let go of your need to be in control of the external world, and take control of your inner world. There you will find peace.

We do this by saying the *Shema*, the most central prayer of Judaism. On Rosh Hashana this prayer has an even deeper impact.

Cover your eyes with your right hand and say:

Listen, Israel, the Lord שְׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה'
our G-d, the Lord is One. אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד

There is a superficial way of looking at the world that views things as happening by chance. Cover your eyes, to momentarily ignore the way things look on the surface. You are about to enter a deeper view of reality. Switch off the screen that is playing in front of you. Turn off the story of a life that seems random. With your eyes closed, create a blank slate

Continued

MEDITATION



Musaf

תפילת
מוסף

ARTSCROLL 448 KOREN 515 KEHOS 177 BIRNBAUM 327

ACTION

Recite the *Musaf* prayer incorporating the core themes of Rosh Hashana.

CONVERSATION

Imitatio Dei is the principle that we should attempt to 'walk in G-d's ways' and to imitate His attributes. Just as G-d is compassionate, so we must be compassionate. As He is gracious, so we must be gracious. As He forgives, so must we.

A student once asked his Rebbe: "If we are to emulate G-d, how do we fulfill the attribute of revivifying the dead?"

The answer was forthcoming: "If you see a

person who is dejected and who has lost the spirit of life, and you say or do something that lifts their spirits and restores their will to live, then you have emulated G-d in resurrecting the dead."

Have you ever done something that was life changing for someone else? How did you feel?

Has anyone done this for you? What impact did it have on your life?

Continued

on which you will draw a new picture of a different world.

Now that you are not distracted by externalities, start to **LISTEN** to the inner song of the world.

Hear the harmony that reigns in the universe. Everything happens as it is meant to happen. You are where you are meant to be. All is in order.

You are not listening with your ears, you are tuning in with your soul, the inner part of you called **ISRAEL**. This is your deepest core, the layer of you that is one with G-d. On this level, you have perfect faith. Your mind

may have questions and doubts. Your heart may have worries and fears. But your soul is completely at peace, has total clarity, and knows with absolute conviction that **THE LORD IS OUR G-D**. So, for a few moments suspend your doubts and put aside your worries. Transcend your heart and mind and enter into the soul.

Once you have entered this soul reality, linger there for a while. Contemplate the oneness of all. Think of all that is going on in the world, and everything happening in your own life, both the good and the not so good. From the vantage point of your soul, you see the oneness in all.

One of the most moving prayers of the *Musaf* liturgy is *u'netane tokef*, which concludes with the reminder that, 'On Rosh Hashanah it is written, and on Yom Kippur it is sealed.'

The stakes could not be higher, or the moment more urgent. Among the possible judgments that are enumerated is:

'Who shall be poor, and who shall be rich.'

As the passage suggests, wealth is a blessing. But in Jewish tradition the terms rich and poor signify much more than economic standing.

In Ethics of the Fathers, our sages famously ask: 'Who is rich? One who is happy with his lot!'

Society teaches the opposite. Who is rich?

One who can buy what he does not yet have.

Our sages assert that the criterion of wealth and poverty should not be assessed in terms of economic assets, but in terms of mindset.

One person has millions in the bank and yet as long as they are unsatisfied, they are poor.

Another has a few hundred in the bank and yet as long as they are grateful they are rich.

When we pray for "riches" as opposed to "poverty," the answer to our prayers does not merely lie in monetary assets, but within ourselves – in the manner in which we approach that which we already have.

May G-d grant that in the coming year, we will have both financial and emotional parnasa.

Whatever is happening is coming from the same one G-d. Even if things seem random and all over the place, even if contradictory forces seem to be at play, it is not really so.

Everything comes from the one G-d.

THE LORD IS ONE.

Let the word ONE hang in your mind for a bit longer. All is one. Feel the peace and calm in that idea. Allow the peace to spread

from your soul to your mind, from your mind to your heart, from heart to your entire body. As you open your eyes, let that peace spread outside of you to the entire world.

Blessed be the name of the glory of His kingdom forever and ever.

בְּרוּךְ שֵׁם
כְּבוֹד מְלָכוּתוֹ
לְעוֹלָם וָעֶד

MEDITATION

INSIGHTS

Lunch

סעודת
יום טוב

ARTSCROLL 594 KOREN 655 KEHOS 266 BIRNBAUM 421

ACTION

Recite the Kiddush and sit down for a festive lunch.

CONVERSATION

Pomegranates = the holy hypocrite

On the first night of Rosh Hashana, we eat the pomegranate. There is something unique about the seeds of a pomegranate. Each individual seed is a self-contained entity.

Good deeds are the same. Each one is a world unto itself. Every *mitzvah* that you do has infinite worth. Maybe you don't keep all 613 commandments of the Torah, but each *mitzvah* you do is a self-contained bubble

of holy energy, a bulb of goodness that is not erased by anything else you do or don't do.

It is never hypocritical to do a mitzvah. Judaism is not all or nothing. There's always room to grow, but each mitzvah is an eternal expression of your Jewishness that can never be taken away.

What good deeds do I refrain from doing because I don't want to be a hypocrite? Do I view Jewish observance as all or nothing?



Shofar

תקיעת
שופר

ARTSCROLL 430 KOREN 493 KEHOS 175 BIRNBAUM 315

ACTION

Recite the blessings and blow/hear the Shofar.

MEDITATION

A Shofar Visualisation

We have learnt a new language: Lockdown. Social distancing. Self-isolation. Masks.

Restrictions.

They serve to separate us, divide us, limit us and hold us back.

We know these measures are for our own good, to preserve our health. But what happens to the human spirit when it is restricted?

It could go in any one of three ways.

Restrictions can cause **repression**. We lose our identity; we turn inward and stop expressing ourselves.

Restrictions can cause **rebellion**. We lose our composure, and lash out with frustration and anger.

OR

Restrictions can cause **renewal**. We find novel ways to express ourselves. We rise above the limits placed upon us and open new channels of expression.

It is our choice how we respond to restrictions. We can allow ourselves to

be quashed, we can allow ourselves to be enraged, or we can allow ourselves to sing.

The Shofar teaches us how to sing this song. The sound of the Shofar is produced by a breath of air pushing through a narrow opening. The restriction of the air creates the resonance. What comes out is a loud and confident note.

The song of the Shofar is the song of our soul, calling from the depths and letting all its beauty shine. Not in spite of the narrowness, but because of it. Restrictions are ultimately there to bring out a deeper song.

Ponder Points:

What new skills, attitudes, connections, experiences have you had as a result of the recent restrictions?

If you can't visit a vulnerable friend, what can you do to give support?

If your smile is hidden by your mask, what can you do to express friendliness?

If you can't attend a big celebration, what can you do to share happy moments?

