

# The Torah Any Times

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## Mr. Charlie Harary

### Joy in Judgement

Rosh Hashanah is, without a doubt, one of the most perplexing days of the year. Think about it—it's Yom Ha'Din, Judgment Day. The fate of the entire world is decided on this day. The Mishnah (Rosh Hashanah 16a) clearly states that on Rosh Hashanah, kol b'ei olam—the whole world—stands before HaKadosh Baruch Hu like sheep to be judged. The books of life are opened, and our entire year is determined.

Now, if I were tasked with designing this day, I'd probably go about it differently. I'd say, "Listen, we're not perfect. Hashem knows that, and we know that. It's Judgment Day, so here's the plan: we wake up at the crack of dawn, stand before HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and for 15 hours, over two days, we say, 'I'm sorry.' Maybe by the end of it, Hashem will say, 'Alright, you really mean it—have a good year.'" Yes, it would be uncomfortable and exhausting, but that's how a judgment day should look if I were prepping someone for trial in front of the ultimate Judge.

But that's not what we do. Not even close. We don't spend hours confessing our sins. We daven, yes, but not for that long—just a few additional hours. And after that? We celebrate Yom Tov. We eat challah, enjoy the meal, and maybe even hope for some dessert like chocolate. It's a festive day, which almost seems inappropriate considering the gravity of the judgment.

How can we sit at a table, eating and drinking, while the King is deciding our fate? How did the sages design Rosh Hashanah like this?

Perhaps the celebration and joy aren't distractions but are, in fact, the essence of the day. Maybe the hardest part of Rosh Hashanah isn't the time we spend in shul, but what happens after shul. And maybe, part of the judgment depends on how we conduct ourselves outside of prayer.

Let me share a story that illustrates this idea.

There was a man, quite wealthy, whose daughter was getting married. He wanted to throw an extravagant wedding, so he gave his family a blank check. As they planned the event, costs escalated, but he was prepared to pay, confident in his financial stability.

On the day of the wedding, however, he received a devastating phone call from his business partner. One of their largest investments had failed due to unforeseen issues, like permits not coming through. The money he had counted on for the wedding was now gone. He had some funds left, but not enough to cover the lavish event.

He arrived at the wedding with a heavy heart. It was a beautiful celebration, but how was he going to pay for it? The caterer approached him, expecting payment. The man said, "I'll call you tomorrow." A few days passed, and he knew he couldn't avoid the caterer forever. He finally

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Manish ben Esther

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Bechor ben Rivkah

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Deena bat Shoshana

Chaya Raizel bat Dena

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Reuven ben Rochel

called and scheduled a meeting to discuss the bill.

When they met, the man broke down. He told the caterer, "I didn't plan for this. I had the money, but I lost it in an investment. I'm wiped out." The caterer was stunned. This wasn't what he had expected to hear, and he didn't know how to respond. In the caterer's mind, he feared the man might not pay him at all. He needed to figure out if he could trust him, so he started asking questions.

"Where are you from?" the caterer asked. The man shared details about his life and background, eventually mentioning that his family came from a particular town in Europe.

The caterer's face changed. "You're from that town?" he asked, visibly moved. "When did your father come over?"

The man explained that his father had emigrated after the war, and the caterer became even more emotional.

Finally, the caterer said, "I can't believe I'm sitting here."

The man, assuming the caterer was upset, apologized profusely, but the caterer interrupted him. "No, no, you don't understand. I'm from the same town as your father. When I came to America, I had nothing—no money, no connections, no family. But I could cook, so I thought I'd try to start a business. I didn't even have enough to open a store. I was completely lost.

"One day, a few guys asked me where I was from, and I mentioned my hometown. They told me, 'There's a man here who's from your town, too.' I went up to him and introduced myself. After we talked, he said, 'Come back Thursday night and meet me at shul.'

"When I arrived, he handed me an envelope with enough money to start a small store. I couldn't believe it. I asked him if it was a loan, and he said, 'Yes, pay it back when you can.'

"I worked hard, and after a few months, I had enough to repay the loan. I went back to the shul and handed him the envelope, but he refused to take it. He said, 'I didn't lend you anything. It was a gift from ten other

people. When you're able, pass it on to someone else who needs help.'

"All these years, I've been waiting for an opportunity to repay your father, and now I finally can."

With that, the caterer tore the bill in half and said, "Paid in full."

This story teaches a powerful lesson about Rosh Hashanah. We often view it through the lens of fear, thinking Hashem is a harsh judge who scrutinizes our every flaw. We enter the day feeling inadequate, believing we don't measure up, and that we'll only survive by constantly apologizing.

But perhaps we've misunderstood. Like the man at the wedding, who thought the caterer would demand payment but was shown kindness because of his father, we need to realize that Hashem, our Father, wants to show us mercy. If we can approach Rosh Hashanah with the understanding that Hashem loves us, like a parent who wants the best for their child, we will experience the day not with dread, but with joy and confidence.

