

SHABBAT SHALOM FROM CYBERSPACE

NISABIM-VAYELECH

AUGUST 30-31, 2013

25 ELUL 5773

DEDICATIONS: In memory of Rabbi Jack Maslaton with condolences to His Wife: Ruthie Maslaton, and children: Rebbetzin Beverly Cohen, Rebbetzin Susie Choueka, Rabbi Mordechai Maslaton, Mrs. Sari Grazi, Rabbi Shaul Maslaton and his sister Mrs. Esther Dayan

Candles: 7:12 PM - Afternoon and Evening service (Minha/Arbith): 7:10 PM

Morning Service (Shaharith): 9:00AM –Please say Shemah at home by 8:55 AM.
Tefilah will be preceded by a class at 8:30AM on Hilchot Shabbat with a Sephardic twist.

This week's kiddush by Barbara Levy in memory of her father Chaim Lev – Leo Freiser

11:00 - 12:00 Shabbat Morning Kids Program upstairs in the Rabbi's study. Stories, Tefillah, Games, Snacks and more . . . And Leah Colish will be babysitting down in the playroom

5:30 - Shabbat Afternoon Oneg with Rabbi Yosef and Leah; Treats, Stories, Basketball, Hula-hoop, Parsha Quiz, Tefillot, Raffles and Fun! Supervised play during Seudat Shelishit.

Children's Shabbat Afternoon Oneg, Age's 6 and up (Under age 6 is welcome with an adult)
We kindly request all parents to pick-up their children or supervise them once Mincha commences

Pirkey Avot with Rabbi Aharon 6:00, Minha: 6:40 PM –
Seudah Shelishi and a Class 7:10 with David
Evening Service (Arbith): 8:00 PM - Shabbat Ends: 8:11PM

WEEKDAY TEFILLA SCHEDULE
SEE ALSO ROSH HASHANA SCHEDULE
Selihot Sunday at 7:15 and Monday through Friday at 6:15
Shaharit Sunday 8:00, Mon-Fri at 7:00 (6:55 Mondays and Thursdays)
Daily Hebrew language class follows afterward in the Rabbi's Study

WEEKDAY TORAH CLASS SCHEDULE
Daily 6:00 AM class – Honest Business Practices

Monday Night Class with Rabba Yanai – Cancelled This week

Tuesday night at 8PM
At the home of Chantelle and David Bibi
1233 Beech Street in Atlantic Beach

ROSH HASHANA
We have baby sitting Thursday and Friday
10:30AM to 1:30 PM

SAVE THE DATE
Pizza in the Hut. Sunday after Yom Kippur.- **SEPTEMBER 15**
11 to 1 pm Come decorate the Sukkah, music, Art & Crafts, friends, pizza and fun.

LULAV AND ETROG
Please reserve a set so we know how many to get
\$50 per set payable to the Synagogue
To reserve: Email SepardicCongregation@gmail.com

**SUKKAH BUILDING SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 8th - Able bodied guys needed for 2 hours
After Tefilah Please join us and Thanks**

HIGH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE 5774 – AND HONORS TO PURCHASE IN ADVANCE

Wednesday September 4, 2013

Ereb Rosh Hashana.

Selihot 6:15 AM - Shahrit and Hatara 7:00 AM

Erub Tabshilin – To be done at home prior to Candle Lighting

Candle Lighting 7:04 PM - Minha and Arbit 7:00 PM

See Email

Special Vatikin Minyan

5:30 AM

Sunrise is 6:25:36

Thursday September 5th – First Day Rosh Hashana

Shahrit 8:00 AM

Minha followed by Tashlich 6:00 PM

Candle Lighting 7:56PM

Friday September 6th – Second Day Rosh Hashana

Shahrit 8:00 AM

Minha 7:00 PM followed by Kabbalat Shabbat and Arbit Candles after 8:04

Saturday September 6th – Shabbat Teshuba Perasha “Ha’Azinu”

Shahrit 9:00 AM

Minha 6:15 followed by Seudah Shelishi and a class

Arbit 7:50 – Havdalah and Shabbat Ends at 8:00

“Hatara”- the nullifying of one’s vows and oaths for the past year will be recited after Arbit.

All men and women are urged to attend at 8:10

ASERET YEMEY TESHUBAH

Sunday September 7th – Fast of Gedalyah

Fast Begins 5:11 AM

Selihot 7:00 AM - Shahrit 8:00 AM

Minha with Sefer Torah 6:45 PM

Arbit 7:20 PM - Fast ends 7:40 PM

DAILY

Selihot 6:00 AM Shahrit 7:00

YOM KIPPUR

Friday September 13 – Ereb Yom Kippur

Selihot 6:00 AM / Shahrit 7:00 AM

Minha (with Tefillin) 2:00 PM

Yom Kippur Candle Lighting 6:49 PM

Fast Begins 6:49 PM

Kal Nidre Services followed by Arbit 6:55 PM

Saturday September 14 – Yom Kippur

Shahrit 8:00 AM / Musaf 12:30 PM / Minha 4:15 PM

Ne’ilah Services 6:15 PM / Arbit 7:40 PM

Prayer Times are approximate and may change

Fast Ends - Habdala 7:50 PM

Birkat Halebana – Blessing on the Moon

ROSH HASHANA HONORS TO PURCHASE AS OF WEDNESDAY August 28, 2013

The items in red are still available for purchase.