Mincha & Tashlich

תפילת
מנחה
ותשל"ך

MINCHA: ARTSCROLL 598 KOREN 893 KEHOS 272 BIRNBAUM 425

TASHLICH: ARTSCROLL 630 KOREN 937 KEHOS 291 BIRNBAUM 459

ACTION

Mincha: Recite the *Mincha* prayer.

Tashlich: Head to a body of water and recite the *Tashlich* prayer.

A Tashlich Experience – Shake Off the Dust

Tashlich is the ceremony that casts away our bad energy.

FIND THE RIGHT SPOT

During the afternoon of Rosh Hashana, take a wander to a body of water. It can be a beach, a lake, a river or a pond. You can go as close or as far as you wish. Anywhere within eyesight of the water is fine. This is the stage for Tashlich – casting away our baggage.

THE SECRET OF WATER

Observe the water. Watch it move. Imagine what might be underneath the surface. There is a whole world under that water – animal and plant life, ruins and shipwrecks. All are equally submerged and one with the great blue deep. That's where we are about to banish our negativity.

CLEAR THE CACHE

Each one of us has things in our past that we'd love to get rid of. Rosh Hashana is the reset moment, when all the caches stored in our psyche are cleared and we start anew. Identify the negative patterns you want to break, the misguided behaviours you

want to change and the habits you want to quit. View each one of them as a blockage, holding back the light of your soul from shining in its full glory. As you say the words 'and You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea', visualise those blockages being hurled into the water. Watch them sink to the bottom, hit the seabed with a thud, and then slowly start to disintegrate under the water.

SHAKE OFF THE REMNANTS

After reading the prayer, shake the corners of your clothing, as if dusting yourself off. Shake away the accumulated dust of lethargy and inaction. Now, feel how much lighter you have become, how your freshness has been restored and a new energy flows through your veins. The blockages have gone, your light is free to shine.

Look back at the water. Those bad habits are not yours anymore. You have disowned them forever. Let that sink in.

Before you leave, decide on one practical change you will now make in your life, a small step towards being a better you. When you have that clear, turn away from the water and greet the new you with a smile.



MEDITATION

Ma'ariv

Evening Service

תפילת
ערבית

ARTSCROLL 50 KOREN 53 KEHOS 29 BIRNBAUM 21

ACTION

Recite the *Ma'ariv* prayer.

CONVERSATION

Outwardly, tonight's *Ma'ariv* service seems like a repetition of yesterday's. However, after the soulfulness, prayers and meditations of day one, tonight we are on a higher level.

The text of the prayer may be the same but we are different tonight.

Have you ever done the exact same thing twice and felt differently each time? Why?



Yom Tov Dinner

הדלקת
נרות
וסעודת
יום טוב

ARTSCROLL 94 KOREN 105 KEHOS 46 BIRNBAUM 47

ACTION

Light candles from existing flame, make Kiddush, wash for challah, partake of a new fruit and enjoy your festive meal.

INSIGHTS

A unique custom for the second night is to eat a new fruit immediately after Kiddush.

There is an unresolved question in the early authorities regarding the two days of Rosh Hashanah. Do we view them as one single long holy day or two separate ones?

This question is relevant when we make Kiddush and light Yom Tov candles on the second night.

If it is a new holiday, we should recite the blessing of *she'he'chyanu* when we do these *mitzvot*; thanking G-d for allowing us to reach this important occasion. If the second day of Rosh Hashanah is merely a

continuation of the first day, we should not recite this blessing.

To resolve this question, it is proper to buy a new fruit (or a new item of clothing) for the holiday which is saved for the second night of Rosh Hashanah. New fruit, as well as expensive new clothing, also warrant the blessing of *she'he'chyanu*.

The fruit is placed on the dining room table before the candles are lit and Kiddush is made. You then include the *she'he'chyanu* blessing with the candle lighting and at Kiddush, having in mind that that blessing is for the fruit as well.

CONVERSATION



Sitting at your Yom Tov meal is the perfect time to engage your family in discussion.

1. **Are there any advantages of observing Rosh Hashana at home?**
2. **If you were the Rabbi, what would you be speaking about to the community this Rosh Hashana?**

Shacharit

תפילת
שחרית

ARTSCROLL 136 KOREN 197/661 KEHOS 60 BIRNBAUM 133

ACTION

Pray the morning *Shacharit*, including the *Shema* and *Amidah* prayers.

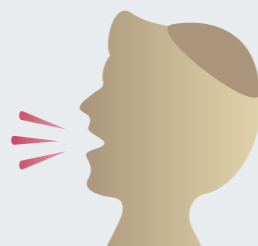
INSIGHTS

After *Shacharit* we recite the powerful prayer of *Avinu Malkenu* composed by the great sage Rabbi Akiva. It is a series of heartfelt requests to G-d for prosperity, delivery, atonement, health and acceptance of our prayers.

We appeal to G-d as our king - '*malkenu*', expressing awe in the presence of the supreme power of the world.

Yet we first say father - '*avinu*', expressing the love that exists between parent and child.

A king rules with justice. A parent will allow love to supersede strict justice and provide forgiveness.



The Rosh Hashana liturgy is peppered with references to Abraham and the binding of Isaac.

'The One who answered Abraham, our father on Mount Moriah – answer us.'

Even if we were to scrutinise the story of the binding of Isaac, we wouldn't find a reference of Abraham praying to G-d. At what point does G-d answer Abraham's prayer on Mount Moriah?

G-d answered the prayer of Abraham's heart, the torment of a father feeling that he was about to lose his child. Even when

Abraham did not speak, G-d still heard him.

A person can go through such painful times that they can hardly pray. They may experience pain too deep to express in words, enduring inner suffering in silence. Consequently, we ask that G-d answer not only the prayers that we verbalize, but also those that, like Abraham, we don't or can't express.

Are you holding on to pain so deep that you can't express it? Is it possible that those close to you are holding a pain too difficult to express?

CONVERSATION



Torah Reading

קריאת התורה

ARTSCROLL 402 KOREN 737 KEHOS 164 BIRNBAUM 277

ACTION

- We read the Torah portion from the book of Genesis: The binding of Isaac.
- We read the Maftir from the book of Numbers: Sacrifices of the day,
- We read the Haftorah from the book of Jeremiah: The promise of Jeremiah and the tears of our Matriarch Rachel.

INSIGHTS

When we blow the Shofar, we use the horn of a ram.

According to Jewish law we can use the horn of any Kosher animal however, that of a ram is best. The Talmud explains that the ram's horn reminds G-d of the binding of Isaac, and as we blow it, G-d considers us to have bound ourselves for sacrifice.

Thus, before we blow the Shofar we read of

the *Akeidat Yitzchak* and we question what it means to have self-sacrifice.