## Rabbi Yehoshua Nissan

### Feeling When You're Not

During these auspicious days of closeness and endearment to Hashem, Hashem strives to raise us and lift us up. Equally so, at this time of year, what we can achieve with just a little effort would take tremendous effort during the rest of the year. All the help Hashem promises us all year is amplified many, many times during this month. It's like being a kid in a candy store or going on a shopping spree—we need to grab hold of this opportunity.

I would like to share with you an insight from the Nesivos Shalom, which I think is, first, ex-

tremely validating and, second, offers advice for dealing with the difficulties we sometimes face, especially during such significant times. At the start of the year, everything sounds so inspiring. We feel like we should be dancing, and maybe we will. But the Nesivos Shalom, reflecting on Parshas Ki Teitzei, notes that the Parsha speaks about going out to war—a war that deeply symbolizes our battle with the Yetzer Hara.

In discussing this battle, the Nesivos Shalom refers back to Parshas Beha'alosecha, quoting a Pasuk (10:9): "When a battle comes into your land against an enemy who oppresses you, you should sound the

trumpets, and you will be remembered before Hashem, and you will be saved from your enemies."

Sometimes, the battle comes into our land, meaning an enemy suddenly jumps into our personal space with a particular challenge. It's not the normal day-to-day struggle we expect, but something new, an unexpected difficulty. We find ourselves facing a big temptation to do wrong or a strong resistance to doing what's right. The enemy has breached the walls and we're suddenly overwhelmed.

The Nesivos Shalom explains that at these moments, when we don't have the strength or the strategies to face the Yetzer Hara, when we're caught off guard, the Torah offers a solution: sound the trumpets. What does that mean? It means calling

out to Hashem, groaning from the depths of our souls, “Hashem, I don’t want to be dragged down. Save me, lift me up, throw me a lifeline. I don’t want to drown in this challenge.”

This is the secret hidden within the shofar. The sound of the shofar represents that deep groan from the depths of our hearts, breaking through all the barriers, all the obstacles, and even the prosecuting angels who can’t comprehend its depth. The cry of a Jew to Hashem, our Father, reaches all the way to His throne, and Hashem comes to our rescue.

However, the Nesivos Shalom adds an even further, deeper dimension. Sometimes, when the Yetzer Hara grabs us, it doesn’t just place a challenge in front of us; it throws us a second challenge—a knuckleball. It closes off our hearts. We might wish we could cry out to Hashem, but we feel like we just can’t. We want to cry from the depths of our souls, but our hearts feel locked up.

You might be going through Elul, standing before Hashem on Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur, and feel disconnected. You understand intellectually what’s going on, you’ve heard the inspiring messages, but emotionally, it just doesn’t click. You can’t even blast the shofar from within because your heart is closed. What do you do then?

The Nesivos Shalom validates this experience. It’s not that we’re bad people. It’s part of the human struggle. The Yetzer Hara sometimes throws this curveball at us, especially during high spiritual moments, like the Yomim Noraim. We wait all year to feel close to Hash-

em, and when those days come, sometimes we wake up to find our hearts numb, and we’re unable to feel anything.

So, what do we do when the Yetzer Hara closes off our hearts during the most important times of the year? First and foremost, acknowledge it. The Nesivos Shalom writes that it’s important to recognize that this happens. It’s part of being in Hashem’s army, facing challenges even on days we thought would be full of light and inspiration. Even when we feel like we should be dancing and celebrating, sometimes the lights go off—but that’s what it means to be a holy soldier.

We go through everything for Hashem, even when we can’t feel it. So what then becomes our mission in those moments when the feeling just isn’t there?

Nowadays, you see people changing, growing, transforming. Everyone is emotional, grabbing the treasures of kings, metaphorically walking out with sacks of gold from the treasury of Elul, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur. And you think, “I want that! But I can’t feel it.” What’s the mission when you’re in that situation?

“Hu ha’emunah — the job is to fortify yourself, dig your heels into faith,” writes the Nesivos Shalom.

Faith in what? That even though everyone else is walking out with the treasures, and you’re sitting there in the dark, you must believe that Hashem hears every prayer from every mouth. Not every heart, because your heart isn’t always accessible. But Hashem hears the words that come out of your mouth.

And you have to believe: Hash-

em is my Father, I am His child. If I call out to Him, even if my heart is closed off, even if I just want to want to connect, and I say, “Tatty, help me. Abba, please. I also want to walk out of here with all the treasures. I also want closeness to You, even though I don’t feel it yet. I want to want it.”

