

Chabad of Venice & North Port

# Shalom Times

FALL 2021 / HIGH HOLIDAYS 5782

A LITTLE NOSH FOR THE SOUL

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MICHAL OSHMAN**

**INTERVIEW WITH  
SIMON JACOBSON**

**COMPLETE GUIDE  
TO HIGH HOLIDAYS**





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**DIRECTORS:**  
Rabbi Sholom & Chaya Rivka Schmerling

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# SHALOM!

Dear Friend,

Enjoy our new "High Holidays Edition" of the Shalom Times.

The Jewish New Year is the perfect time to refocus on our Jewishness and purpose on this planet. The shofar has always been our nation's "Wake Up Call" to action. Studies show, that the lucky few who are actually successful



in completing their New Year's resolutions all have one thing in common; action. Small actions that solidify our big ideas.

We all have big dreams for this year, we all want to live a life full of meaning and blessing, and with small doable mitzvot we can make it happen.

The truth is, no mitzva is small. The root word for mitzva is connection. And even the smallest connection to an Infinite Creator is a pretty big deal.

The Torah is not only our story and laws, but it's also a unique life-force that can transform our lives and the world around us.

Wishing you Happy and Healthy New Year!

*Rabbi Sholom & Chaya Rivka Schmerling*

Directors, Chabad of Venice and North Port

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# EDITOR'S PICK

{art}

## THE FIDDLER

When I first saw *The Fiddler* up close, it was as if I was back in Safed Israel. Looking at the large print, you could almost smell the citrus and hear the singing emanating from wooden sukkah walls. *The Fiddler*, by Toronto-based artist Yehuda Lang, is both vibrant and soothing. Lang has captured a moment that seems plucked from perhaps the annual klezmer festival or a late-night street corner along the stone alleys of the Old City.

*To browse or purchase the art of Yehuda Lang visit [www.yehudalang.com](http://www.yehudalang.com).*

{the cover}

## MARC LUMER



Yeah, about the cover. When it comes to capturing the High Holiday joyous frenzy, the name Marc Lumer comes to mind. The French-born artist has worked as a visual development artist for Warner Bros' *Batman Beyond*, *Superman*, and *Freakazoid*. Lumer, now living in Los Angeles, worked under Jeffrey Katzenberg at Dreamworks in creating *The Road to El Dorado* and *The Prince of Egypt*. I'm sure you'll agree, this High Holiday cover with plenty of apples and honey is his sweetest work yet.

*You can view his work at [www.marclumerdesign.com](http://www.marclumerdesign.com).*

{book}

## AUSTRALIAN ENCOUNTERS



Robert Kremnizer is an Australian lawyer with a specialty in Commercial Law and real estate, but he is most proud that he is a Chasid of the Rebbe. Kremnizer, who now runs a private Mortgage Fund in Sydney, captures his warm relationship with the Rebbe in his latest *Australian Encounters* book. Over two hundred volumes present the Rebbe's ideas and scholarship, but this

slim, easy-to-read volume shows the day-to-day inspiration and the incredible love the Rebbe bestowed upon those who met him.

The book is sure to inspire readers everywhere.

*Available at [www.kehot.com](http://www.kehot.com).*

{mitzvah}

## THE LULAV SHAKE

Here's a mitzvah you can do at home this Sukkot: shake the Four Kinds, known as the *Lulav* and *Etrog*. The already assembled palm branch, citron, myrtle and willow branches are shipped directly to your door. Online instructions walk you through this ancient mitzvah bringing blessings and unity to your home and family.

*Visit [www.MyBoxMitzvah.com](http://www.MyBoxMitzvah.com).* 🍊



# High Holidays at Chabad



Chabad High Holiday Services in Venice are awaited every year for its sense of community and its spiritual energy boost that it gives people all year long. The community loves being together, especially in the High Holiday season. That's the time of year when we all charge up our batteries.

This year, we will provide High Holiday services albeit in a safe way for all. Our goals are to provide you with much-needed inspiration and a sense of connection to the community and to G-d as we begin the New Year.

**Reservations are required this year as services will be capped per size.** As always Chabad will provide traditional and inspirational services in a warm and friendly atmosphere. There is no affiliation necessary and no membership fees or tickets. Hebrew/English Prayer-Books will be provided.

**Holiday Home Kit:** We will be offering a taste of the Holidays with a giveaway Holiday Foods, plus a beautifully printed Holiday Guide of Prayers and Insights that you will be able to use for your own home-bound Holiday Service. Prayer Book: A prayer book set (Machzor), Tallit & Kippot can be provided to you for pick-up or mail delivery.

**Pre-Holiday Classes & Inspiration:** We will be offering classes and DIY training to inspire services at home as well as recording and sending out the High Holiday Sermons before the holiday.

**Yizkor Memorial Booklet:** We are in the midst of compiling the annual Yizkor Booklet. By inscribing your loved ones in the Yizkor Book, we will announce their name as a part of the Keil Malei prayer at each of the four Yizkor services throughout the coming Jewish year of 5782 (2021-22).

To include the name of a loved one, please visit: [www.ChabadofVenice.com/Yizkorbook](http://www.ChabadofVenice.com/Yizkorbook)



## YES! I want to help Chabad blow new life into the New Year!

### High Holiday Donation:

Chabad of Venice offers High Holiday services at no charge to the community.

As always, our services are without charge and participation is voluntary.

In light of the increased costs we appreciate your financial participation.

\_\_\_\$54 \_\_\_\$100 \_\_\_\$180 \_\_\_\$360 \_\_\_\$540 \_\_\_\$1000 \_\_\_\$1800 \_\_\_\$3600 \_\_\_\$5000

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Fall 2021 / High Holidays 5782

# {HIGH HOLIDAY SCHEDULE}

ALL SERVICES WILL BE AT  
CHABAD OF VENICE  
21560 ANGELA LANE, FL 34293

Reservations are required this year as services will be capped per size. Participation in all High Holiday programs is free. Donations are appreciated.