When Abraham was tested, he responded 'hineini' - here I am; ready and prepared to give something up to serve G-d.

This year we have been called to give up a lot. This is our test, our challenge. Will we let the moment pass, or will we pass this test?

In the Haftorah we read a most powerful passage. We are told how Rachel is heard crying for her children, refusing to be comforted. In Jewish folklore Rachel is described as the prototypical mother. She is not just the mother of Joseph and Benjamin but the mother of all the Jewish people. Thus, she cannot be comforted when she sees her people suffering.

We picture Rachel weeping in heaven during the Holocaust. Crying for our communities ravaged by hate over centuries.

The role of mothers is so central to Judaism. It is in the home where the greatest challenge

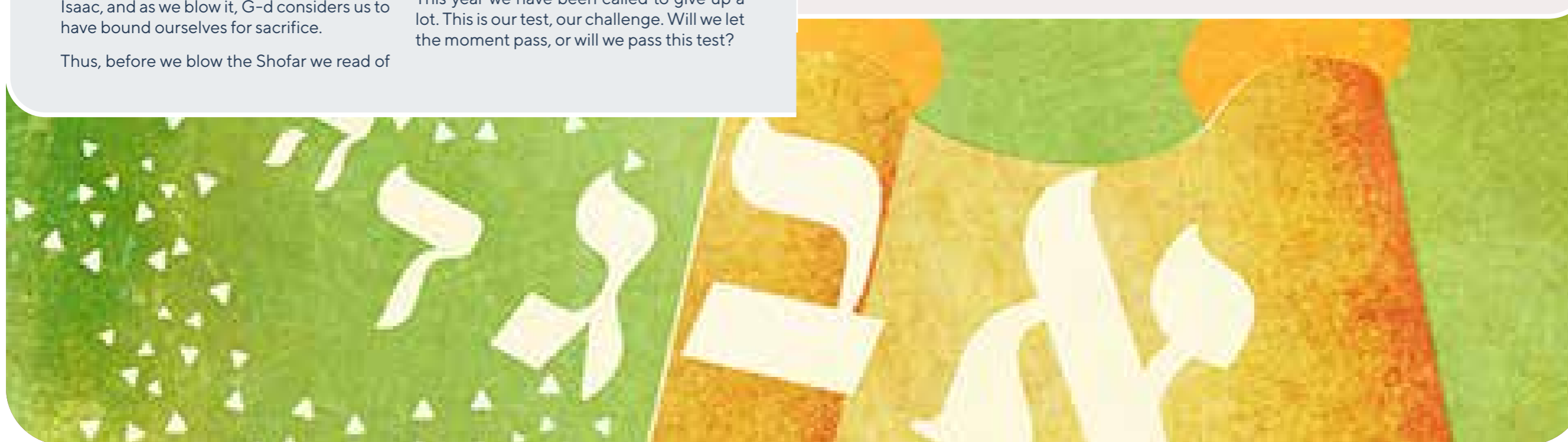
is set, raising the next generation of Jews. This privilege, whilst shared between men and women, is believed to be best achieved through the gift of maternal nurture.

In a world where much focus is placed on the role of the CEO and celebrity, in what way are we honouring our mothers?

Indeed, in today's world we could ask this about parenting in general. As a society, how do we value parenting?

If we are parents or grandparents, how could we focus more this year on that side of our lives?

CONVERSATION



Musaf

תפילה
מוסף

ARTSCROLL 448 KOREN 771 KEHOS 177 BIRNBAUM 327

ACTION

Recite the *Musaf* prayer incorporating the core themes of Rosh Hashana.

CONVERSATION

In the repetition of the *Amidah* we recite the prayer *aleinu*.

This paragraph tells of our praise to G-d for having chosen us, the Jewish nation, to make the world a better place. *Aleinu* is perhaps the mission statement of the Jewish people. We are assigned the all-important mission of spreading the message of monotheism to the world.

Additionally *aleinu* talks about the omnipresence of G-d. Yet as human beings we all ask: Where do we find G-d?

We find G-d in the work of our hands, repairing His world.

What are we doing to make the world a better and more spiritual place?

Have I dismissed my potential as being insignificant? What can I do to better live up to my calling?



The Rosh Hashana prayers are built on three themes: *malchiyot* (kingship), *zichronot* (remembrance), and *shofarot* (Shofar blasts):

Malchiyot: we acknowledge G-d's creation of all existence, His sovereignty over the entire world, and our eternal acceptance of His rule.

Zichronot: we proclaim our faith that G-d is the one who providentially and constantly cares for all that He has made, reviewing all of man's actions and rewarding and punishing man accordingly.

Shofarot: we express our acceptance of the principles of the Torah as if it were once again being given amidst thunder and lightning and mighty shofar blasts. We also express our anticipation of the final redemption that will be marked by the sounding of the shofar of Mashiach.

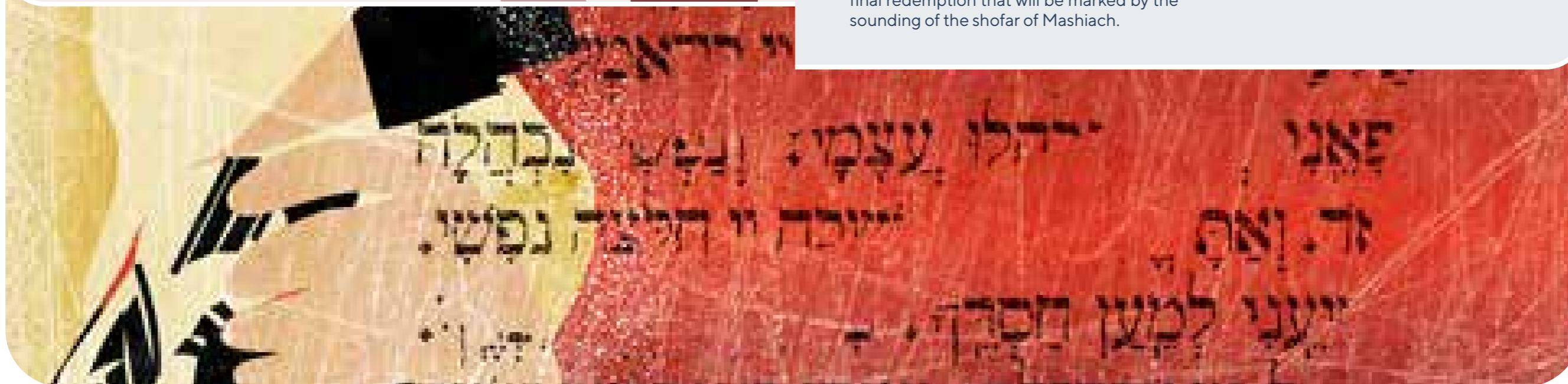
The concepts of these three blessings can be applied to our personal lives.