Rosh Hashana Eve

Parnasa of Eve of Rosh Hashana Day – The prayer for financial success - Mizrahi Family for Shaya Abittan

1st Day Rosh Hashana

Opening the Ark on Rosh Hashana – Mizrahi Family for Abie Abittan

Carrying The Torah Yusupov Family for Bobby Mizrahi

Carrying The Second Torah Barbara Halio for Shaya Abittan

Carry the Haftara Case Yusupov Family for Mathew Mizrahi

Rimonim for all the Torah's Bibi Family for Ari Waldman And for Ely Altarac to join him from Rose Pappo Allen for The Pappo Family, Santo, Eny & Renee in memory of her dad who was a devoted member of the Sephardic Congregation for so many years

Raise the Torah Hagbah Lemberger Family for Sam Shetrit

Gelila Wrap the Torah Lemberger Family for Yehudah Shetrit

Mashlim with Kaddish said in memory of a loved one Leon Sutton

Haftara with Kaddish Mizrahi Family for Chaim Abittan

Parnasa of Rosh Hashana Day Yusupov Family

Parnasa of Rosh Hashana Mincha Mizrahi Family for Sam Shetrit

Parnasa of Rosh Hashana evening service Bibi Family for Bobby Mizrahi

2nd Day Rosh Hashana

Opening the Ark on Rosh Hashana – Soleymanzadeh Family

Carrying The Torah Yusupov Family for Hal Waldman

Carrying The Second Torah Mizrahi Family for Yosef Kahn and Moses Bibi

Carry the Haftara Case Ely Altarac for Ari Waldman

Rimonim for all the Torah's Lobell Family for Josh

Raise the Torah Hagbah Yusupov Family for Robert Yadgarov

Gelila Wrap the Torah Lobell Family for Danny Lobell

Mashlim with Kaddish said in memory of a loved one \$ 1500 not sold

Haftara with Kaddish said in memory of a loved one \$ 1800 not sold

Parnasa of Rosh Hashana Day – The prayer for financial success \$2600 not sold

Parnasa of Rosh Hashana Mincha – The prayer for financial success Mizrahi Family for Sam Yusupov

Yom Kippur – Selected Honors

Yom Kippur Eve

Open the Ark for Kal Nidre – Mizrahi Family for Meyer Abittan

Sefer Kal Nidre - Azizo Family for Rabbi David Bibi to hold for them

Each of the additional Torahs brought out with Sefer Kal Nidre 4-12 @ \$ 1500 ea

2. The Waldmans for Bobby Mizrahi

3. The Waldmans for Albert Yusupov

All the Rimonim for all the Torahs \$ 1500

Parnasa of evening service –LEON SUTTON

Yom Kippur Day

Opening the Ark on Yom Kippur - Soleymanzadeh Family

Carrying The Torah Yusupov Family for Sam Shetrit

Carrying The Second Torah Bibi Family for Moses Bibi

Carry the Haftara Case Ely Altarac for Ari Waldman

Rimonim for all the Torah's Ernie Davidson

Raise the Torah Hagbah Bibi Family for Albert Yusupov

Gelila Wrap the Torah Lobell Family for Yoni Lobell

Mashlim with Kaddish said in memory of a loved one - Bobby Mizrahi in memory of his dad and of Hindys brother.

Haftara Yom Kippur Day Bibi Family for Rabbi Yosef Colish

Parnasa Yom Kippur 2600 not sold

Yom Kippur Mincha

Opening the Ark Mincha on Yom Kippur - Soleymanzadeh Family for Meyer Abittan

Carrying The Torah Barbara Halio for Shaya

Carry the Haftara Case Mizrahi Family for Moshe Shetrit

Rimonim for the Torah and Haftara Case's Kathy Amiel for Nissim (Barry) Pinto

Raise the Torah Hagbah Lobell Family for Sammy Lobell

Gelila Wrap the Torah Lobell Family for Richard Lobell

Maftir Yona Yusupov Family for Sam Yusupov

Parnasa Yom Kippur Mincha Soleymanzadeh Family

Opening Ark Neila – Mizrahi Family for the tennis gang.

SELECTED CUSTOMS AND TRADITIONS FOR ROSH HASHANAH 5774 - 2013

ERUB TABSHILIN

Our sages instituted Erub Tabshilin as a means to enable us to prepare food on the Friday of the Holiday for Shabbat. This year the holidays are followed immediately by Shabbat and Erub Tabshilin is applicable. On Wednesday afternoon, set aside a piece of bread and cooked food intended for Shabbat (i.e. a hard-boiled egg). Raise it and recite the following:

“Barukh Ata A-nay Elo-kenu Melekh Ha’olam Asher Kideshanu Bemisvotav Vessivanu Al Misvat Erub.”

“In accordance with the Law of Erub, it shall be permissible for us to bake, cook, prepare and do all necessary things for Shabbat during Yom Tob (the holiday).”

Be sure to eat the bread and food by “Seuda Shelishit” on Shabbat.

Candle Lighting

The blessing for candle lighting for both nights of Rosh HaShanah:

“Barukh Ata A-nay Elo-kenu Melekh Haolam Asher Kideshanu Bemisvotav Vessivanu Lehadlik Ner Shel Yom Tob.”

Kiddush

A regular Rosh HaShanah Kiddush is recited on both nights of Rosh HaShanah.

The blessing of *“Shehechyanu”* is recited on both nights.

Seder for Rosh HaShanah Both Nights:

After Kiddush and the blessing on the bread, it is our custom to precede the family meal with special foods chosen symbolically and eaten with appropriate blessings and wishes suggested by their names. Recite the prayer and the blessing before eating the following:

Apple dipped in sugar or honey

May it be Thy will Oh L-rd to grant us a year from the first day to the last, goodly as the apple and sweet as honey.

“Barukh Ata A---nay Elo-kenu Melekh Haolam Boreh Peri Ha’ess.”