To make reservation go to:  
[www.chabadofvenice.com](http://www.chabadofvenice.com) or call 941.493.2770

## ROSH HASHANAH

**Mon. Sept. 6**

Rosh Hashanah Eve 7:00 pm. Followed by Buffet Oneg

**Tue. Sept. 7**

\* Rosh Hashanah 1st day 10:00 am - 1:30 pm (Oneg)

\* Main Part of Service (1.5 hours) 12:00-1:30 pm  
(includes Torah Reading & Shofar)

\* **Short and Sweet:** Shofar & Tashlich (30 Min) 6 pm

**Wed. Sept. 8**

\* Rosh Hashanah 2nd day 10:00 am-1:30 pm (Oneg)

\* Main Part of Service (1.5 hours) 12:00-1:30 pm

## YOM KIPPUR

**Wed. Sept. 15**

Kol Nidrei 7:00 -8:00 pm

Maariv 8:00-9:00 pm

**Thu. Sept. 16**

Shacharit-Full Service 9:00 am- 2:00 pm

First Yizkor & Sermon 12:00-1:00 pm

Second Yizkor & Sermon 5:30-6:00 pm

Minchah 6:00-7:00 pm

Neilah & Shofar 7:00 pm

Break the Fast (prepacked sandwiches) 8:10 pm

## SUKKOT

**Monday, Sept. 20**

Oneg in the Sukkah 7:00 pm

**Tuesday & Wednesday Sep. 21 & 22**

🌿 Shacharit & Shacking of Lulov 10:00 am

## SHMINI ATZERET & SIMCHAT TORAH

**Monday, Sep. 27 10:00 am, Yizkor 12:00 pm**

Simchat Torah: 7:00 pm

**Tuesday, Sep. 28 Shacharit Simchat Torah: 10:00 am**

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# REFLECTIONS 5781

By Linda Wolfe

What a year it's been!



As we say goodbye to 5781 and begin preparations for the new year, we reflect back on the highlights of the year we shared together. As the pandemic hopefully fades into the past, we slowly exhale its memories with hopes for a healthy, social and joyous new year. **Chabad of Venice** along with guidance from the CDC safely reopened June of 2020. A strange new reality set in; a tent in the parking lot, masks and socially distanced seating. It all felt so unreal, but the need to pray together, see a friendly face, and share individually packed kiddush meals was a much-needed respite from the isolation of the previous months. And although only a handful of people were in attendance at first, programs slowly grew to include other familiar faces not seen for quite a while.

The year began with High Holiday services outside in “Sarah and Abraham’s Tent”, proudly named in honor of our Patriarch and Matriarch. A spacious structure generously financed by contributions from the community, provided a safe place for Shabbat, Sukkot, Hebrew School, Women’s Book Club and Tanya Classes. And for Purim, a reading of the Megillah, complete with outrageous costumes, chowing down on hamantaschen and the ability to drown out the name of Haman with Chabad supplied graggers made Purim a fun and memorable holiday for adults and children. Pesach provided another opportunity for a successful community event. One hundred twenty people shared a unique Seder meal under the stars and under the tent commemorating the night Jews left Egypt.

There was something very uplifting about gathering outdoors in open-air that mirrored the ways our ancestors prayed, lived and shared meals. Somehow feeling the weather, the setting sun, the rain and heat brought us closer to our ancient homeland. It was an unexpected bonus that many experienced. Many of the year’s offerings provided in person and zoom experiences. Regardless of how you joined, resuming Jewish learning offered a sense of belonging much needed during the isolating times of Covid. One of the much-loved events that was in jeopardy of not happening last year, was the “Mega Challah Bake” ... but it did. Challah-making packages were distributed to all who signed up and women through-out Sarasota County joined in by Zoom to share the experience of making Challah, rekindle friendships and make new ones.

Chanukah in the park offered its own set of challenges, but Chabad rose to the task. A socially distanced event, pre-packed foods and while abridged, it did not detract from the celebration of Chanukah. The giant Menorah was lit, songs were sung, people gathered and although it wasn't the usual mega event, it was obvious to all in attendance that it provided a sense of community that was missing through-out the year.

With financial support through the "Stronger Together" grant from the Jewish Federation of Sarasota-Manatee, Chabad was able to provide over 50 weekly Shabbat and holiday meals for those who remained safely at home. And for Pesach, over 500 packages of matzo were delivered by Chabad volunteers. This generous grant allowed the homebound members of our community to share in the Holiday and Shabbat experiences from the safety of their homes.

Two of the most joyous occasions this year was the "Naches" shared by the Schmerling family when two of their children Levi and Yocheved had Bar and Bat Mitzvahs. Levi's was over Thanksgiving weekend under "Abraham and Sarah's tent and Yocheved's in June, the first time back inside Chabad since the pandemic began. And what a perfect re-entering event, with the joy

of watching a daughter grow to a proud Jewish young woman and now we "qvell" as we watch Levi "daven" and take his place by his father's side. Mazel tov Levi and Yocheved!

Shavuot marked another festive day of celebration. After the reading of the ten commandments, the dairy feast began. Blintzes, cheesecakes, all the trimmings for ice cream sundaes, cookies, pies and salads and wine completed the feast. Many new families found their way to Chabad last Shavuot. We heard first-hand accounts from two IDF officers who left California for a new life in North Port. They shared details of life in Israel and the challenges faced by Israelis living under the threat of ongoing attacks every day. As we safely celebrated Shavuot in Venice, there was no way to forget that Israel was under attack that very week. We recited a special prayer offering strength and fortitude to the Jewish people and the land of Israel.

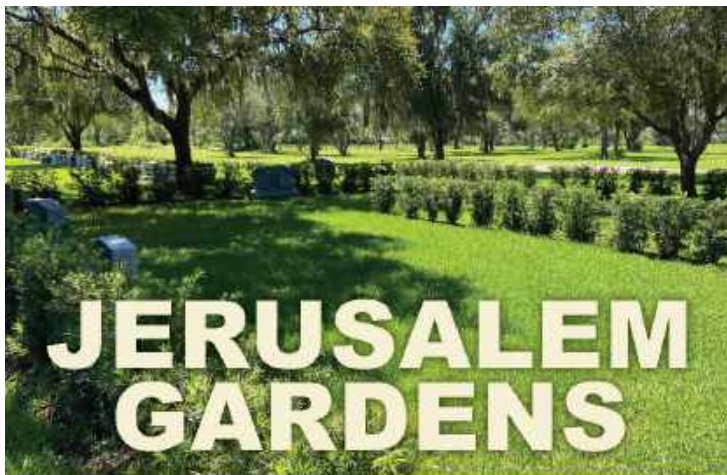
This spring, saw the successful launch of another fun weekly Chabad social event, "Bagels, Lox and Schmooze" was a roaring success with attendees from 31 states and four countries sharing in the exceptional gift of living in paradise and the "Yiddishkeit" that binds us all. It was a unique gathering that helped us remember that no matter what part of the country or world you are from, our Jewish culture and food brings a shared familiarity.