You have to believe, deep down, that Hashem listens to every utterance from His children. No matter what level it’s on—whether it’s broken, stifled, disconnected, or discombobulated—Hashem loves us and hears every whisper. And when we ask for help, when we ask to be close to Him, He will rush to answer.

This is the avodah, the service, says the Nesivos Shalom. When your heart is closed, double down on faith in your relationship with Hashem.

There are two powerful things this does for us. First, it’s just the truth. Hashem is listening. It doesn’t have to be a perfect prayer or even heartfelt. If you try, if you gave it your best shot and it wasn’t accessible to you, know that Hashem is still listening to every word. So, keep talking to Him, because it works. Hashem will answer.

The Nesivos Shalom shares something beautiful about this time of year. When a person feels impoverished and broken and calls out, “Please lift me up; pick me up out of the mud,” and they have emunah that Hashem is listening, something amazing happens. The Beis Avraham says that when we ask for physical things—health, wealth, a good job, a house—heaven judges: Is this person worthy? But when we ask for spiritual things, when



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we beg, "Hashem, lift me up, I'm stuck, I can't fight, I can't win, I can't even access my heart, please help me," there is no judgment in heaven. Hashem grants it immediately. There's no court case. Worthy or not, if you ask to be close to Hashem, He grants it.

Rabbi Yisrael Salanter taught the

same concept. When we request spiritual things and believe Hashem hears our words, no matter how faint, He listens. That's why we whisper Shemoneh Esrei—because we believe Hashem hears even our whispers. If we prayed aloud, it would look like we don't believe that. Whispering isn't just

physical; it's spiritual too. Even if our prayer lacks umph, if it's just a whisper of intention, Hashem still hears it. Hashem, help me. Help me to change, to declare You as King, to pick a new direction in life.

Say these words and believe that Hashem hears and will answer.

Because, in fact, He will.

## Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

### Jumping in the Royal Carriage

The Kindertransport was a desperate initiative to save Jewish children from the Nazis. In the nine months leading up to the outbreak of World War II in 1939, the United Kingdom welcomed nearly 10,000 children from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland, and the Free City of Danzig. These children were placed in British foster homes, hostels, schools, and farms, often becoming the sole survivors of their families during the Holocaust.

One of those children was Beryl Garter, who later shared his story with BBC Radio. He recounted living in an orphanage with other refugee children, when one day the teacher announced that King George VI would visit their town. The next morning, the children woke up early, donned their best shorts, and scrubbed their faces and knees in eager anticipation of the King's arrival. Excitement filled the air as they waited for the royal coach to turn the corner, and suddenly it appeared.

King George, Queen Elizabeth, and the two princesses waved to the cheering crowd. Everyone pressed forward against the barricades to catch a glimpse, but 11-year-old Beryl did more than just push forward; he leaped over the barrier and raced at top speed

toward the royal car. Climbing onto one of the running boards, he began banging on the car door.

The vehicle came to an abrupt halt, and the King's bodyguards quickly pulled Beryl away. Just then, the car door opened, and Beryl found himself face to face with the King. "I see you want to say hello," the King smiled. Overwhelmed, Beryl looked into the King's eyes, attempted to speak, and then burst into tears. "Don't cry now," said the King, "We're not going to put you in the Tower of London."

"Oh, Your Majesty, please forgive me for banging on your car, but please, please help me. You're the only one who can help me," Beryl pleaded. "How can I help you?" asked the King.

"Your Majesty, I am a Jew from Germany. Through your kindness, I was brought here by the Kindertransport, but my parents are still in Germany, and I'm so frightened about what happened to them. Sometimes I think I'll never see them again." Beryl broke down in tears once more.

"What is your name?" the King inquired. After Beryl told him, the King instructed an equerry to write down his name and the names and addresses of his parents. "Well, let's see what we can do," the King said, patting Beryl on the head and smiling.

ing.

Beryl climbed down from the car and watched as it turned the corner, feeling certain he would face severe punishment. Surprisingly, the school took no action until a few weeks later when the Headmaster called him into his office. Fearing the worst, Beryl entered, convinced he was in trouble.

"Beryl," the Headmaster began, "you made quite an impression on the King. In fact, he sent you a gift." With that, he opened the side door of his office, revealing Beryl's parents standing there.

The Baal HaTanya teaches that in the days and weeks leading up to Rosh Hashanah, the King is not in his palace; He is in the fields, in the villages, and on the farms. He comes out to visit us, accessible and near. At these moments, we often find ourselves behind the barricades we've built, feeling unable to break through.

But we should leap over those barricades. The bodyguards may try to stop us, but the King wants us there. We can ask Him for anything we desire—especially to reconnect with our deepest selves. This Rosh Hashanah, as the King returns to His palace, we must jump onto that royal carriage.