Kingship: Loyalty is the bedrock of any relationship. To be disloyal to a spouse, a friend, or to your country is to shatter the relationship. At this point in the service a Jew must consider where his or her loyalty ultimately lies.

Remembrance: If you want to know what your priorities truly are, then consider those things you always remember – even without setting the alarm on your watch. At this point in the service a Jew is reminded of the commitments he or she has made.

Shofar Blasts: Wake up! It's time to rethink and recommit, making sure that we remember where our loyalties lie and never forgetting the commitments we have made.

INSIGHTS



Lunch

סעודת
יום טוב

ARTSCROLL 594 KOREN 889 KEHOS 266 BIRNBAUM 421

ACTION

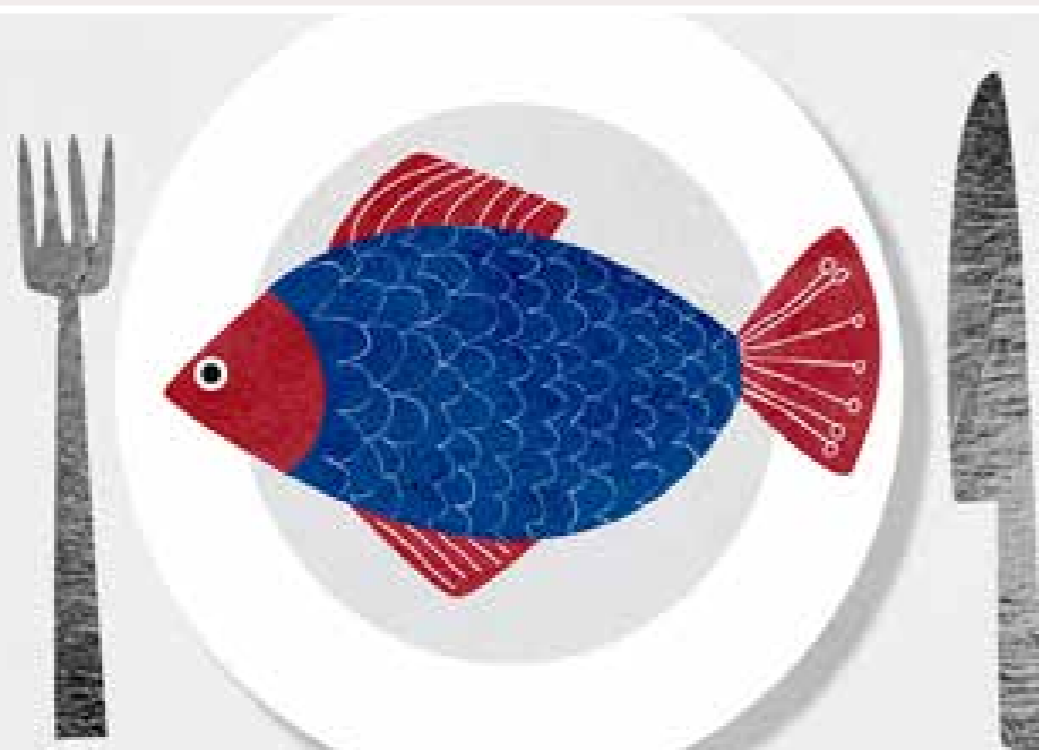
Recite the *Kiddush* and sit down for a festive lunch.

CONVERSATION

Here are a couple more questions for discussion at the Yom Tov table:

Can one really completely undergo change in one day? Surely a more gradual approach is required. So what does Rosh Hashana achieve?

Are there aspects of Judaism that I view as a burden? Is there a more positive perspective perhaps?



Shofar

תקיעת
שופר

ARTSCROLL 430 KOREN 493 KEHOS 175 BIRNBAUM 315

ACTION

Recite the blessings and blow/hear the Shofar.

MEDITATION

Rosh Hashanah is all about making a plan for your life, and devising practical steps to improve in the coming year. As you hear the Shofar call, beckoning you to reconnect with your soul, take some time to meditate on some of life's most important questions:

When do I feel that my life is most meaningful? And how can I make more time for those things?

What was my most significant achievement of the past year? How can I build on it?

What was my biggest mistake during the past year? How can I learn from it?

What is the most important decision I need to make this coming year?

Which endeavour gives me the strongest feeling of self-respect?

Over the last year, did my most important relationships become closer and deeper, or was there a sense of stagnation and drifting?

What can I do to nurture those relationships in the coming year?



Mincha, Ma'ariv & Havdalah

תפילת מנחה
תפילת ערבית
והבדלה

MINCHA: ARTSCROLL 598 KOREN 893 KEHOS 272 BIRNBAUM 425

HAVDALLAH: ARTSCROLL 646 KOREN 949 KEHOS 293 BIRNBAUM 1019

ACTION

Mincha: Recite the *Mincha* prayer.

Ma'ariv & Havdalah: Recite the *Ma'ariv* prayer and make *Havdalah*.

CONVERSATION

It is easy to allow the end of the chag to peter off without meaning. Let us ensure we end on a high with the final prayer of Mincha.

Let us contemplate on the challenges of doing Rosh Hashana at home, and reflect on how we coped. Look for the positives! What did we gain from it?



HomeShul

Yom Kippur

15- 16 SEPTEMBER 2021



Pre Yom Tov Meal & Candle Lighting

סעודת המפסקת והדלקת נרות

ARTSCROLL 34 KOREN 45 KEHOS 25 BIRNBAUM 485

With the fast approaching we sit to eat the pre-fast festive meal.

Just before 5:29pm remove your leather shoes.

Normally the women of the home light alone, this Yom Kippur gather the family around to bring in Yom Kippur as one. If you are alone, man or woman, recite the blessings and light the candles, knowing that you are connected to all of the Jewish nation who are lighting at this time.

As you bring in the holiest day of the year, ask how you plan to make this day unique.

How will you spend the next 25 hours?

Commit to being as peaceful and harmonious with those around you, ensuring the home is a place of serenity and spirituality over the chag!

GET FULL FROM FASTING

Fasting on Yom Kippur can give you a powerful spiritual experience. Or it can just make you feel hungry.

We don't fast to punish ourselves. We fast to elevate ourselves above our body, and align with our soul. If we do Yom Kippur right, we can attain a moment of true transcendence. We can feel our soul.

Here is a meditation that offers a way to make fasting itself a catalyst for introspection. It can help you reach that place where you actually feel energised without food.