Summer camp, "Gan Israel of Venice" resumed in June with a full schedule of Jewish learning through songs, games, contests and fun activities. Camp is much more than a physical break from the school routine. It helps create a bridge back to "Hebrew School for the Arts" that builds on the core values of Chabad, a deep sense of pride in Jewish heritage and a love for the land of Israel. Hebrew School begins Wednesday, September 1st.

As our community continues to grow and flourish, we welcomed many new families to Chabad this year. And with new homes comes the need for mezuzahs. Last year saw the busiest year to date with over 300 mezuzahs placed in homes of new and long-time residents. If you haven't had the opportunity for a home welcome visit, or a home blessing or the placement of Mezuzahs, please contact Rabbi Sholom to schedule a visit.

We have a vibrant and busy year planned, so if you are new to the area, or been MIA last year because of Covid, we would be thrilled to see you for Shabbat, a social event or a holiday program. Please visit the website for full details on all of Chabad programs or stop in or call any weekday. Rabbi Sholom, Chaya Rivka and staff welcome a chance to meet newcomers or visit with old friends.

Here's to sharing a healthy and happy year together.



We are pleased to announce that Chabad of Venice has acquired its very own Cemetery "Jerusalem Gardens" located at Venice Memorial Gardens, 1950 Center Rd.

We have partnered with Farley Funeral Homes to provide a full Jewish funeral service, including Chevra Kadisha - The Jewish Burial Society.

For Cemetery Burial Spaces & Chevrah call Chabad: (941) 493-2770

For Farley Funeral Home call Venice: (941) 488-2291

North Port: (941) 426-2880

Free Burial Spaces for Veterans



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## 2021–2022 Course Offerings

Four Sunday Mornings, starting Sunday, October 31, 2021, 10:30 AM at Chabad of Venice.

Live in Person  
and Via Zoom



Sign up at: [www.ChabadofVenice.com/JLI](http://www.ChabadofVenice.com/JLI) Led by Rabbi Sholom Schmerling



## Outsmarting Antisemitism

*It's hard to outrun it. It's time to outsmart it.*

OCTOBER 2021

Against the backdrop of a recent uptick in antisemitism and the increased anxiety it has brought to the Jewish community, this course sets out to beat this age-old cancer—with purpose, positivity, and pride. Marshaling historical analysis, Talmudic sources, Jewish mysticism, and contemporary expert analysis, the four lessons of this course provide insight, perspective, practical direction, and personal reassurance to motivate and inspire proud, fearless Jewish life.



## Meditation from Sinai

*Divine spirituality to help you think, feel, and live deeper.*

FEBRUARY 2022

Judaism places great emphasis on action. As a result, many Jews are unaware of another important facet of the Jewish tradition: deeply meaningful teachings about mindfulness, spirituality, and meditative practices. This course advances the uniquely Jewish approaches to these fascinating topics. Whether you've practiced meditation before or not, this course will both inspire and practically guide you so that you can reap the benefits of a more spiritual and mindful life.



## Beyond Right

*The Values That Shape Judaism's Civil Code.*

MAY 2022

Talmudic analysis and mind-bending logic have long been hallmarks of Jewish scholarship. But buried beneath much of the discussion and legalese are core Jewish values that fuel so much of the debate. This course examines a number of key legal issues that disclose fundamental ethical considerations that serve as the engine of Jewish civil law.



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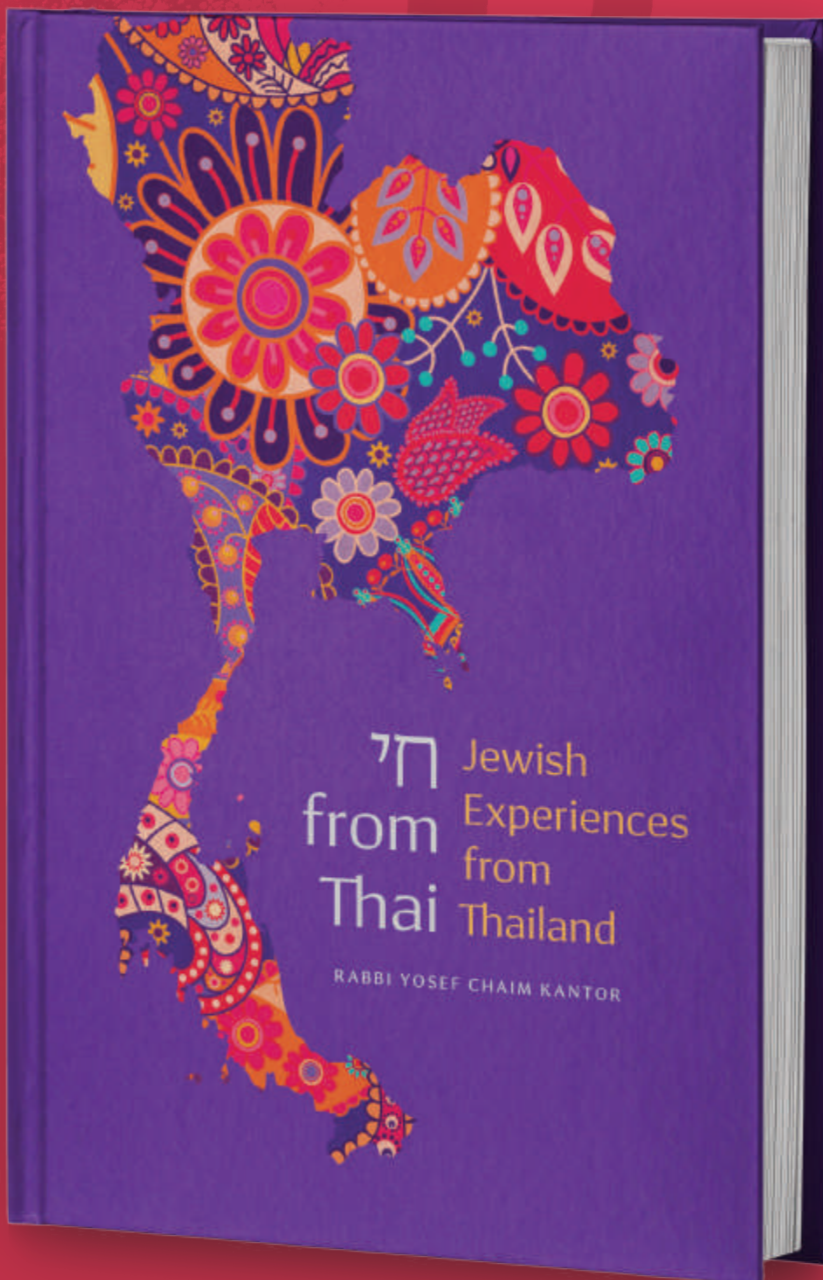
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# EDIBLE PRAYERS