During Shemoneh Esrei on Rosh Hashanah, we say "Uvachayin" four times. The fourth mention is drawn from the Megillas Esther, teaching us that we should approach the King even when un-

uninvited or feeling unworthy. By jumping through those barricades, like Esther HaMalka, we can strive to save the Jewish people.

This past year has been difficult.

But if we leap through the barricades and petition the King of Kings, we can hope for anything—because He can do everything. So let us open our hearts and leap forward. And may we

all be sealed for a year filled with blessings, success, peace, and the coming of Mashiach.

## Rabbi Zechariah Wallerstein zt"l

### Our Defense Attorney

As Rosh Hashanah approaches, we are reminded that we will stand before the heavenly Beis Din, the court of Shamayim. On Rosh Hashanah, we pass before Hashem, "Kivnei Marom," one by one, and He asks each of us, "My daughter, My beloved, what do you want for this year?"

Naturally, we answer, "Hashem, I want to live." But the Satan, acting as a fierce prosecutor, immediately steps in: "Hashem, she asked for that last year, and You gave it to her. She's still alive today. Do You mind if I show You what she did with her year?" And there, before the court, the Satan plays a video of our entire year—every moment, every action. What did we do with the precious time Hashem granted us?

The Satan, relentless, presses his case: "This is why You should give her another year? To watch movies? To spend hours talking to her friends on the phone? That's how she used her time." He is a prosecuting lawyer, not someone to take lightly. He wants us gone, because as long as we're alive, we can do mitzvos. His aim is to con-

vince Hashem that we don't deserve another year.

Not only that, but with today's technology, it's easier than ever for the Satan to build his case. All he needs to do is check with Verizon in Shamayim, and in seconds, he can tell exactly how much time we spent on our phones. He'll argue, "Hashem, why should she be in this world when all she's doing is wasting her time? In Shamayim, we don't have phones."

So, as we approach Rosh Hashanah, we need to think deeply: What is our defense? Why should Hashem grant us another year? What do we offer?

One powerful practice is to write down our intentions for the coming year—what we want to achieve if Hashem gives us more time. And at the end of the year, we can open that note and reflect: Did we fulfill those goals?

A key aspect of the judgment on Rosh Hashanah is Hakaras Hatov, showing gratitude. Did we appreciate the year Hashem gave us? If we didn't, why should He give us another one? Hashem places great emphasis on gratitude—being thankful for

what we have and acknowledging it.

There's a Yekke minhag, a custom I grew up with, that emphasizes this gratitude. Before Rosh Hashanah, we write letters to our parents, one to our mother and one to our father, thanking them for everything they did for us in the past year. These letters are placed under their plates at the Rosh Hashanah meal, and the parents read them that night. The letters aren't sealed, so they don't need to be torn open—just a simple, heartfelt message of appreciation.

In our family, we've expanded the minhag. Now, not only do children write to their parents, but parents also write letters to their children, expressing how proud they are. Brothers and sisters also write notes to each other. Imagine sitting at the Rosh Hashanah table, with everyone opening envelopes filled with words of gratitude and love. If you have this practice, you have nothing to worry about on Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur. You've shown Hashem that you value and appreciate the people in your life.

Even for those who don't have the best relationship with their parents, Hakaras Hatov means recognizing the good, even in challenging situations. If you can't find anything good to appreciate, look deeper. There's always something, even if it's small, to be grateful for.

## Rebbetzin Chaya Sora Gertzulin

### Is that Honk Necessary?

It's 2 a.m. "Ani ye'shein-ah, v'leebe eir—I am sleeping, but my heart is awake." (Shir HaShirim 5:2). I came home from

Selichos a little while ago, physically tired, but spiritually awake. This year, the words of Selichos take on extra meaning. Each tefilla pene-

trates our neshama. Each tefilla is heartfelt.

"Shema koleinu—Hear our voices, and accept with compassion our prayers." We repeatedly cry out to HaShem, reciting the "Yud Gim-mel Middos", HaShem's Thirteen

Attributes of Mercy and Compassion. "Aneinu HaShem, Aneinu", Answer us HaShem, answer us. "Shomer Yisroel", Guardian of Am Yisroel, Protect the remnants of Yisroel, Don't let Yisroel be destroyed. "V'havee'osim el har kod-shee", And I will bring them to My house, and I will gladden them in My house of prayer.

I came home feeling proud and fortunate to be part of Am Yisroel. A nation that even in times of darkness and difficulty, does not lose hope, but turns to HaShem with tefilla. We don't know what lies ahead of us, but we have faith in Avinu sheh'bashomayim, our Father in Heaven.

We are approaching the one-year mark of October 7. (which last year fell on Shemini Atzeres) The images of thousands of Hamas terrorists invading the Nova music festival and the many kibbutzim and communities in the south are still seared into our hearts and minds. The bullet-riddled homes with bloodied floors and mattresses, the burned out abandoned cars piled up on the roads, the savagely mutilated bodies scattered about, and the look of pure fear on the faces of those being taken hostage are impossible to forget. It was a day that changed Israel, and left its mark on all civilized people throughout the world. A day that changed the course of history forever.