Banana (Its mainly to say the Adamah blessing to eliminate a possible need on the other foods)

May it be Thy will...that we never slip on life’s banana peels (David Frieden at our Tuesday night class)

“Barukh Ata A---nay Elo-kenu Melekh Haolam Boreh Peri Ha’adama.”

Leek

May it be Thy will...that all our enemies and those who hate us be eliminated.

Swiss Chard

May it be Thy will...that those who have beaten us or sought harm shall be beaten in the coming year.

Dates

May it be Thy will...that all our enemies and those that hate us be neutralized and non-existent.

Squash, gourd, or pumpkin

May it be Thy will...to consider our good deeds and guard us from enemies that gird at us.

Pomegranate

May it be Thy will...that we will be rich and replete with acts inspired by religion and piety as this pomegranate is rich and replete with seeds.

Frijoles, lubia, or fasoolia beans

May it be Thy will...that we will be rich and replete with acts inspired by religion and piety as these beans are rich and numerous.

Sheep's head, Fish head, cow brains, or the like

(You might try the heads of Swedish fish or a "head" of lettuce for the vegans)

May it be Thy will...that we may go ahead in all we undertake and be the first for good deeds.

OBSERVANCE OF ROSH HASHANAH

Both days of Rosh HaShanah are observed in a similar way to Shabbat with the exception of cooking and carrying. One may not work, write, or sell, buy or ride in a car, but one can cook (transfer fire from an existing flame or pilot to another) and one may carry outside (even without an Erub) keys, talit, baby carriage, etc. One may not strike a match to start a fire even for the purpose of cooking. We suggest the use of the pilot light or a candle left burning from before the holiday. You may use the candles that were lit for the holiday.

Tekiat Shofar:

The Shofar is sounded on both days of Rosh HaShanah this year. The Shofar is sounded during the morning services. Make sure that you arrive on time since the Missva (commandment) of listening to the Shofar is of the utmost importance. Although women are not obligated from the Torah to listen to the sound of the Shofar, generations of women have taken it upon themselves to fulfill this commandment. We call upon all the women to come early enough to be able to participate and fulfill the Missva of Shofar.

Som Gedalyah:

The Fast of Gedalyah begins with the break of dawn **5:13 AM** on **Sunday, September 8, 2013** and ends at **7:36 PM**.

Prayers on the Ten Days of Penitence:

Beginning on Rosh HaShanah, we add certain verses and paragraphs to the prayers relating to the 10 days of Penitence. These prayers are found in every siddur. Do not forget to recite "Shir Hama'alot" before "Yosser". In the Amida recite "Zokhrenu Le'haim", "Me Khamokha", "Hamelekh Hakadosh", "Ukhtob Le'haim Tobim", and "Ubsefer Haim". These additions remain in effect through Yom Kippur.

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Daily Minyan Mon – Thurs at 979 Third Avenue, 17th Floor, Artistic Frame at 4PM – Please join us! 212-289-2100

Editors Notes

It's the last day of Moshe Rabeynu's life. The children of Israel have just heard 98 frightening curses echoing within a valley surrounded by two mountains, detailing the most terrible horrors imaginable. In parting Moses tells them not to worry. All of you are still standing here today. You've made it this far and if you stick to the path you'll continue to stand.

"You are still standing here today" is an oft repeated statement in Jewish history. Each generation, each town, each community when faced with difficult times hears this message from Moses and is granted the confidence to keep going.

The rabbis discuss the use of the term "HaYom" or "Today". It could refer to Adar 7 and the day Moses would leave them. It could allude to every day of our existence. Many though suggest that HaYom refers to the day man was created, to the day of Rosh Hashana. Each Rosh Hashana the spiritual gas tank of mankind runs empty and G-d in his mercy refills the tanks for most of us for another year. We are granted another chance to do what we should. Another chance to say, "I am still standing here today". Rosh Hashana and the days which precede it are set aside for reflection especially on that thought that I am still here.

When Rabbi Abittan z'sl passed away some seven years ago, the responsibility for keeping the Synagogue open and the community fell upon a few of us and we've done our best to fulfill what we believe was his mandate. I vividly recall at the rabbi's sheloshim, his memorial thirty days after his passing being told by a number of prominent members of the greater local community that I should not expect the Synagogue to last more than a year or two and to shut the lights before locking up. But with the rabbi's heavenly merit energizing us from above, each Rosh Hashana we heard the words, "you are still standing here today" and not only were we standing, we were

succeeding in keeping the rabbi's message resonating loud and clear.

On this Rosh Hashana, the words, "you are still standing here today", will echo even louder.

I was reviewing my notes from last year and it seems our greatest worry was the same worry that affected most Jewish organizations; dealing with a lack of funds due to the continuing recession and slow recovery. We figured, we would manage as all the rest.

This year it's different. Now don't get me wrong. In comparison to the tragedies that struck the Jewish people through our history, Sandy must be a minuscule blip. I am sure some reading this may even have to pause and ask for a second, "who is Sandy"? Ten months after the storm Sandy barely registers in the world's memory.

But for those towns struck hardest by the storm, Sandy has left her mark and barely a day goes by without thinking about the havoc she wreaked. The war zone images, the mountains of sand in the streets competing with the mountains of furniture and personal belongings, the abandoned vehicles along with the countless cars that would never start again. The weeks without water, gas or electric and a period where we were communally homeless is not easy to forget. The continuing repairs and the battles with contractors, plumbers, electricians and carpenters who have overstayed their welcome and bring bills which grow daily act as constant reminders. And knowing some of our friends and neighbors cannot yet move back home, while others have had no choice but to move is sad.