by Ben Sherman

Ben Sherman is a staff writer for Chabad Magazine. He lives with his family in Southern California.

Jewish people see food as edible prayers. Take, for example, the chanukah latka and how it praises the miraculous oil that burned for eight days. Or the delicious three-cornered cookies called hamantaschen and how each mouthful tells miracles tales from the scroll of esther. Jews find meaning and symbols in the food they choose for each holiday and occasion. The jewish new year is when the book of life is open, and we pray to be inscribed for a good and sweet year. The following traditional foods each have an edible prayer packed with jewish flavor and tradition.

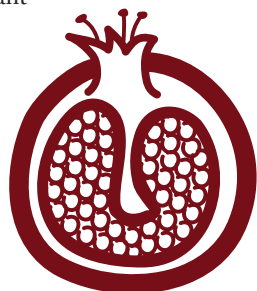
## FOODS FOR ROSH HASHANAH

**Apple and honey** is by far the most popular rosh hashanah dish. The reason for this is in its sweetness. As we pray to activate the divine mercy to grant us a sweet year, we eat a sweet apple with honey. The sages tell us that the sweetness found in apples devolved from divine mercy, so, in a way, by eating apples, we jump-start the processes. The kabbalistic apple orchard is a reference to g-d's compassion, and the tasty dish helps us bring this kindness into our lives.

**Round challah bread with raisins** symbolizing the circle and cycle of the year, the traditional challah bread is baked in round shapes with the added sweetness of raisins or similar. The custom is to dip the challah into honey (instead of salt) on rosh hashanah.

**Head of fish** indicates our heartfelt prayers that we are from the head of the class this year. Fish are a symbol of abundance and the never closing eye. Fish thus represent the abundance of blessings to be enjoyed under heaven's constant protection over his people.

**Pomegranate** is one of the seven kinds that the land of israel is blessed with. The talmud relates that every jew is full of merits as the pomegranate is full of seeds. The pomegranate can thus serve as a reminder that we are all meritorious and should be blessed for a sweet new year.



**Gourds** is a fleshy, typically large fruit with a hard skin, and it's actually mentioned in the talmud as a rosh hashanah food. In hebrew gourds are "k'rah." The word means "readout, proclaim" as in "may our merits be proclaimed." K'rah also means "rip up" as in "may harsh decrees be torn."

**Carrots** are called "merin" in yiddish, which means to multiply. In our efforts to be more productive this year, we eat carrots or merin, in hopes that its name will serve as a symbol of what's to come.

**Beets** are called "selek" in hebrew and have the same hebrew root for siluk, which means removal. During the high holidays, we implore g-d to remove all negative aspects from our lives, and beets serve as the sign for our hopes to get rid of our bad habits and start the year on a positive path.

**Dates** are called "tamri" in hebrew, which means to "end," and we wish our problems to end. The date thus symbolizes our prayers that the pain and suffering end and may we live in peace and prosperity.

**Black-eyed peas.** Some egyptian jews have the tradition of eating black-eyed peas on rosh hashanah. Perhaps, this is because they are called "ruby" in hebrew, related to the hebrew word rov, meaning a lot or many, indicating our desire for many blessings this season.

## FOODS FOR PRE-YOM KIPPUR FEAST

**Kreplach**, the jewish version of dumplings, is made with chopped meat wrapped in dough. The custom is to eat these tasty treats before yom kippur and on the last day of sukkot. The meat represents toughness, and the dough is seen as kindness, so by hiding the tough meat in-kind dough, we spiritually soften the harshness of life and pray for a sweet year.

## SIMCHAT TORAH FOODS

**Stuffed cabbage** is the traditional food for simchat torah. As we dance with a wrapped and closed torah, we celebrate with a covered and closed dish. The rolled stuffed cabbage even looks like a scroll.

# Are you sleepwalking through life?

This is your wake-up call.

By Shira Gold

For me, there is no escaping the daily grind of carpool and laundry. The seemingly endless scribbles on the family calendar include uninspiring tasks, like dentist appointments and oil changes. Recently, while shopping for school supplies, I noticed that I was on autopilot as I checked off erasers and glue sticks from the list. I was sleepwalking through life. I knew that an alarm clock was ringing for me somewhere out there, but I was busy in Target aisles 23a and could not hear it.

Is there someone in your life who exudes joyful tranquility? Have you found people who have come alive and wondered what makes them tick? Research shows that those of us that are purpose-driven are happier, and I am happy. My problem is that my happiness and busyness have caused a sort of spiritual drowsiness in my life. I am a happy and positive person. I'm just not as excited about my Jewishness the way I was in Hebrew school.

I googled it, and what I discovered is that I'm not the first Jew to have this slumberous soul issue. In 1698, many of Eastern Europe's Jews were more than asleep; they were almost unconscious. The pogroms and false messiahs were critical blows to their already harsh economic and political situation. That's when a man named Israel Baal Shem Tov founded Chasidism, and the first item on his new Chasidic movement's to-do list was *Awaken Jews from there "Unconsciousness."*

That's when it all clicked for me. The Jewish dancing, the songs, and the soulful prayers were all signs of life. These people had somehow found inner meaning and excitement that spilled over and infused mundane tasks, like carpool and laundry. I searched Chasidic books to find that sparkplug that could help get my Jewish engine going. I wanted to feel alive.