Over the course of the past year, I have been asked many times, what would your mother, the Rebbetzin a"h, say about October 7. What would my mother say? I remember her receiving similar questions following 9-11. The nation was in pain. People needed chizuk,

strength, they were looking for clarity. All wanted to know the Rebbetzin's answer to 9/11.

My mother began a coast-to-coast speaking tour, addressing that very question. She visited scores of cities, delivering a message that was direct and passionate. A three-fold formula taken from the Musaf prayer of Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur. Teshuva, repentance; tefilla, prayer; and tzedaka, giving of ourselves to others, and personal sacrifice for the sake of the Torah.

I am sure that the Rebbetzin would give us the same message after all that we have experienced over the past year.

Teshuva – to return. HaShem created each and every one of us with a pure soul. As we say in the morning prayers, "HaShem, the soul that You have given me is pure." That pure soul is always with us, and enables us to return to our Creator. The ability to return is a gift from HaShem.

As I write these words, I received a phone call from a friend's daughter. Knowing that I am always looking for stories that are life lessons, she wanted to share a personal experience.

The young mother had carpool for her daughter's Sunday program. It was raining. There was a lineup of cars in front and behind her. She was trying to get into the entranceway to pick up the girls, but this one car was blocking the entrance. She tried to be patient, but after a while, it was wearing thin. After all, the girls were waiting, and she had errands to do. She gave it a few more minutes, and then, enough was enough. She started honking. Loud. Again and again. And then she saw a child wrapped in blankets as a protection from the

rain, being taken out in a wheelchair. She felt sick to her stomach. What was she thinking? Did she really have to honk, and honk some more? Ouch! She then found out that the building housing the Sunday program recently leased a portion of the space to a program for special needs children.

The woman called to tell me that she learned a life lesson. A lesson to have patience, to give the benefit of the doubt, to realize that one ever fully knows what is happening. Don't be quick to judge. Don't be hasty in reaching conclusions.

She asked if I could please print her story. She called it her pre-Rosh HaShana lesson. For this young mother, it was her personal lesson of teshuva. She hoped that perhaps someone else will learn from it too.

What can we do for October 7? We ask HaShem to be kind, compassionate and patient with us. Let's work on showing kindness, compassion and understanding to others.

Tefilla - prayer. Towards the conclusion of the Selichos, there is a beautiful tefilla, Mi Sheh'anah, He Who answered.

We turn to HaShem, saying, You answered so many in times of distress and personal need. You answered Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov. Yosef, Moshe, and Aaron. You answered our prophets and our kings, and so many more.

As I was davening and concentrating on each line in this tefilla, I was thinking, HaShem, You answered so many, we need You to answer us today. And then, second thoughts came to mind. Who am I to come near these greats?

The answer is at the end of the te-

filla. While we recognize that HaShem answered all these tzaddikim, we are not comparing ourselves to them at all. We beseech HaShem, that just as you answer the poor, the brokenhearted and the humble in spirit, please answer my prayers as well.

Tzedaka - charity. But, it means so much more than donating money. Give charitably, but also give of yourself. There are so many people to whom we can give. We can give of our time, give of our talents. Give of our expertise and knowledge. Say a kind word. Cheer someone

up. By helping others, we are helping ourselves.

Teshuva, tefilla, tzedaka. Take the time to look inward, connect to Hashem through prayer, and be there for others. We have the power to change a decree. The power to change the world.

## Rabbi Yehuda Zev Klein

### Compassion like a Father

**O**n Rosh Hashanah, we recite the phrase, “Kerachem av al banim,” asking Hashem to have mercy on us as a father has mercy on his children. This leads to a thought-provoking question: Who has more mercy, a father or a mother?

A story is told about someone who asked the Gerrer Rebbe, the Imrei Emes, why we don’t say “Kerachem em al banim,” suggesting that a mother’s compassion might be greater. The Rebbetzin of the Imrei Emes, overhearing this, interjected, “You know why we don’t say that? Because we don’t have the chutzpah! We can’t be so audacious as to ask for such a high level of mercy.” So we ask for compassion like that of a father.

But perhaps there’s another layer to this. A mother, full of heart, instinctively feels her child’s pain and often acts out of pure love and emotion, sometimes to the point of not disciplining properly. In contrast, a father might need to take a larger and broader view, acting in ways that may seem harsh but are ultimately for the child’s benefit. Thus, when we say, “Kerachem av al banim,” we acknowledge that what may feel difficult or strict to us can actually be for our own good, even if we lack the perspective to see it right now.