There are five rungs on the ladder of Yom Kippur. We climb them one by one, starting all the way at the bottom, until we reach the peak at the end. It begins at night, continues in the morning, through midday, the afternoon and reaches its height as it

gets dark and Yom Kippur ends. As the fast intensifies, so does the soul journey. You need to stick with this journey from start to finish. At each step, check in with your body, and watch as it slowly moves aside to make way for your soul.

KOL NIDREI NIGHT

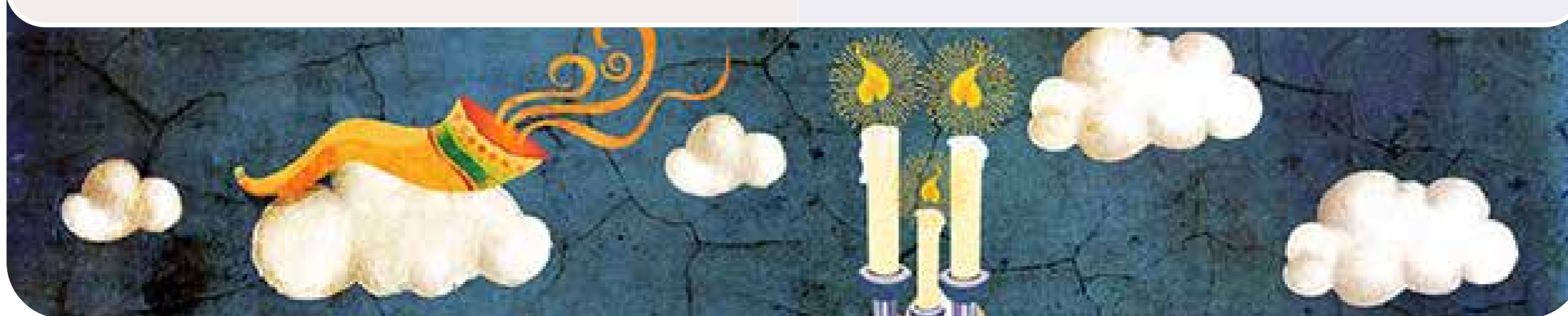
Sit comfortably, close your eyes and breathe a few deep relaxing breaths. Zone into your body. Become aware of your hunger. Don't react to it, just be aware of it. At this point, you probably aren't that hungry. You ate not so long ago. And yet, you are already thinking about food. This is more of a psychological craving: you know you can't eat, so you want to. That's fine. You can want to do something and not do it. You have begun to fast.

REFLECTION: *I don't need to give in to every impulse. I can say no. I am asserting control over myself.*

ACTION

CONVERSATION

MEDITATION



Kol Nidrei

כל נדרי

ARTSCROLL 58 KOREN 69 KEHOS 35 BIRNBAUM 489

ACTION

Recite the *Kol Nidrei* prayer.

Were you to be in shul at this point you would likely be hearing from your Rabbi. Today, you create your own sermon with your loved ones or in your own solitude.

CONVERSATION

Kol Nidrei is a prayer of unclear origins. Some suggest that it was a prayer recited by those who had converted out of Judaism against their will, and this releasing of vows was their way of denouncing their externally practiced faith.

As you recite *Kol Nidrei*, you are free to choose and live your religion.

However, what other commitments have you made that you can no longer keep to? What have you been intending to do but been thwarted by Covid times?

Discuss this as a family. Talk through letting go of these commitments and replacing them with new ideals and new goals.

What about negative habits that you have been committed to? What bad habits have you picked up over this Covid period?

Denounce the past negativity and failed plans and commit to starting anew.

The Talmud tells us that on Yom Kippur, 'the books of life and the books of death are opened before the Almighty'.

Why are the "books" described in the plural?

Isn't there one book for those who will merit life and one book for those who won't?

The Chuster Rav asked this question in a concentration camp barrack, on Kol Nidrei night. He then suggested that there is not one way to live and one way to die.

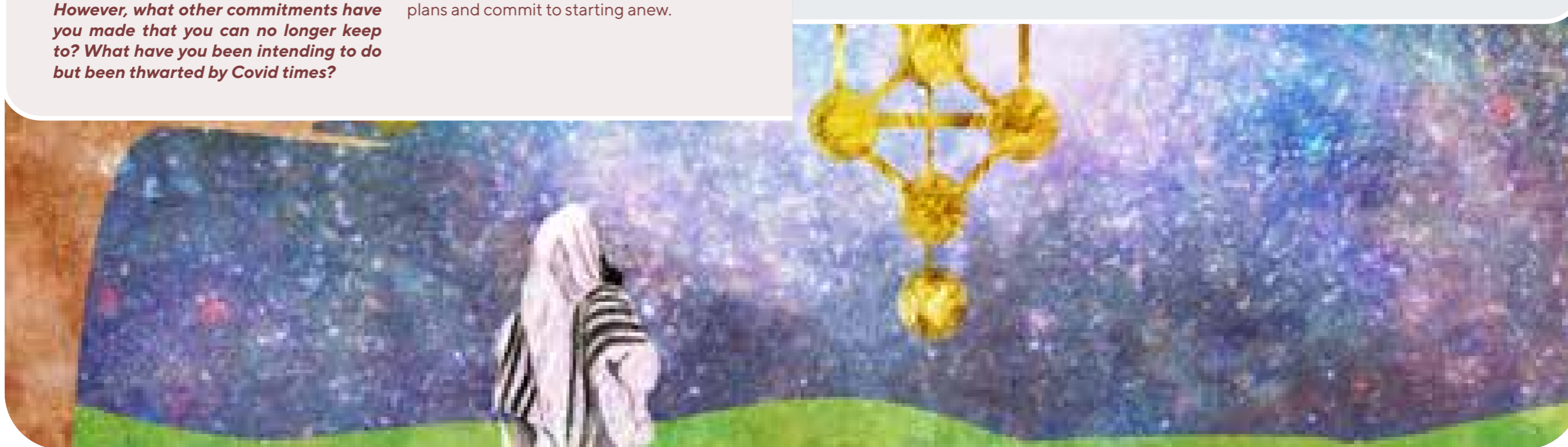
You can live with freedom or in slavery. You can live in good times and in hard times. You can die a natural death or tragically in the gas chambers.

In 2021 we have learned that we also have different experiences in life. A life in which we go to work or a life in which we work from home. A life in which we go to shul and connect as a community and a life in which we must dig deep to find inspiration from within.

We can also choose how we intend to live that life. Do we throw in the towel or rise to the occasion?

We have been given a challenge. As you recite *Kol Nidrei*, try to commit to making the most of the book of life we have been placed into.

INSIGHTS



Ma'ariv & Selichot

מעריב
וסליחות

ARTSCROLL 66 KOREN 81 KEHOS 42 BIRNBAUM 495

ACTION

Pray the *Ma'ariv* service, including *Shema*, *Amidah* and subsequent *Selichot*.