## So, what are simple things that Jews do to help them maintain their aliveness? Here's what we found:

▶ **OFFER THANKS** Every morning, the first thing a Jew does is recite the *Modeh Ani*. That's a twelve-word meditation of thanks for being alive. So, take a moment each morning to meditate on why you are happy to be alive? What does it mean to have a Divine soul? And if it's so empowering to be alive with a G-dly soul, what will you do with that power today?

▶ **PRAYER AND STUDY** The soul is the source of our aliveness, and it needs maintenance, just like the body. If you want strong muscles, you'll need to do push-ups or lift weights. Similarly, the soul needs Divinity to fuel its power; things like prayer and Torah study are the essential workouts for your soul. Those who pray daily and study the daily Torah portion feel that boost of *soul energy* and feel alive.

▶ **PURPOSEFUL VACATION** Those who regularly disconnect from the daily grind give their soul energy the time and space it needs to grow. The weekly Shabbat celebration allows us to disconnect from work emails and social media and attach ourselves to our purpose and a higher calling. The Shabbat meals become food for our souls and minds. This weekly vacation from the workforce empowers us to re-enter it as spiritual agents on a mission to elevate the world. So, take purposeful weekly Shabbat vacations and see how that impacts your workweek.

▶ **HEAR THE SHOFAR** The shofar of Rosh Hashanah has been the spiritual alarm clock of our nation. The shofar's cry on the Jewish New Year serves as a wake-up call that can keep us spiritually awake all year. The following is a brief overview of the sounds and significance of the shofar.

# The Shofar

The wordless sound that says it all

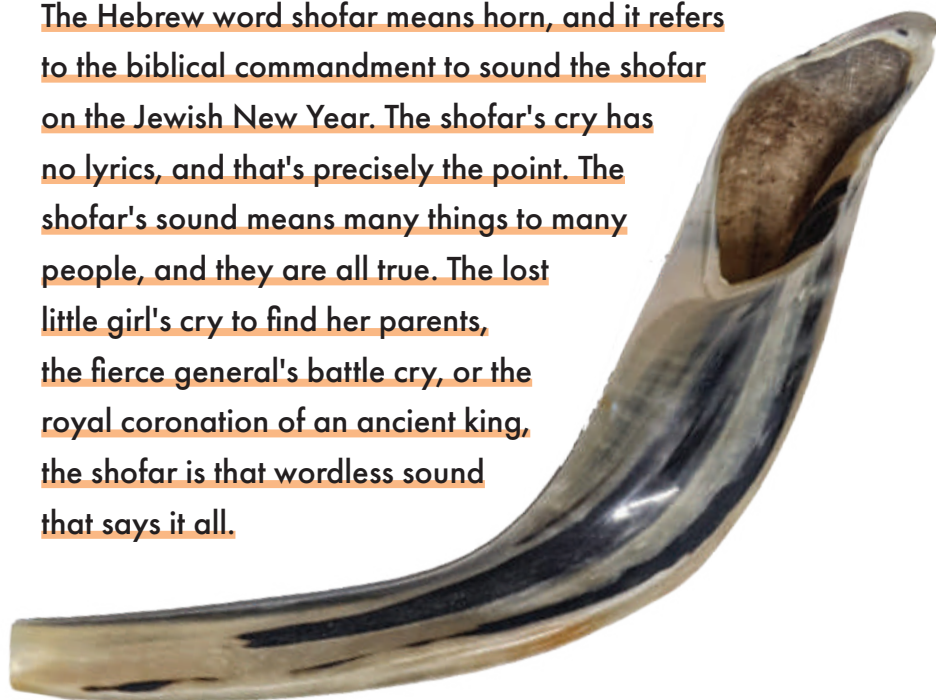
One of the most famous Jewish symbols is the shofar. The Hebrew word shofar means horn, and it refers to the biblical commandment to sound the shofar on the Jewish New Year. The shofar's cry has no lyrics, and that's precisely the point. The shofar's sound means many things to many people, and they are all true. The lost little girl's cry to find her parents, the fierce general's battle cry, or the royal coronation of an ancient king, the shofar is that wordless sound that says it all.

## Shofar's Top 10 Reasons:

*As compiled by the great medieval sage, Rabbi Saadia Gaon (882-942)*

1. The shofar's trumpeting call is used on Rosh Hashanah as we coronate G-d as our King.
2. Its piercing wail serves as a wake-up call to slumbering souls that have grown complacent.
3. It evokes the shofar blasts that were heard when G-d descended on Mount Sinai and gave the Torah.
4. It echoes the cries of the prophets who urged Israel to mend their ways and return to G-d and the Torah.
5. It reminds us of the war cries of our enemies as they broke into the Temple in Jerusalem and destroyed it.
6. Traditionally, we use a ram's horn to recall the binding of Isaac, where G-d showed Abraham a ram to bring as an offering in his stead.
7. Its loud, piercing sound humbles us and fills us with awe before G-d.
8. It foreshadows the day of judgment at the end of days, which the prophet describes as "a day of shofar and alarm against the fortified cities and the high towers."
9. It gives us hope, mirroring the sound of the "great shofar" that will call together the Jewish people from all corners of the earth at the time of the coming of Moshiach.
10. It reminds us of the prophecy that "dwellers of the earth will revive ... the shofar's sound you shall hear."

This year, be sure to hear the shofar at a Chabad center near you.



### THE NAME

The word shofar means horn but can also be translated as shapir, which means improving, shining, or polishing. The name itself encourages us to be the most polished version of ourselves. We may not choose our capabilities, but we can choose to be polished at whatever we can do.



### THE MOUTHPIECE

The shofar blower creates sounds by blowing air into the narrow mouthpiece and pushing it through the horn's gradual expansion towards its final openness. This journey from a tight and narrow spot to wideness and growth is referred to by King David in his book Psalms "From out of distress I called to You, with abounding relief You answered me." The shofar shows us that we discover our powerful inner voice in moments of our narrow distress.



### THE SHAPE

The shofar must be bent and cannot be straight like a clarinet. Seeing this bentness reminds us to bend our hearts towards Heaven and others. The shofar's shape helps us channel our natural self-love to relate and care for others lovingly. The visual of the bent shofar inspires us with both gratitude and service.



### THE SOUND

The shofar's blowing comprises three basic sounds known as tekia, truah, and shevarim. The tekia is a complete long blast, the truah is three shorter blasts, and the shevarim is nine rapid blasts. The tekia is always at the start and end of each shofar blowing. The Rosh Hashanah shofar service includes different combinations of these sounds.