The overarching theme of Rosh

Hashanah is our coronation of Hashem as the King of the universe: “Melech hakal l’oylem kuleh b’ch-vodecha.” But this prompts another question: Who is challenging Hashem’s kingship? Normally, when there’s a transition of power, an inauguration follows. Yet here, Hashem is running unopposed—He has been the King from the beginning and will remain so eternally. So what is the significance of this coronation?

The Sfas Emes offers a powerful insight. In Parshas Kedoshim, we are commanded to fear our parents, encompassing two aspects: Kavod (respect) and Yirah (awe). Kavod includes showing basic respect, while Yirah is about not contradicting them or sitting in their seat. The Sfas Emes draws a parallel: just as we shouldn’t sit in our parents’ seats, we also shouldn’t presume to sit in Hashem’s seat.

How do we sit in Hashem’s seat? If we think, “If I were running the world, I would do things differently,” we are effectively questioning His decisions. The Sfas Emes reminds us to accept that Hashem knows exactly what He’s doing.

On Rosh Hashanah, we confront our own doubts and accept Hashem’s will. Each person often questions His ways, wishing things were different—wishing there were no conflict, no suffering, no injustice. But during this time, we coronate

Hashem and declare that we accept His decisions, even when they seem incomprehensible to us. What may appear as cruelty is, in fact, a manifestation of His kindness and compassion.

There’s a story about a man named Nochem from Monsey, New York. One Monday morning, he discovered that \$5,000 cash, which he had earmarked for a specific cause, had been stolen from his office. Naturally, he was upset and questioned why Hashem would let this happen. He approached Rabbi Wachsman for guidance. Rabbi Wachsman told him: “Nochem, if you knew the trouble you just avoided by having that money stolen, you would have guided the thief to your office. Who knows? Perhaps that money was meant to be used for something that would lead to a greater calamity.”

This is the meaning of “kerachem av al banim.” What seems like strict justice may actually be an expression of heavenly mercy. In retrospect, we can understand that what appeared as a setback was, in fact, a protective measure. And now, as we enter this sacred season, we carry that understanding with us.



# Rabbi Avrum Mordche Malach

## Real Eye Contact

Once, I had a Rosh Yeshiva who delivered an inspiring drasha (talk) once a month to the entire yeshiva, drawing in a few hundred boys. During these drashos, I noticed he often focused intently on one particular boy. Curious, I asked my friend, the boy, “Why does the Rosh Yeshiva always look at you?”

He replied, “Avrum Mordche, you don’t understand. When I look at him, it captures his attention. That’s just how eye contact works—Hashem made it that way. If you establish eye contact, it doesn’t take long for the other person to notice you.”

Inspired by this insight, I decided to give it a try. At the next drosha, I made a conscious effort to focus solely on the Rosh Yeshiva instead of letting my gaze drift to the ceiling or elsewhere. However, to my

disappointment, it didn’t work. After the drosha, I approached my friend and said, “It didn’t work! The Rosh Yeshiva was still looking at you, not at me.”

He responded, “Malach, you missed the point. It’s not just about looking at him; you have to truly commit. You must decide not to look anywhere else. When you focus exclusively on him and let go of all other distractions, that’s when you’ll truly capture his attention.”

This reminds me of the pasuk: “Hinei Ein Hashem El Yireyov, LamYachlim L’chazdoi.” The Ribbono Shel Olam watches over His Yireyim—those who fear Him. Imagine how comforting it is to know that wherever you go and whatever you do, Hashem is watching over you, caring for you, and providing for you. You are always under His gaze. Isn’t that amazing?

But how do we cultivate this con-

nection? It’s not enough to glance at Hashem occasionally; we need to be willing to turn away from distractions. My friend taught me that true connection comes from being mevatlar—ready to forgo other sights and focus solely on Him.

When we tell the Ribbono Shel Olam that we are not looking at worldly distractions, it is because He commanded us to focus on Him. Sometimes, Hashem sees flaws in us, and the Mekatrigim (accusers) might come forward to speak against us. Yet, if Hashem sees that we’re striving to turn away from distractions and focus solely on Him, He might respond to those accusers, saying, “This person is looking away from everything else for My sake. I will also look away from their shortcomings.”

As Rosh Hashanah approaches, let’s strive to capture Hashem’s attention by turning away from distractions with joy and commitment. If we do this, we will be zoche to be inscribed for a year of blessing and goodness.

# Rabbi David Yosef

## From Your Heart

As we transition into Rosh Hashanah, we are called to reflect on the profound teachings of our Sages. One notable story is that of Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa, a revered tzaddik, who visited Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakkai, the esteemed president of Am Yisrael.

Upon his arrival, Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakkai expressed his sorrow: “Rabbi, my son is unwell and in bed. Despite my fervent prayers, nothing has helped. Please pray for him.”