When I met with people from UJA recently, they asked me what the single biggest impact Sandy would have on the community. I responded that I felt that within a year or two, at least one Synagogue in each municipal with multiple Synagogues would be forced to shut its doors. Why, they asked.

There are people who have moved from the community; some to Brooklyn or Queens and others to Lakewood or Israel. Less people make it more difficult to get a quorum each day. We see one local Synagogue who cancelled their services for the summer and whose members are praying in other shuls.

The biggest impact is financial. We for example, accepted that our single biggest priority was to get people back into their homes. In Long Beach we

distributed an estimated 1.6 million dollars. No money went to overhead or expenses. No money went to marketing or to paying employees. Everything we took in was funneled right out. And everyone who got help desperately needed help.

With mounting bills and little from insurance, it will be impossible for the Synagogues in zones damaged by Sandy to rely on their membership. And after having begged for help from the greater community for the year, it's very difficult to go back to the same people who gave so generously. Doors will close!

Yet, we have no choice. We need to go back. Many of you may have thought about contributing to Sandy at the time, but didn't. Many of you did contribute and perhaps you can again?

Sandy taught us something. We learned how amazing people can be and how much good they can do. Tragedy creates heroes and Sandy gave us many heroes. But today we need you to become a hero. So if you can, please send us a check to the Sephardic Congregation of Long Beach, c/o Rabbi David Bibi, 979 Third Ave, #1704, NYC, NY 10022 and mark it Sandy Restoration.

We are not asking anyone to pay for a Torah scroll or an ark. We are asking to help us pay for our children's room, our hot water heater, our boiler, our playground, our roof, our air conditioning system. We are asking people to help make sure that next year we can say, "We are standing here today".

I often wondered, if everyone gets their tanks refilled at Rosh Hashana, then why do we bother coming to Synagogue. Why are we admonished with the demad to do: Teshubah, repentance, Tefilah, prayer and Sedakah, charity? I guess the best comparison might be that there are some people who head to the gas station when the fuel light goes on and simply fill up. They do nothing more for their cars than that. Others make sure to get their cars inspected, top off fluids, change the oil, rotate the tires, replace the brake pads and keep their cars in tip top shape. When our cars are brand new, we tend to need little more than gas but as they age without servicing our cars, our cars will soon stop serving us.

We can pass Rosh Hashana and do nothing and most of us will get the tank refilled. But if we want to eliminate the curses of the past, get rid of the baggage and if we want to start over again anew and with blessings, we need to make the effort. And that effort includes charity. Help us out and when we open the ark for the special prayers of Rosh Hashana, we'll

pray for you to have a year of health and happiness, peace and prosperity.

Today can be a new day and a new beginning. Let's stand together. Let's end the year and its curses and begin the year with its blessings.

Shabbat Shalom and Tizku LeShanim Rabot.
David Bibi

Summary of The Weekly Torah Reading:

It's about time we stopped making excuses and took responsibility for who and what we are. It's long overdue. Here we are at the threshold of a new-year and it's all about being honest with ourselves. The degree of our commitment to Torah and Mitzvos will be in direct proportion to how many excuses we make for ourselves in avoiding commitment. The more the excuses, the less the commitment. As Moshe continued his final discourse, he confronted the primary excuses we all use in avoiding commitment and responsibility.

1st Aliya: Moshe presented the entire nation with the basis for our covenant with G-d. Starting with the promise to the forefathers and stretching across 500 years of history, our relationship with G-d had been substantiated through miracle after miracle. Yet, future generations might deny their personal obligation for continuing the relationship and its attendant responsibilities. Therefore, Moshe makes it absolutely clear that each generation is obligated to educate their children and train them to accept the covenant with G-d. No subsequent generation should be able to excuse their responsibilities for Torah and Mitzvos due to ignorance.

The next excuse Moshe confronted was the modernization of Torah. In every generation there are those who see Torah as archaic and outdated. "Only by grafting new ideas and practices to the stale practices of Torah will Judaism continue to exist and flourish." This excuse for changing Torah's eternal truths will result in the destruction of Torah observances, our land, and our people.

2nd and 3rd Aliyot: As history tragically proved, Moshe's warnings would be ignored. Subsequent generations would wonder about the destruction and desolation and, in their search for answers, return to the uncompromised truths and practices of their forefathers. The benefits in doing Teshuva (repentance - returning) will be the fulfillment of all the blessings that G-d had promised.

As a generation of Baalei Teshuva (those who have returned) find their way back, many will be overwhelmed by the seemingly inaccessibility of Torah knowledge. Moshe reassures us that Torah is accessible to all those who truly desire it. Ignorance and a lack of opportunity for learning should never be an excuse.

4th Aliya: Finally, Moshe presented the bottom line. Endowed with free will we must choose properly. In the end, we are responsible for what happens.

Parshas Vayelach was said on the 7th day of Adar, 2488, the last day of Moshe's life. Exactly 120 years earlier the world was graced with the birth of a child who brought redemption to his people and the light of Torah to the world. He became a prophet of unparalleled greatness who led his nation through a miraculous 40-year journey to the edge of the promised land. Trials and tribulations, rebellions and conspiracies, disillusionment and questions were his lot in life. Yet, Moshe never gave up. He nurtured the Jews "like a mother cares for her child". He confronted man and G-d in protecting his charges, and succeeded in bringing the people, both physically and spiritually intact, to the fulfillment of a 500-year old promise. It was time to put his affairs in order, finish his work, and insure an unquestioned transition of leadership to his student Yehoshua.