*Shira Gold is a staff writer at Chabad Magazine.*

# Rejoice! IT'S TISHREI



## THE MONTH BEFORE:

During Elul, the month before the High Holidays, we begin practicing blowing the Shofar daily and reciting **Psalm 27** in our daily prayers. The code of Jewish Law encourages people to visit the resting place of a great tzadik to pray to G-d before the High Holidays. Many people today use the online form at [www.OhelChabad.com](http://www.OhelChabad.com) to send their letters for blessings to the resting place of the Rebbe.



It's that time of year when we swap beach bags for tallit bags, and Twitter for the Siddur. The month of Tishrei is full of momentous occasions and meaningful customs and rituals. It's like the free Wi-Fi zone at the airport where you download everything you'll need before you take off into a fresh new year.

## WANT MORE DETAILS?

Check out the complete High Holiday Guide on the previous & next page.

<p>SEPT 12   TISHREI 6</p>	<p>SEPT 13   TISHREI 7</p>	<p>SEPT 7   TISHREI 1 Rosh Hashanah Day 1</p> <p>Hear the <b>Shofar</b></p> <p>Do <b>Tashlich</b> at a body of water</p> <p><b>Light candles</b> after nightfall</p> <p><i>Happy Birthday Adam &amp; Eve. On this day 5781 year ago G-d said: "Let us make man in Our image."</i></p>
<p>SEPT 19   TISHREI 13</p>	<p>SEPT 20   TISHREI 14 Erev Sukkot</p> <p><b>Light candles</b> 18 minutes before sunset.</p> <p>Kidush and all meals in the <b>Sukkah</b>, and dip challah in honey!</p> <p><i>On Sukkot, supernal "guests" grace our Sukkah. These guests are known as Ushpizin.</i></p> <p><i>Tonight's Guest: Abraham</i></p>	<p><b>Did you know?</b></p> <p>The Shofar is made of a ram's horn to recall the Binding of Isaac which also occurred on Rosh Hashanah, in which a ram took Isaac's place as an offering to G-d.</p> <p>We evoke Abraham's merit as we pray for a year of life, health and prosperity.</p>
<p>SEPT 26   TISHREI 20 Chol Hamoed</p> <p>Shake the <b>Lulav and Etrog</b></p> <p>All meals in the <b>Sukkah</b></p> <p><i>Tonight's Guest: David</i></p>	<p>SEPT 27   TISHREI 21 Hoshana Rabba</p> <p>Shake the <b>Lulav and Etrog</b></p> <p>Perform <b>Hoshanot</b></p> <p>All meals in the <b>Sukkah</b></p> <p><b>Light candles</b> 18 minutes before sunset</p> <p>Outside of Israel: Perform <b>Hakafot</b></p>	<p>SEPT 21   TISHREI 15 Sukkot Day 1</p> <p>Shake the <b>Lulav and Etrog</b></p> <p>Kidush and all meals in the <b>Sukkah</b> and dip challah in honey!</p> <p><b>Light candles</b> after nightfall</p> <p><i>Tonight's Guest: Isaac</i></p>
		<p>SEPT 28   TISHREI 22 Shemini Atzeret</p> <p>Perform <b>Hakafot</b></p> <p>Recite <b>Yizkor</b> Memorial Prayer</p> <p>Begin <b>Prayer for Rain</b></p> <p><b>Light candles</b> after nightfall</p> <p>Perform <b>Hakafot</b> and <b>dance</b> with the Torah</p>

## CANDLE LIGHTING BLESSINGS

**1. Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments, and has commanded us to kindle the light of...**

*Bo-ruch a-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ho-olom a-sher ki-de-sha-nu be-mitz-vo-sov ve-tzi-vo-nu le-had-lik ner shel...*

SHABBAT: <i>Sha-bos ko-desh</i>	ROSH HASHANAH ON SHABBAT: <i>Sha-bos v'shel Yom Ha-zi-karon</i>	ROSH HASHANAH: <i>Yom Ha-zi-karon</i>	YOM KIPPUR: <i>Yom Ha-kipurim</i>	FESTIVALS: <i>Yom Tov</i>	FESTIVAL ON SHABBAT: <i>Sha-bos v'shel Yom Tov</i>
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**2. Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and let us reach this time.**


*Bo-ruch a-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ho-olom she-he-che-ya-nu vi-kee-yi-ma-nu vi-hi-gee-an-u liz-man ha-zeh.*