For the first time on Yom Kippur, we read the confessional prayer known as '*al chet*'.

It contains a veritable laundry list of sins that many of us wouldn't even find the time to transgress. Why is it that we would confess to things we may never have done?

Perhaps the answer lies in the phraseology we use. We state 'on the sins which we have transgressed' using the plural 'we', not the singular 'I'.

As we begin a lengthy process of introspection, it would be easy to look at ourselves as individuals. Yet our liturgy dictates that we view ourselves as part of

the collective. We are all responsible for each other.

Pause to ponder and discuss.

What role do we have in making our community a better place?

How are we engaging with our fellow Jews to make the world a better place?

During this lockdown, how are we staying connected? How do we intend to reinvigorate our communal involvement when lockdown lifts?

Say this prayer and commit to communal responsibility.

Many of the prayers in the *Selichot* following *Ma'ariv*, contain references to the forgiveness of sin and our wrongdoings being transformed to positives.

In his writings on repentance, Rav Soloveitchik writes that actually sins are not to be forgotten or cast into the depths of the sea.

On the contrary, we are required to remember our sins. It is this memory that gives us the strength to grow continuously.

The Talmudic sage, Reish Lakish was famous

for repenting after falling into thievery. According to the French scholar Rabbeinu Tam, Reish Lakish was an accomplished sage when he became a thief and was later influenced to return. Subsequently, Reish Lakish became even greater than he had been before. Somehow the sin itself spurred him on to greater heights.

When we pray to G-d to turn our sins to good deeds, it isn't just hyperbole. Rather we are asking G-d to inspire us to use the very things we did wrong to inspire us to grow and be better.

INSIGHTS



CONVERSATION



Shacharit

תפילת
שחרית

ARTSCROLL 234 KOREN 449 KEHOS 96 BIRNBAUM 581

ACTION

Recite the *Shacharit* prayer.

These days, we all have smartphones or computers with multiple apps. Apps for travel, apps for photography, apps for baking, apps for games. Of course, we then get the notifications that 'an update is now available.'

So, you ask yourself this very simple question: why update? If it was good until today, why won't it be good tomorrow?

Of course the answer is also quite simple. We keep updating because they keep coming out with more advanced features.

We have no problem accepting that apps can and should be constantly updated. How much more willing should we be, to update something of infinitely higher value and importance: our character. Our personality. Our conduct. Those are the things we should update often.

This is what we do during the confessional

prayer of Yom Kippur. Each time we tap our chests, we are upgrading our personalities. We are fixing pesky bugs that keep us from operating smoothly. As we recite the confession, we review the condition of our character, looking for the wrongs we have done. We ask for G-d's forgiveness and His assistance as we attempt to update our entire being. When every single trait has been updated, we turn a few pages, and then what do we do?

Of course, we update again!

Ask yourself the following question: Do you sometimes seek to completely radically change who you are, but end up failing? Maybe you don't need a total reset, but just an update?

This is what is so great about Yom Kippur: it's the release of the updated 5782 version of you!

In the liturgy of Yom Kippur we recite the prayer known as *shema kolenu*. In it we say the phrase 'Do not cast us away in our old age; when our strength gives out, do not forsake us.'

Rav Eliezer Waldenburg explains: we tend to view young people as filled with vigour and vitality. They have their whole life ahead of them to grow, mature, develop, and change. Older people, however, are set

in their ways, fixed in their behaviour and unlikely to change.

We ask G-d, don't cast us away or give up on us, as if we are too old to change and stubbornly set in our ways. Don't abandon us even when we can't imagine having the strength to change. Help us to realise that no matter our age we have the capacity to transform our habits and become better people.

The Morning

Zone in on your body as you did last night. Sit, relax and breathe. Tune in to your hunger now. Again, don't react ("I wish I could have a coffee"), just observe ("there's my caffeine craving"). The hunger is not just psychological now. You really feel the need to eat. By not eating, you are consciously choosing meaning over meals. You are connecting with your tradition, your people,

your G-d and your soul, even if it means going hungry. The fast is serious now. You are making a sacrifice.

REFLECTION: My body has needs, but so does my soul. I can put aside my hunger for food so I can feed my hunger for connection.

Continued

CONVERSATION

INSIGHTS

MEDITATION



Torah Reading

קריאת
התורה

ARTSCROLL 452 KOREN 727 KEHOS 202 BIRNBAUM 701

ACTION

We read the Torah portion from the book of Leviticus: The service of the High Priest on Yom Kippur.

We read the Maftir from the book of Numbers: Sacrifices of the day.

We read the Haftorah from the book of Isaiah: The call for a just society.

CONVERSATION

The morning Torah reading describes how Yom Kippur was traditionally observed in Temple times. Up until the destruction of the second Temple, Yom Kippur was observed differently. Back then the day revolved around the service of one man: the High Priest.

The zenith of the day was when he entered the Holy of Holies to offer up the incense on behalf of the people.

In ancient times, our prayers and hopes were in the hands of the High Priest. As circumstances changed, individuals became more responsible for their own prayers.

In a similar vein, in the past you had your Rabbi and Chazzan to inspire you. This year you must find some inspiration on your own.

What would you prefer: Reliance on leaders or to take self-responsibility?

INSIGHTS

Yom Kippur translates as the Day of Atonement. Through our fasting and prayers, we seek to attain forgiveness from G-d. Yet our sages are unequivocal that this day can only atone for sins between man and G-d. Sins committed by mankind on each other, cannot be atoned without the perpetrators making things right by their victims.

The Haftorah we read is the call of the prophet Isaiah to help the poor, clothe the naked and not to desert our own flesh and blood.

Similarly on Yom Kippur we stress that 'repentance, prayer and charity' are all required to change our destiny.

The message is clear: it is not enough to be punctilious in our fulfilment of *mitzvot* between man and G-d. There is a deep connection between our spiritual life and the building of a moral society. The two are thoroughly and intrinsically intertwined. Focusing on both arenas will allow us to truly find atonement.

Continued Noon Time

When you zone in now, you should be starting to really feel the lack of food. You've missed breakfast, it's now lunchtime, and there are still many hours of fasting left. Observe the pangs of hunger and contemplate, why would anyone do this? It makes no sense for a healthy person to deny themselves food for a day. It is not rational. It is a soul thing. You are choosing to ignore your normal bodily urges, in order to ascend to a higher place. Let that sink in. This is the turning point. Feel the centre of your gravity move from the physical to the spiritual, from body to soul.

REFLECTION: Until now I was a body that has a soul. Now I am a soul that has a body.

Afternoon

You are well into this fast now. Your body is losing strength, but your soul is stronger than ever. You have become a more spiritual being. As you breathe in deeply this time, allow the air itself to quench your thirst. Breathe in purity, breathe out negativity. You are detoxing now. Any wrongdoings are the makings of the body. The purity of your soul is shining through. You are being cleansed. You are being forgiven.