Moshe emphasized G-d's continued presence and protection, even though, Moshe himself would not be with them any longer. Ever since assuming the leadership of Israel, Moshe had the conflicting job of fostering the nation's dependency upon G-d while de-emphasizing their dependency upon him as a leader and provider. Now, as he prepared his final good-bye, it was clear that by day's end, with his death, the nation would have no other choice but to reassess their dependency on Moshe and direct their attention to G-d. However this was far more complex than it first seemed. True, on the one hand, Moshe's death would be a definitive "cutting of the apron strings," forcing the nation to depend on G-d and not Moshe. However, on the other hand, living by the laws of nature, rather than miracles, would de-emphasize G-d's overt role in all aspects of their lives and present them with the illusion of their own independence.

5th Aliya: By writing the entire text of the Torah, entrusting it into the care of the Kohanim, and explaining the unique mitzvah of Hakhel (gathering), Moshe hoped that the people would retain the perspective of their dependency upon G-d. The Kohanim represented the continued presence of "G-d in the midst of the camp". As teachers and role models, they kept an otherwise dispersed and

decentralized nation focused on their national and individual missions. Once every 7 years, the entire nation was to gather in the Bais Hamikdash in a reenactment of the giving of the Torah. This national expression of devotion would serve as an essential reminder that adherence to the Torah is the reason why the nation occupied and retained the land.

6th and 7th Aliyot: Moshe and Yehoshua were summoned to the Ohel Moed (meeting tent) and told the harsh future of their charges. In spite of all the warnings, the people would sin and lose sight of their dependency upon G-d. They would be punished, and instead of accepting responsibility for the consequences that their neglect of G-d's commandments caused, they would have the chutzpah to blame G-d's absence and neglect for the calamities and disasters that have befallen them. (31:17) It would then be the words of this "Song" (the Torah) which would testify to the reality of their defection from G-d and the inevitable consequences which had been forewarned in this Torah.

Yehoshua was encouraged to be strong and courageous and lead the nation with the same devotion that Moshe had displayed. The Torah, written by Moshe himself, was then placed in the Ark as proof of the conditions by which the Jewish people would live or die.

The 7th and final Haftarah of Consolation is from Yishaya 61:10 - 63:9. Coming before Rosh Hashana, this selection perfectly focuses us on the intended purpose of the High Holy Days. We are dependent upon G-d. He is the source of our protection, well being, and purpose. His constant love and attention is evident in the miracle of our survival and the strength of our limited numbers. Just as the Navi (prophet) prepared the hope allowing us to place tragedy in perspective, we prepare ourselves to acknowledge G-d's providence through prayer and justice.

There will soon come a time when we, as the Chosen People, will embrace the gift of G-d's special attention. At that time the "...nations will see your righteousness and all the kings your glory..." Glory and honor are the byproducts of devotion and commitment. Our responsibility in the coming days is to "...recount G-d's mercies and praises..." Our goal is to acknowledge G-d and for G-d to proclaim "...Surely they are my people... (63:8)

EXCERPTS FROM THE JERSEY SHORE TORAH BULLETIN

"May it be Your will, that You renew for us a good and sweet year." (Special prayer on Rosh Hashanah)

On the first night of Rosh Hashanah it is customary to perform a number of simanim (positive omens) to augment the coming new year. The most important siman of them all, though, is not the edible kind, but rather the siman that comes from within each and every one of us. It is, in fact, the most essential of all! Being pleasant, optimistic, and creating a friendly environment. There should be no sharp or hostile comments during this time period, but only a "sweet as the honey on the table" atmosphere. In that spirit, family members and guests should all wish each other a good, sweet year as is done in shul.

On the night of Rosh Hashanah we dip a piece of apple in the honey (the Syrians use sugar). The berachah of boreh peri ha'ess is recited and we add a prayer of "a good, sweet year." One might think that the entire exercise is performed in order to stress upon us the "sweetness" of the new year. However, we do not make a berachah on the honey at all. Instead, we make the berachah on the apple, and the honey is simply added. Why? Rabbi Yitzchak Sender explains, because the apple is a symbol of life itself, since it comes from a tree, and Torah, our lifeblood, is called "ess hayim," the tree of life. While we may wish for a life filled with sweetness and happiness, the main object of the prayer is life itself! The berachah of boreh peri ha'ess that is recited indicates the main ingredient, the main focus of our prayers. We first petition for life itself, reciting the berachah of ha'ess on the apple, and only then do we beg for the "sugar coating," asking for a shanah tobah umetukah, a good, sweet year. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Reuven Semah

"Assemble the people, the men, and the women, and the little ones." (Debarim 31:12)

Rashi explains that although the little children were clearly not capable of comprehending the experience, they accompanied the adults. Thus, those who brought them would be rewarded. In truth, the children that came along probably disrupted the adults to the point that they could not listen as intently as they would have desired. We may, therefore, wonder at the Torah's insistence that the children be present. Would it not have been preferable for the children to remain at home, in order to enable the adults to properly concentrate on their service to Hashem?

Rabbi N. Adler, z"l, suggests that herein lies the actual reward. The adults were implored to "sacrifice" some of their personal spiritual experiences, so that the children would be availed

the opportunity to see, hear and experience the sublimity of the moment. Torah education takes precedence over parents' personal needs. Many times, we won't bring our children (the ones who don't run around) to shul, because we want to "relax" and not worry about them. Or we will come home from work, wanting to take it easy, while our children have homework and other needs. This is a point well worth remembering. Shabbat Shalom. Rabbi Shmuel Choueka

VENDING MACHINE

The seventh-grader hurtled through the doorway. He dropped his briefcase, threw off his coat, and headed for the kitchen. "Mom, I'm starving! What's for dinner?" he inquired as he opened the refrigerator door, frantically searching for a snack.

"Dinner isn't ready yet, dear," answered his mother. Danny settled for a glass of chocolate milk and a handful of cookies which he quickly gobbled, then went out of the kitchen.