<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SEPT 8   TISHREI 2</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Rosh Hashanah Day 2</i></p> <p>Hear the <b>Shofar</b></p> <p><b>Havdalah</b> after nightfall</p> <p><i>On this day in 1677 BCE our matriarch Sarah passed away after hearing the good news that her husband Abraham had not sacrificed her only son Isaac.</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SEPT 9   TISHREI 3</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SEPT 10   TISHREI 4</p> <p><b>Light candles</b> 18 minutes before sunset.</p> <p>Kidush &amp; dip challah in <b>honey!</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SEPT 11   TISHREI 5</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Shabbat of Return (Shabbat Shuva)</i></p> <p>Torah Portion: <b>Vayelech</b></p> <p>Kidush &amp; dip challah in <b>honey!</b></p> <p><b>Havdalah</b> after sundown</p>
<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SEPT 15   TISHREI 9</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Erev Yom Kippur</i></p> <p><b>Kaparot</b></p> <p>Give extra <b>charity</b>.</p> <p><b>Light candles</b> 18 minutes before sunset.</p> <p><b>Fast</b> begins</p> <p>Remove <b>leather shoes</b></p> <p><b>Kol Nidrei</b> prayer</p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SEPT 16   TISHREI 10</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Yom Kippur</i></p> <p>No <b>eating or drinking</b></p> <p>Sounding of <b>Shofar</b> at conclusion of Neilah</p> <p><b>Havdalah</b> &amp; <b>break-fast</b> after nightfall</p> <p><i>On this day G-d said: "I forgive the Jewish people" (for the sin of the golden calf) and G-d gave Moses the 2nd Tablets).</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SEPT 17   TISHREI 11</p> <p>Start building <b>Sukkah</b>.</p> <p>Don't forget to order your set of <b>the Four Kind</b></p> <p><b>Light candles</b> 18 minutes before sunset.</p> <p>Kidush &amp; dip challah in <b>honey!</b></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SEPT 18   TISHREI 12</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Shabbat</i></p> <p>Torah Portion: <b>Ha'azinu</b></p> <p>Kidush &amp; dip challah in <b>honey!</b></p> <p><b>Havdalah</b> after sundown</p>
<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SEPT 22   TISHREI 16</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sukkot Day 2</i></p> <p>Shake the <b>Lulav and Etrog</b></p> <p>Kidush and all meals in the <b>Sukkah</b> and dip challah in honey!</p> <p><b>Havdalah in the Sukkah</b> after nightfall</p> <p><i>Tonight's Guest: Jacob</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SEPT 23   TISHREI 17</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Chol Hamoed</i></p> <p>Shake the <b>Lulav and Etrog</b></p> <p>All meals in the <b>Sukkah</b></p> <p><i>Tonight's Guest: Moses</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SEPT 24   TISHREI 18</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Chol Hamoed</i></p> <p>Shake the <b>Lulav and Etrog</b></p> <p><b>Light candles</b> 18 minutes before sunset.</p> <p>Kidush &amp; dip challah in <b>honey!</b></p> <p>All meals in the <b>Sukkah</b></p> <p><i>Tonight's Guest: Aaron</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SEPT 25   TISHREI 19</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Chol Hamoed Shabbat</i></p> <p>All meals in the <b>Sukkah</b></p> <p><i>Tonight's Guest: Joseph</i></p>
<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold;">SEPT 29   TISHREI 23</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Simchat Torah</i></p> <p>Perform <b>Hakafot</b> and <b>dance</b> with the Torah</p> <p>Kidush and all meals in the house and dip challah in <b>honey</b></p> <p><b>Havdalah</b> after nightfall</p>	 <p style="text-align: center;">On <i>Simchat Torah</i>, when we conclude the Torah, it is customary for every man to get called up to the Torah, i.e., to receive an <i>aliyah</i>. The children also receive an <i>aliyah</i>! After the final <i>aliyah</i> of the Torah, we immediately <b>begin</b> a new cycle from the beginning of Genesis; this is because as soon as we conclude studying the Torah, G-d's infinite wisdom, on one level, we immediately start again, this time to discover new and loftier interpretations.</p>		

# { complete high holiday guide }


## Rosh Hashanah


 **DEFINITION:** **Rosh Hashanah** (Head of the Year). The Kabbalists teach that basically what your brain is to your body, Rosh Hashanah is to the year. It's the Head of the Year, it's the nerve center of the year. What happens on Rosh Hashanah impacts the entire year.

 **ALSO KNOWN AS:** **Yom Hazi-karon** (Day of Remembrance). This is the name of the holiday used in our prayers, blessing at candle lighting, and in the *Kidush*.


 **BIBLICAL VERSE:** "...Speak to the children of Israel, saying: In the seventh month, on the first of the month, it shall be a Sabbath for you, a remembrance of [Israel through] the Shofar blast a holy occasion." — *Leviticus 23:24*

Rosh Hashanah is the day we proclaim G-d King of the Universe. Each year on Rosh Hashanah, "all inhabitants of the world pass before G-d like a flock of sheep," and it is decreed in the heavenly court "who shall live, and who shall die . . . who shall be impoverished, and who shall be enriched; who shall fall and who shall rise."

 **OBSERVANCE:** Hear the **Shofar**. The Shofar, the ram's horn, which was used to warn people of approaching danger, or to call them to return and regroup, was also used to coronate kings. The Heavenly Shofar was heard at Mount Sinai and the Heavenly Shofar will again be sounded in the future to herald the arrival of the redemption. On Rosh Hashanah make sure to hear the Shofar on both days (unless one day is Shabbat).


 **DO IT YOURSELF:** The Shofar has three sounds: 1) the long blast of **tekiya** 2) the three shorter blasts of **shevarim** and 3) the nine rapid blasts of **teruah**. The length of each of the three sounds should be the same so that the one **tekiya** is the length of the **shevarim** or **teruah**. Of course that's not true of the final **tekiya gedola** (the large **tekiya**) that can go as long as you can hold the note. Do not place the


Shofar in the center of your lips like a trumpet, rather use the right side of your mouth. Practice to blow from your stomach, not your cheeks, so if your cheeks are puffed up right now, you're doing it wrong.

 **CUSTOMARY FOODS:** Eat **apple dipped in honey** on the first night, to symbolize our desire for a sweet year. (See blessing in *Machzor* page 46.) Some have a **head of a fish**, ram, or other kosher animal, to symbolize our desire to be at the "head of the class" this year. **Pomegranates** symbolize our wish for a year full of mitzvot and good deeds as a pomegranate is filled with seeds. Throughout the meal, it is customary to also eat foods whose names in the vernacular allude to blessing and prosperity. For example, many have the custom of eating a carrot dish, because in Yiddish the word for carrots, *meren*, means to multiply.

Eat a **new fruit** on the second night and recite the *Shehecheyanu* blessing. (See *Machzor* page 46)

**TASHLICH:** On the second day of Rosh Hashanah, a special prayer is said near a body of water with fish in it. Water is a symbol of Divine kindness. Fish is a symbol of an ever-open eye, making it the perfect place to pray for Divine mercy. (See *Machzor* page 291.)

 **PRACTICAL:** Find a **High Holiday service** near you, or call the number on the back of this magazine to find out where you can hear the Shofar.


 **BUY:** You must get the book, and I recommend *Kehot's Machzor for Rosh Hashanah –Annotated Edition with English Translation* sold at [www.kehot.com](http://www.kehot.com). You'll have all the prayers and instructions right there in your hands.


You could get yourself a Shofar and learn how to blow it yourself. Visit [www.TheRabbiShop.com](http://www.TheRabbiShop.com) for a full selection of Shofars (lessons not included).


## Yom Kippur


 **DEFINITION:** **Yom Kippur** means "Day of Atonement." Yom Kippur


is the holiest day of the year—the day on which we are closest to G-d and to the quintessence of our own souls.