REFLECTION: My soul is my goodness. As my bodily strength fades, my goodness comes to the fore. At my core, I am all good. I want to stay that way.



Yizkor

הזכרת
נשמות

ARTSCROLL 470 KOREN 757 KEHOS 210 BIRNBAUM 727

ACTION

Recite the Yizkor prayers.

A guided meditative Yizkor service

Yizkor is a holy moment, when we connect with the souls of our loved ones through memory and prayer. By mentioning their names, we honour their presence in our lives and perpetuate their impact on the world. Here is a guide for a spiritually moving Yizkor that can be said alone. With some soulful reflection we can make this year's Yizkor more powerful than ever, even if we are saying it at home.

Create the Space

When Yizkor is recited in the synagogue, those who have both parents still living are accustomed to exit the shul. The Yizkor service is a sacred space reserved for those who have experienced the loss of a parent. When Yizkor is recited at home, you need to create this sacred space. Find a quiet spot, where you will not be disturbed by any external distractions. With eyes closed, envisage the space around you being emptied. In that emptiness, souls of the departed are congregating, coming down from heaven to participate with you in the Yizkor prayer.

Accept Your Family

Before reciting the name of our loved one, we mention our familial connection to them: "My mother, my father, my brother, my sister, my grandparent, my child." When saying these words, recognise that our family was chosen for us by G-d. Accept that we are all human, and no family is perfect. But your family is the right one for your soul. Think thoughts of forgiveness for any hurt you may be harbouring, and think thoughts of gratitude for the blessings you received, including your very existence, from those who came before you.

Call the Name

Conjure an image of your loved ones as you would like to remember them. Imagine them in their healthy and strong days, when they were happiest. As you say each name, see their face responding to your call. The Hebrew name is the name of the soul, and should be used if known. When we call out that name, the soul hears and lights up.

Give a Gift

What gift can we give to the departed? How can we tangibly express our never-

ending love for them? The best gift we can give them is a good deed in their memory. Souls in heaven can still see, hear, love and be proud. But they can't do a mitzvah. Only we on earth can. When we do an act of kindness in memory of a departed soul, we serve as their body, their continued presence down here on earth. This is why we pledge charity at Yizkor. It is not just a nice gesture; it is essential to the Yizkor service. The good deed done by the living on behalf of the departed makes Yizkor more than a memorial service – it binds generations together in perpetual kindness, and lifts the souls of the departed to higher places of rest.

When you say the words "I will... donate charity for his/her sake" visualise yourself as an extension of their soul, bringing down some of their goodness and their light. You can also think of a particular character trait that they excelled in – whether generosity, love of family, devotion to community – that you would like to emulate and keep alive. And don't forget to give the charity after Yom Tov.

Welcome Home

When you mention the names of the Mothers and Fathers of the Jewish people, allow the soul of your loved one to go upwards, to be welcomed by their holy ancestors into the highest heavens. Take comfort in knowing that they are in a place

of eternal happiness, and you have just sent them even higher. Your bond with them has been strengthened, your love expressed in the deepest way.

Time to Leave

Once Yizkor is over, we need to come back to the world outside. Just as in shul, those who went out are invited back in, so too at home, open your eyes and reconnect to your surroundings. You're back in the land of the living. But you aren't the same. You have encountered the other world. Now, appreciate our world, the life we are given in it, and the opportunity to do good that can only happen here. And know that your loved ones have appreciated your gift. They have been remembered, for good, and forever.



MEDITATION

Musaf

תפילה
מוסף

ARTSCROLL 478 KOREN 777 KEHOS 215 BIRNBAUM 745

ACTION

Recite the *Musaf* prayer.

In 1911, the Louvre Museum in Paris fell victim to one of the world's all-time great art heists, when the Mona Lisa was stolen. It remained missing for two years. In that time, more people went to stare at the blank space where it had been, than had gone to look at the masterpiece in the previous twelve years.

This tells us something about human nature. All too often, we fail to appreciate precious things while we have them. However when they are taken from us, we become painfully aware of the 'blank space' in our lives.

In fact, our lives are full of 'Mona Lisas,' countless blessings that grace us daily, but perhaps we are oblivious to them.

Sometimes we look upon prayer exclusively as an opportunity to ask for blessings. Indeed it is a vital part of prayer.

Yet an equally vital function of prayer is to acknowledge the blessings we already have: family, friends, life itself. Gratitude is a transformative emotion. It is to the heart what serotonin is to the brain. It brings about inner peace and happiness.

As you have been praying today, have you been asking for things? Have you taken a moment to articulate what you are grateful for? How does this verbalisation of gratitude leave you feeling?

A central part of our prayers on Yom Kippur is asking for forgiveness. We have done wrong and want our offense to be forgotten.

What about those who have wronged us? Have we forgiven them? Are we perhaps still stubbornly holding on to gripes from the past?

The sage Rava tells us that one who is easy going and doesn't hold on to the past, is forgiven for all his sins. Measure for measure, if we can let go and forgive, then our errors will also be forgiven.

What about those who haven't apologised?

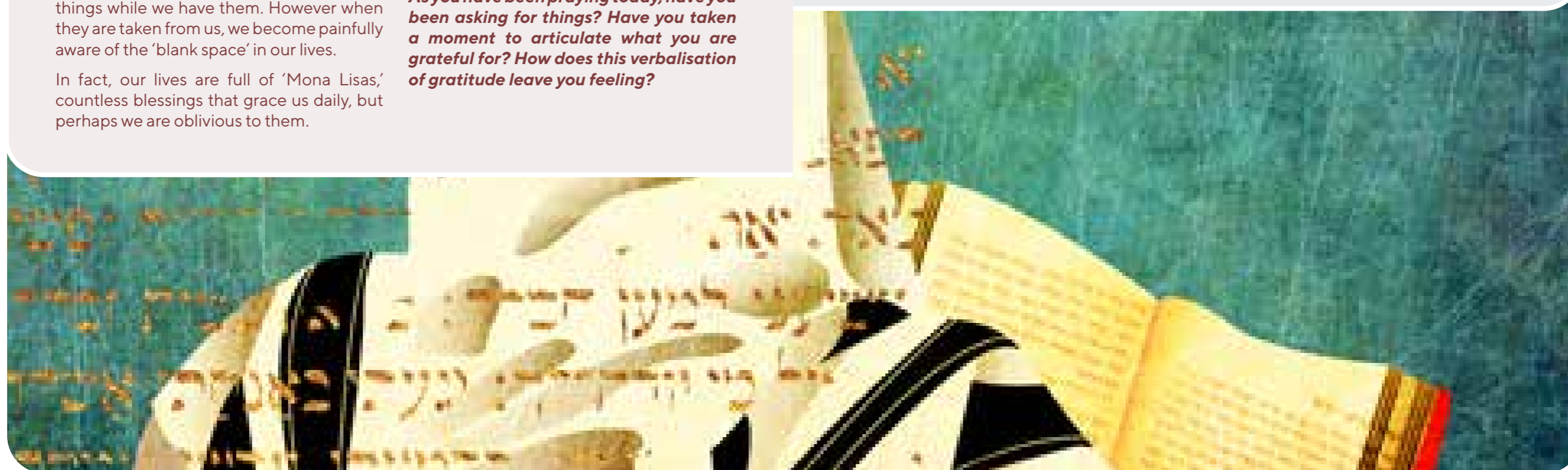
How can I forgive that which hasn't been acknowledged?