Boys will be boys, and it was not long before Danny's room, the den, and several other areas of the neat house he had entered sported a trail of dropped articles. Homework papers, CDs, pens and markers littered the house.

"Danny, if you want dinner and the delicious dessert I made, you had better start picking up after yourself," warned Danny's mother. Realizing the consequences, he quickly attended to the mess.

Soon after Dinner, Danny's stuff was all over the house again. "Danny, get this place cleaned up, please, and then get yourself showered and up to bed," his loving mother called out. This time, however, his belly full, Danny ignored her instructions and set out for his room to read a couple of magazines and listen to some music. He fell asleep with out heeding his mother's instructions.

Is this a case of good boy turned bad?

Our Sages teach: "A person does not rebel against Hashem except when satisfied" (Berachot 32a). We should feel obligated to behave in a manner that will make our Father in Heaven happy, regardless of the way we feel about His treatment of us. And the obligation is even greater when things are going well! Unfortunately, we all too often treat our Creator like a vending machine – we want to put in a coin and make our selection. If an item we selected doesn't come out of the machine, we begin to bang and kick the device.

When you get what you want, be sure it doesn't break your connection to Hashem. Feel gratitude and a desire to perform to His satisfaction in order to express your thanks to Him. Appreciation only takes a minute, but it will keep you from "kicking" when you should be thanking. (One Minute With Yourself – Rabbi Raymond Beyda)

RABBI ELI MANSOUR
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Teshuba Can't Wait

The Gemara tells that Nahum Ish Gamzu, the legendary Sadik, suffered terribly toward the end of his life. He lost his vision, as well as both arms and legs. His students asked him if he could think of a reason for why he, who lived a life marked by extreme piety, would be subjected to such suffering. He replied that he was once traveling with three donkeys carrying food, and a poor person approached and asked, "Rebbi, Parneseni" – "My Rabbi, feed me." Nahum replied to the pauper, "Wait for me until I get off my donkey." By the time Nahum Ish Gamzu got off his donkey to fetch some food from his cargo on the other donkeys, the poor man died of starvation. For this, he told his students, he was punished with suffering.

This story seems very difficult to understand. While it is true that Hashem is especially strict with the Sadikim, and holds them accountable for even seemingly minor mistakes, in this instance it does not appear that any wrong was committed at all. Nahum did not turn the poor man away. To the contrary, he immediately agreed to give him food and proceeded right away to get some. It is certainly tragic that the poor man did not survive long enough to be rejuvenated, but why should Nahum Ish Gamzu be accountable for this man's dire level of starvation?

Several answers have been offered, but the correct explanation, I believe, is that Nahum told this story to his students as an analogy, as a life lesson that is relevant to each and every one of us, particularly as we enter the season of the Yamim Noraim.

Every person is comprised of both a body and a soul; we have a physical component, as well as a spiritual component. Our bodies, the physical part of our beings, could be described as "wealthy." It is pampered. We eat, drink, sleep, bathe and seek medical treatment. We generally take good care of our body and keep it in tiptop shape. The soul, however, is "poor." Many of us deprive our soul of its nourishment – Torah and Misvot. Although we certainly spend some time learning, praying and involving ourselves in Misvot, we cannot honestly say that we "pamper" our souls the way we pamper our bodies.

Nahum Ish Gamzu was telling not a story about himself, but rather the life story of the vast majority of

people. The poor man, representing the soul, comes to us and begs, "Parneseni" – "Feed me!" It desperately pleads for some spiritual nourishment. Our response, more often than not, is, "Wait for me until I get off the donkey." The donkey, which is a strong, robust animal with hardly any intelligence, is often used as a symbol of physicality, and indeed its Hebrew name, "Hamor," relates to the Hebrew word for physicality ("Homriyut"). We tell the soul, "Wait until we finish with our physical needs." We do not deny that our souls are deprived and need more nourishment, and we have every intention of providing this nourishment, but not now. First we have to get the business on its feet, get our career going, save up for retirement, fix up the house, marry off the children, and so on and so forth. We are sympathetic to the plight of the "poor man," we acknowledge our shortcomings, but we feel we need to put the needs of the soul on hold until we are finished with the needs of the body.

And, as we know, most people never really finish with the needs of the body. The Mishna in Avot thus exhorts, "Do not say, 'When I have time I will learn,' for you might perhaps never have time."

Our Sages teach that whenever we see the word "Ve'ata" – "And now" – in the Torah, it alludes to repentance. This is not just a lesson in Biblical Hebrew; this is a profound lesson about Teshuba – it is all about "now," working to improve ourselves now, in our current situation, and not delaying any further. Nahum's response to the poor man, "Wait for me," might be the greatest weapon the Yeser Ha'ra (evil inclination) has in its arsenal. The more we delay our Teshuba, the less likely we are to actually do it.

This lesson is a vital one to learn at any time, but it is especially relevant to us as we are about to begin the days of judgment. There is no longer any more time to wait. There is no more delaying. Let us feed the "poor person" right now, and do what we can in our present situation to nourish our soul, to raise our level of spirituality, without any further delay.

Rabbi Wein

In matters of faith and religion there always is a struggle between the actualities of life that we physically see and experience and the beliefs that are mostly unable to be seen and proven empirically. To further complicate this matter, one generation's miracle often turns out to be a different generation's science. See Mark Twain's devastating satire of a book "A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court" for an example of this.

Yet religion is basically founded on the unseen and that which cannot be proved. In matters of religion and faith, belief must always outweigh the real world and its rationalities and order. Yet a sense of balance and proportion in this matter of viewing life and the world is central to Jewish thinking and a traditional way of living.