Rabbi Chanina Ben Dosa immediately stood up and prayed earnestly for the son of Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakkai. Remarkably, the boy recov-

ered almost instantly. Baruch Hashem!

After Rabbi Chanina departed, Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakkai’s wife remarked, “Rabbi, you are the leader of Am Yisrael, yet I see that Rabbi Hanina is greater than you. Look, your prayers did not help, but his prayer led to your son’s immediate recovery!”

Rabban Yochanan Ben Zakkai replied, “No, he is not greater than I. However, when he prays, he prays like a servant before the King, while I pray like a minister before the King.”

He elaborated: “A poor man who suffers prays with deep intensity, driven by his pain. His suffering

compels him to cry out and weep, forging a profound connection with Hashem. Rabbi Hanina, having faced much hardship and lacking even basic sustenance, prayed with an anguish and sincerity that was palpable.

In contrast, I, as a wealthy man, have all that I need. It is more challenging for me to pray with that same depth of heart.”

As we prepare for Rosh Hashanah, this story serves as a powerful reminder. Let us strive to pray from our hearts, pouring out our emotions and seeking forgiveness. If we can cry, it enhances the power of our prayers. May we ask Hashem for a good life, and may we be inscribed for a year of blessing, good writing, and good signing.



# Bring Them Home!

## Names of Hostages in Gaza and Partial List of Injured Soldiers

(Updated: 27 Elul)

שלמה בן מרסל (מנצור)  
תמיר בן חירות (נמרודי)

### שמות חיילים פצועים לרפואה שלמה

אברהם מרדכי בן יעל  
אהרן בן שרה הנדל  
אורי אברהם בן הדסה  
אייל אליעזר בן חנה  
אלון בן מרים  
אלחנן יאיר בן דבורה  
אליה בן רות  
אלישע יהודה בן רות  
אמיר בן אלה  
בנימין בן ריינה  
בנימין יצחק בן שרה  
גלעד איתי בן אפרת  
דוד בן זיוה  
הראל בן חנה  
טל גרשון בן שרה  
יאיר יונה בן דרורה צפורה מלכה  
יהונתן יאשיהו בן כרמית  
יוחאי יהודה בן סיגל חוה  
יונה בצלאל בן חווה שושנה  
ירין אליהו בן סיגל  
כפיר חיים בן מירה מרים  
מישל בת אנג'ליקה  
מנחם דוד חי בן מרים  
משה אהרן בן לאה בילא  
משה צבי בן עירית  
מתן בן דבורה  
ניר בן אורנה  
עדי מנחם בן מורן מירה  
עודד אפרים בן ויויאן  
עוז חי בן סמדר  
עידן בן טובה  
עמיחי בן סיגלית רחל  
עמית יהונתן בן מאיה  
רון בן שרון  
רועי חיים בן מירב  
תום שאול בן דניאל  
תומר בן צפורה

אבינתן בן דיצה תרצה (אור)  
אביתר בן גליה (דוד)  
אגם בת מירב (ברגר)  
אוהד בן אסתר (בן עמי)  
אוהד בן קרן (יהלומי)  
אור בן גאולה (לוי)  
איתן בן רות אדית (הורן)  
איתן אברהם בן אפרת (מור)  
אלון בן עידית (אהל)  
אליה בן סיגלית (כהן)  
אליהו בן חנה (שרעבי)  
אלכסנדר ששה בן ילנה לאה (טרופנוב)  
אלקנה בן רוחמה (בוחבוט)  
אמילי תהילה בת אמנדה פרנסיס (דמארי)  
ארבל בת יעל (יהוד)  
אריאל בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)  
אריאל בן שירי (ביבס)  
בר אברהם בן גיליה (קופרשטיין)  
גד משה בן שרה (מוזס)  
גיא בן מירב (גלבוט דלאל)  
גלי בן טליה (ברמן)  
דוד בן סילביה מוניקה (קוניו)  
דורון בת סימונה שרה (שטיינברכר)  
דניאלה בת אורלי (גלבוט)  
זיו בן טליה (ברמן)  
טל בן ניצה (שוהם קורנגולד)  
יאיר בן רות אידית (הורן)  
יוסף חיים בן מרים (אוחנה)  
יצחק בן אנטה חנה (אלגרט)  
יצחק בן דבורה (עידן)  
ירדן בן פנינה (ביבס)  
כפיר בן שירי (ביבס)  
לירי בת שירה (אלבג)  
מקסים בן טלה (הרקין)  
מתן בן ענת (אנגרסט)  
מתן בן ירדנה עינב (צנגאוקר)  
נמרוד בן ויקי (כהן)  
נעמה בת איילת (לוי)  
עודד בן בלהה (ליפשיץ)  
עומר בן ניבה (ונקרט)  
עומר בן שלי (שם טוב)  
עומר מקסים בן אורנה אסתר (נאוטרה)  
עופר בן כוכבה (קלדרון)  
עידן בן יעל (אלכסנדר)  
עידן בן דלית (שתיו)  
עמרי בן אסתר ורוניקה (מירן)  
קית' שמואל בן גלדיס חוה (סיגל)  
קרינה בת אירנה (ארייב)  
רום בן תמר נועה (ברסלבסקי)  
רומי בת מירב (גונן)  
שגב בן גלית (כלפון)  
שגיא בן נעמית (חן דקל)  
שירי בת מרגיט (ביבס)