Every night before retiring, we recite the *Shema*. Many have the custom of reciting a prayer before the *Shema* that declares: 'Master of the universe, behold I forgive anyone who has angered or wronged me.'

We make this declaration in the privacy of our rooms, because forgiveness isn't solely for the perpetrator but also for ourselves. When we can let go, we are free from the shackles of resentment.

INSIGHTS

CONVERSATION



The Avodah

סדר
העבודה

ARTSCROLL 554 KOREN 879 KEHOS 246 BIRNBAUM 815

ACTION

As part of the *Musaf* service we read a section known as the *Avodah*. We scrutinise the service of the High priest in the Temple, as well as reciting some poetic paragraphs reflecting the magnitude of the day.

Is Yom Kippur a sad or happy day?

We often associate the fasting on Yom Kippur with mourning, like the 9th of Av. Yet Yom Kippur is a festival and must not be a day of mourning. Indeed, someone who must eat on Yom Kippur for medical reasons is required to first make the festive Kiddush, like any Yom Tov.

There is a famous poem titled '*mareh cohen*' in the *Avodah* section. The High Priest's appearance is described in hyperbolic fashion using powerful imagery. It expresses the jubilation of the people when the High Priest exited the Holy of Holies safely after

completing his service on Yom Kippur. Atonement has been achieved; the sheer joy is palpable.

Certainly, Yom Kippur is a holy day. Serene, sombre, serious and significant. Yet when done right, what it can achieve is cause for celebration.

A groom and bride are encouraged to view their wedding day as a personal Yom Kippur. Just as the wedding day has its serene moments but is overall joyous, so too on this special day, we must be confident in the success of our prayers and rejoice as such.

INSIGHTS



Mincha

תפילת
מנחה

ARTSCROLL 630 KOREN 989 KEHOS 301 BIRNBAUM 881

ACTION

Recite the *Mincha* prayer.

We read the Torah portion from the book of Leviticus: Forbidden sexual relationships.

We read the Haftarah from the book of Jonah: The tale of Jonah and the people of Nineveh.

CONVERSATION

The tale of Jonah is a classic in Jewish literature. Sent by G-d to rebuke the wicked people of the city of Nineveh, he tries to flee from his responsibility as a prophet. He is later swallowed by a large fish amidst the storm.

Why did Jonah not want to undertake this responsibility? It is suggested that Jonah was afraid that he would succeed in causing the people of Nineveh to repent, thus highlighting the sins of his people; the Jews.

This has led to the development of the psychological phenomena known as 'a Jonah complex', the fear of success holding you back from self-actualisation.

As you read this fascinating tale, ask yourself, have you avoided responsibility recently? Why?

Have you ever held yourself back from growth out of a fear that your success would bring greater responsibility?

INSIGHTS

In the story of Jonah, we are told that he headed to the port of Yafo to flee to the Mediterranean coastal city of Tarshish.

A play on words however brings to light a practical lesson. The Hebrew word '*yafo*' also means beauty whilst the Hebrew word '*tarshish*' doubles as an aquamarine gemstone.

Within each of us is a little Jonah running away from our true calling to pursue materialism. It is easy to get lost in the superficiality of our world when in fact we were chosen for a mission - to inspire the world.

Sometimes we need a large storm to remind us of our true purpose and to realign our goals.

Neilah

תפילה
נעילה

ARTSCROLL 706 KOREN 1105 KEHOS 347 BIRNBAUM 957

ACTION

Recite the *Neilah* prayer as the sun begins to set. Our fifth and final prayer on this momentous day.

As we approach the *Neilah* prayer we have two concurrent thoughts.

On the one hand, after the emotional rollercoaster of the day, we feel relief that our atonement is almost complete.

On the other hand, as *Neilah* begins we feel a drive to ensure that the day does not end with a drowsy decline but with a mighty roar.

Imagine running a 10,000 metre race. You have pushed through the struggles of the race, you have pushed your muscles to the brink and as you arrive around the last bend, the end is in sight.

On the one hand, there is relief that you are nearly done, yet concurrently there is a drive to give the last 100 metres everything you have.

Consider this as you reach the end of the day: **Will you watch the clock tick over until break-fast, or will you gather every emotional muscle available and end the Chag with an uplifting moment of personal prayer?**

What is the one thing you really want this year? What is your plan to achieve it?

The word *Neilah* in Hebrew means to lock. The classic understanding is that with the day coming to an end, the gates of heaven are being metaphorically locked. If we haven't submitted our prayers yet, then we better hurry because closing time is imminent.

The Lubavitcher Rebbe suggested an alternative understanding. Indeed, the doors are being locked, but at the

culmination of a successful Yom Kippur you find yourself not on the outside of those gates, but on the inside. Akin to a bride and groom who enter the yichud room after the chuppah ceremony, G-d and his people are together and closer than ever.

Have this in mind as you say with strength, the final passages of *Neilah*, declaring G-d's oneness and omnipotence.

CONVERSATION

INSIGHTS

Ma'ariv & Havdalah

מעריב
והבדלה

ARTSCROLL 766 KOREN 1203 KEHOS 390 BIRNBAUM 1019

ACTION

Recite the *Ma'ariv* prayer and make *Havdalah*.

MEDITATION

Break Fast

Eating after a spiritual experience is as important as the experience itself. When you break the fast, do it calmly and with intention. You are not just eating because you haven't eaten all day. You are eating to bring the experience you just had down into your body. You are inviting back your physical self, but you are not the same person as you were before the fast. You are cleansed. You are spiritualised. You've touched your soul and been touched.

REFLECTIONS: How can I hold on to my Yom Kippur experience? Now that my soul is cleansed and my body detoxed, how has my perspective changed on:

- eating
- dealing with difficult people
- accumulating material wealth
- my purpose on this earth.

The test of a good Yom Kippur is how you behave the day after. You just met G-d face to face. You can never be the same.



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wishing the community a Shana Tova!