Over-reliance on extreme beliefs, that simply have no real basis in Jewish thought and experience, historically has always led to personal tragedy and national disaster. It is not for naught that Rambam cautioned us against messianic speculations and false messiahs. To the true believer, nothing can shake one's belief no matter how far-fetched and unsupported by facts and tradition it may be.

In the Jewish world there exist today fringe groups which, in perfect and unshakable faith harm us while believing that they are helping us. A little common sense would also stand us in good stead. Religion must perforce rely on the irrational. But the main focus in Judaism is on the rational, real world that we live in.

A smartly dressed handsome young man came into our synagogue last week and after the maariv prayers shouted out his messianic beliefs. This naturally brought about a reaction from some of the congregants present and a great deal of noisy shouting ensued. I wonder how shouting about one's messianic beliefs in a strange and definitely non-messianic centered synagogue can in any way hasten the coming of the messianic era itself.

That thought apparently never crossed the mind of the true believer that initiated this incident. For reality plays no role in the mindset of the misguided few who make so much noise and trouble for everyone else. There is a great brouhaha brewing currently about the erection of a crucifix by local residents of Uman on the site where Jews have come to pray there the past number of years on the High Holy Days.

Why Jews should think that they are welcome in blood-soaked (Jewish blood) Roman Catholic, anti-Semitic Ukraine is to me completely irrational. To desert the Land of Israel, leave wives to fend for themselves over the holidays in order to boost the tourist economy of a very hostile society puzzles me in the extreme. Especially since in pre-World War II Ukraine the overwhelming number of Eastern European Jews, Chasidic and otherwise, never wished to visit Uman and never did. But a new custom, deified by the commercial ventures that it has inspired and created, now stands as a core

matter of belief though it clearly flies in the face of all past and present Jewish realities.

There is an ironic Yiddish joke about a rural synagogue from whose precincts a Cossack stole a shofar on Rosh Hashanah and stood outside the synagogue foyer and attempted to sound it. The Jews in the synagogue were horrified at the thought of a Cossack sounding the shofar on Rosh Hashanah. Someone attempted to calm them by reminding them that their rebbe had assured them that a Cossack is incapable of extracting sound from a shofar. The Jews thought it over for a moment and said: "The rebbe is undoubtedly correct. But what if the Cossack actually does sound the Shofar?!"

There is a prevailing mindset in the fringe groupings of the Charedi community and the extreme Jewish Left that the State of Israel should never have been capable of arising and coming into being. Since it could not have happened it must, now that it is happened, be at best ignored or at worst fought against. The reality of its existence of sixty-five years and of the fact that over six million Jews populate it today is immaterial again to the true believer.

It should not have happened according to these belief systems and therefore it did not happen, all empiric evidence to the contrary notwithstanding. Reality should not be the enemy of faith. Rather it should serve as the basis for a stronger and more encompassing faith in the Torah and the One Who guards Israel.

**Sir Jonathan Sacks
Chief Rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregations
of the Commonwealth**

At the end of his life, having given the Israelites at God's behest 612 commands, Moses is instructed to give them the last; command 613: Now therefore write down for yourselves this song, and teach it to the people of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be my witness within the people of Israel. (Deut. 31: 19)

According to the plain sense of the verse, God is speaking to Moses and Joshua and is referring to the song in the following chapter, "Listen, O heavens, and I will speak; Hear, O earth, the words of My mouth." Oral tradition, however, gave it a different and much wider interpretation, understanding it as a command for every Jew to write – or at least take some part in writing – a Sefer Torah, a scroll of the law:

Said Rabbah: even though our ancestors have left us a scroll of the Torah, it is our religious duty to write

one for ourselves, as it is said: "Now therefore write this song, and teach it to the people of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the people of Israel." (Sanhedrin 21b).

The logic of the interpretation seems to be, first, that the phrase "write down for yourselves" could be construed as referring to every Israelite (Ibn Ezra), not just Moses and Joshua. Secondly, the passage goes on to say (31: 24): "Moses finished writing in the book the words of this law from beginning to end." The Talmud (Nedarim 38a) offers a third reason. The verse goes on to say: "that this song may be My witness within the people" – implying the Torah as a whole, not just the song in chapter 32.

There is something poetic about this being the last of the commands. It is as if God were saying to the Israelites: "It is not enough that you have received the Torah from Moses. You must make it new again in every generation." The covenant was not to grow old. It had to be periodically renewed.

So it is to this day, that Torah scrolls are still written as in ancient times, by hand, on parchment, using a quill – as were the Dead Sea Scrolls two thousand years ago. In a religion almost devoid of sacred objects (icons, relics), the Torah scroll is the nearest Judaism comes to endowing a physical entity with sanctity – and this is an understatement. The Torah is less like an object than a person. In its presence we stand as if it were a king. On Simchat Torah we dance with it as if it were a bride. If one is, God forbid, damaged or destroyed we bury it as if it were a human; we mourn as if we had lost a relative. Judaism is the story of a love affair between a people and a book, the Book of Books.

What though – if we take the command to refer to the whole Torah and not just one chapter – is the significance of the word "song" [shirah]: "Now therefore write down for yourselves this song"? The word shirah appears five times in this passage. It is clearly a key-word. Why? On this, two nineteenth century scholars offered striking explanations. Netziv (R. Naftali Zvi Yehudah Berlin) interprets it to mean that the whole Torah should be read as poetry, not prose (the word shirah in Hebrew means both a song and a poem). To be sure, most of the Torah is written in prose, but it has, argues Netziv, two characteristics of poetry. First, it is allusive rather than explicit. It leaves unsaid more than is said. Secondly, like poetry, it hints at deeper reservoirs of meaning, sometimes by the use of an unusual word or sentence construction. Descriptive prose carries its meaning on the surface. The Torah, like poetry, does not. (Kidmat Davar, preface to Ha'amek Davar, 3).