# *Bring Them Home!*

## *Names of Hostages in Gaza and Partial List of Injured Soldiers*

*(Updated: 27 Elul)*

Romi bat Meirav (Gonen)  
Segev ben Galit (Chalfon)  
Sagi ben Naamit (Chen-Dekel)  
Shiri bat Margit (Bibas)  
Shlomo ben Marcelle (Mansour)  
Tamir ben Cheirut (Nimrodi)

### **INJURED SOLDIERS**

Avraham Mordechai ben Yael  
Aharon ben Sarah Hendel  
Ori Avraham ben Hadassah  
Eyal Eliezer ben Chana  
Alon ben Miriam  
Elchanan Yair ben Devorah  
Eliya ben Ravit  
Elisha Yehudah ben Rut  
Amir ben Ella  
Binyamin ben Reina  
Binyamin Yitzchak ben Sarah  
Gilad Itai ben Efrat  
David ben Ziva  
Harel ben Chana  
Tal Gershon ben Sarah  
Yair Yonah ben Drora Tzipporah Malka  
Yehonatan Yoshiyahu ben Carmit  
Yochai Yehudah ben Sigal Chava  
Yonah Betzalel ben Chava Shoshana  
Yarin Eliyahu ben Sigal  
Kfir Chaim ben Mira Miriam  
Michelle bat Angelika  
Menachem David Chai ben Miriam  
Moshe Aharon ben Leah Beila  
Moshe Tzi ben Irit  
Matan ben Devorah  
Nir ben Orna  
Adi Menachem ben Moran Mira  
Oded Efraim ben Vivian  
Oz Chai ben Smadar  
Idan ben Tova  
Amichai ben Sigalit Rachel  
Amit Yehonatan ben Maya  
Ron ben Sharon  
Roi Chaim ben Meirav  
Tom Shaul ben Danielle  
Tomer ben Tzipporah

Avinatan ben Ditzza Tirtza (Ohr)  
Evyatar ben Galya (David)  
Agam bat Meirav (Berger)  
Ohad ben Esther (Ben-Ami)  
Ohad ben Keren (Yahalomi)  
Ohr ben Geula (Levi)  
Eitan ben Ruth Idit (Horen)  
Eitan Avraham ben Efrat (Mor)  
Alon ben Idit (Ohel)  
Eliya ben Sigalit (Cohen)  
Eliyahu ben Chana (Sharabi)  
Alexander Sasha ben Yelena Leah  
(Tropanov)  
Elkana ben Ruchama (Buchbut)  
Emily Tehilla bat Amanda Francis  
(Damari)  
Arbel bat Yael (Yehud)  
Ariel ben Sylvia Monika (Konyo)  
Ariel ben Shiri (Bibas)  
Bar Avraham ben Julia (Cooperstein)  
Gad Moshe ben Sarah (Mozes)  
Guy ben Meirav (Gilboa Dalal)  
Gali ben Talya (Berman)  
David ben Sylvia Monika (Konyo)  
Doron bat Simona Sarah (Steinbrecher)  
Daniella bat Orli (Gilboa)  
Ziv ben Talya (Berman)  
Tal ben Nitza (Shoham-Corngold)  
Yair ben Ruth Idit (Horen)  
Yosef Chaim ben Miriam (Ochana)  
Yitzchak ben Aneta Chana (Elgarat)  
Yarden ben Penina (Bibas)  
Kfir ben Shiri (Bibas)  
Liri bat Shira (Elbag)  
Maxim ben Talleh (Herkin)  
Matan ben Anat (Angrest)  
Matan ben Yardena Einav (Tzangauker)  
Nimrod ben Viki (Cohen)  
Naama bat Ayelet (Levi)  
Oded ben Bilhah (Lifschitz)  
Omer ben Niva (Venkrat)  
Omer ben Shelly (Shemtov)  
Omer Maxim ben Orna Esther (Neutra)  
Ofer ben Cochava (Kalderon)  
Idan ben Yael (Alexander)  
Idan ben Dalit (Shtivi)  
Omri ben Esther Veronica (Miran)  
Yitzchak ben Devorah (Idan)  
Kieth Shmuel ben Gladis Chava (Segal)  
Karina bat Irena (Ariav)  
Rom ben Tamar Noa (Brasalevsky)