In this brilliant insight, Netziv anticipates one of the great twentieth century essays on biblical prose, Erich Auerbach's 'Odysseus' Scar'. Auerbach contrasts the narrative style of Genesis with that of Homer. Homer uses dazzlingly detailed descriptions so that each scene is set out pictorially as if bathed in sunlight. By contrast, biblical narrative is spare and understated. In the example Auerbach cites – the story of the binding of Isaac – we do not know what the main characters look like, what they are feeling, what they are wearing, what landscapes they are passing through:

The decisive points of the narrative alone are emphasized, what lies between is non-existent; time and place are undefined and call for interpretation; thoughts and feelings remain unexpressed, are only suggested by the silence and the fragmentary speeches; the whole, permeated with the most unrelieved suspense and directed toward a single goal . . . remains mysterious and "fraught with background".

A completely different aspect is alluded to by R. Yechiel Michal Epstein, author of the halakhic code Arukh ha-Shulchan (Choshen Mishpat, introduction). Epstein points out that the rabbinic literature is full of arguments, about which the sages said: "These and those are the words of the living God." This, says Epstein, is one of the reasons the Torah is called "a song" – because a song becomes more beautiful when scored for many voices interwoven in complex harmonies.

I would suggest a third dimension. The 613th command is not simply about the Torah, but about the duty to make the Torah new in each generation. To make the Torah live anew, it is not enough to hand it on cognitively – as mere history and law. It must speak to us affectively, emotionally.

Judaism is a religion of words, and yet whenever the language of Judaism aspires to the spiritual it breaks into song, as if the words themselves sought escape from the gravitational pull of finite meanings. There is something about melody that intimates a reality beyond our grasp, what William Wordsworth called the "sense sublime / Of something far more deeply interfused / Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns / And the round ocean and the living air." Words are the language of the mind. Music is the language of the soul.

Music is central to the Judaic experience. We do not pray; we davven, meaning we sing the words we direct toward heaven. Nor do we read the Torah;

instead we chant the weekly portion, each word with its own cantillation. Even rabbinical texts are never merely studied; we chant them with the particular sing-song known to all students of Talmud. Each time and text has its specific melodies. The same prayer may be sung to half-a-dozen different tunes depending on whether it is part of the morning, afternoon or evening service, and whether the day is a weekday, a Sabbath, a festival or one of the High Holy Days. There are different cantillations for biblical readings, depending on whether the text comes from the Mosaic books, the prophetic literature, or the Ketuvim, 'the writings.' Music is the map of the Jewish spirit, and each spiritual experience has its own distinctive melodic tonality.

The 613th command – to make the Torah new in every generation – symbolizes the fact that though the Torah was given once, it must be received many times, as each of us, through our study and practice, strives to recapture the pristine voice heard at Mount Sinai. That requires emotion, not just intellect. It means treating Torah not just as words read, but also as a melody sung. The Torah is God's libretto, and we, the Jewish people, are His choir, the performers of His choral symphony. And though, when Jews speak they often argue, when they sing, they sing in harmony, as the Israelites did at the Red Sea, because music is the language of the soul, and at the level of the soul Jews enter the unity of the Divine which transcends the oppositions of lower worlds. The Torah is God's song, and we collectively are its singers.

AS HEARD FROM RABBI AVIGDOR MILLER Z'TL

The main Avoda/Theme of the Judgment Day is focusing on "Hashem Melech", The King. Hashem created the Universe (which was created on Rosh Hashana) & He runs it all. He is the only One that has any power & only He can do anything for us.

On Rosh Hashana we work on gaining clarity on our EMUNAH. The more Emunah you gain, the more you are ready for the Yom Hadeen, because Emunah includes everything. Rambam: "I am Hashem your G-d"(10 Commandments") this is the Mitzvah to gain Awareness & Belief in Hashem. This is most fundamental & supercedes even admitting our sins which we don't do on Rosh Hashana. We have to first think about and do Teshuba for the sin of forgetting that Hakadosh Baruch Hu is in charge of everything, since the lacking of it is the root of our doing sins.

When you go out into the world and you have to make a living and feel you are all alone, know that Hashem remembers people. He remembers Noach (Mussaf Amidah); and so too He remembers the descendants of Noach. This is part of Rosh Hashana, realizing and remembering that He is "Hazan et haolam kulo"/He is sustaining the whole world. That is, your livelihood that you have every day.

The great Purpose in life is to constantly improve, that is something that Hashem is urging us and weighing. "Hashem imparts wisdom to the wise person" (not the jester) because He sees that this wise person will make the best use of this gift. So, we want to improve ourselves to be in this position for the Great Day of Judgment, Yom Hadeen.

"Asher Bara Elokim Laasot", ". "That Hashem created to do". The words 'to do' seem superfluous since it was already stated that "Hashem rested from all of the work that He did". R' Miller explains that the words "to do" come to teach us the great purpose of life is to be a doer, to make something out of ourselves through constant improvement/Teshuba.

Hashem, our Father, Avinu Malkenu, is waiting on Rosh Hashana to hear our commitment to improve. "Bring a Minha offering and come before Hashem" (Hodu) We should come today with some commitment.

We can say, "Hashem, we are going to utilize the coming year to love & fear You. To do everything to serve Hashem. I am going to make something out of myself".

When Hashem hears our commitment for the New Year, He says: "My child, I see that you are committing to improvement, I commit to giving you another year of life and blessing"

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