 **BIBLICAL VERSE:** "...On the tenth of this seventh month, it is a day of atonement, it shall be a holy occasion for you; you shall afflict yourselves..." — *Leviticus 23:27*

 **OBSERVANCE:** 1) Abstain from food and drink. 2) Do not wash your body. 3) Do not anoint your body with creams or lotions. 3) Do not wear leather footwear. 5) Abstain from marital relations.

 **DO IT YOURSELF:** In the early morning hours before Yom Kippur we take a white rooster, or fish, or money and give it to charity in what is called the **Kaparot** ceremony. (See *Kehot's Machzor for Yom Kippur* page 2.)

 **THE DAY BEFORE:** Request and receive **honey cake**. Should you ever need to ask for anything this year, let it be a piece of cake. Eat a festive meal; immerse in a *mikvah*; and give extra charity. In the late afternoon we eat the pre-fast meal. Ask your parents for a blessing, bless your children, and light a memorial candle (if applicable). Girls and women **light candles** 18 minutes before sunset.

 **WHAT TO WEAR:** It is a custom to **wear white** as a sign of purity. Men bring a *tallit* to services Yom Kippur eve, as it's the only evening service that the *tallit* is worn.

 **PRAYERS:** In the course of Yom Kippur we hold five prayer services: 1) **Maariv**, with its solemn *Kol Nidrei* service, on the eve of Yom Kippur; 2) **Shacharit**, the morning prayer, which includes the *Yizkor* memorial service; 3) **Musaf**, which includes a detailed account of the Yom Kippur Temple service; 4) **Mincha**, which includes the reading of the *Book of Jonah*; and 5) **Neilah**, the "closing of the gates" service at sunset.

The closing *Neilah* service climaxes in the resounding single blast of the Shofar, followed by the proclamation, "Next year in Jerusalem." We then perform the *Havdalah* service and Blessing of the New Moon, and partake of a festive after-fast meal, making



the evening after Yom Kippur a *Yom Tov* (festival) in its own right.

## Sukkot

**DEFINITION:** **Sukkot** literally means “Huts.” The Jews enjoyed the protection of the miraculous “clouds of glory” as they traversed the Sinai Desert following the Exodus. That’s something we should not forget. We are commanded to dwell in a **Sukkah**—a hut of temporary construction with a roof covering of branches—for the duration of the Sukkot festival (on the Jewish calendar *Tishrei* 15-21).

**ALSO KNOWN AS:** **Z’man Simchateinu** (The Time of Rejoicing). All Jewish holidays are a joyous occasion, however, Sukkot is the only holiday called “The Time of your Rejoicing.” The nightly evening-to-dawn festivities held in the Holy Temple in preparation for the drawing of water for use in the festival service, was considered an unparalleled joyous occasion.

**BIBLICAL VERSE:** “For a seven day period you shall live in booths. Every resident among the Israelites shall live in booths, in order that your [ensuing] generations should know that I had the children of Israel live in booths when I took them out of the land of Egypt. I am the L-rd, your G-d. —*Leviticus 23:42-43*

**OBSERVANCE:** Eat all your meals in the Sukkah hut, and otherwise regard it as your home.

Take the Four Kinds: a) an **Etrog** (citron), b) a **Lulav** (palm frond), c) three **Haddassim** (myrtle twigs), and d) two **Aravot** (willow twigs). On each day of the festival (besides Shabbat), we recite a blessing over them, bringing them together in our hands as we wave them in all six directions: right, left, forward, up, down and backward. Taking the Four Kinds are also known as “**Shaking the Lulav.**” For complete directions and instructions visit [www.JewishNewYear.com](http://www.JewishNewYear.com).

**BUY:** Get your very own *Lulav* and *Etrog* set, and have it shipped to your door. Prices start at only \$45 at [www.TheRabbiShop.com](http://www.TheRabbiShop.com).

**DO IT YOURSELF:** If you’re handy, try building your own Sukkah. I not,

you can just buy a pop-up Sukkah, so visit [www.TheRabbiShop.com](http://www.TheRabbiShop.com) and search keyword “Sukkah.”

**DEFINITION:** **Chol Hamoed** (literally, “the weekday of the holiday”) refers to the “intermediate period” of the festivals (*Tishrei* 17-20). We eat in the Sukkah, shake the *Lulav*, drink wine and rejoice, and but work is permitted.

**DEFINITION:** **Hoshana Rabbah** Great Salvation (*Tishrei* 21) is the seventh day of Sukkot, and it closes the period of Divine judgment that begun on Rosh Hashanah. On this day we encircle the *Bimah* (synagogue reading table) seven times, while holding the Four Kinds. It’s also traditional to take a bundle of five willow branches and beat them against the ground five times. (See *Kehot’s Siddur—Annotated Edition* page 368 for complete instructions).

## Shemini Atzeret

**DEFINITION:** **Shemini Atzeret**, literally The Eighth (Day) of Restriction (*Tishrei* 22-23), is a biblical festival that comes right after the seven days of Sukkot, which is how it got its name, “The Eighth Day.”

**BIBLICAL VERSE:** “[For] a seven day period, you shall bring a fire offering to the L-rd. On the eighth day, it shall be a holy occasion for you, and you shall bring a fire offering to the L-rd. It is a [day of] restriction. You shall not perform any work of labor.”—*Leviticus 23:36*

[G-d says to Israel,] “I have detained you [to remain] with Me.” This is analogous to a king who invited his sons to feast with him for a certain number of days. When the time came for them to leave, he said: “My sons! Your separation from me is so difficult, please, stay with me just one more day!”

**JOY:** This holiday is characterized by utterly **unbridled joy**, which surpasses even the joy of Sukkot.

**ISRAEL VS. DIASPORA:** In the Diaspora, *Shemini Atzeret* is a two-day holiday. The second day is known as *Simchat Torah*. In Israel, *Shemini Atzeret* is a one-day holiday (which includes *Simchat Torah*).

**OBSERVANCE:** *Shemini Atzeret* is

observed as a biblical holiday, with candle lighting 18 minutes before sundown, and a **festive meal** that begins with *Kidush* over wine. *Shemini Atzeret* evening service features the seven **Hakafot** and dancing with the Torah, similar to *Simchat Torah*. The morning service features the annual Prayer for Rain, as we officially start the rainy season in ritual prayer. The **Yizkor** memorial service is observed (if applicable) after the Torah reading. It’s not Sukkot, so no need for shaking the *Lulav*, but many have the custom to still eat and drink in the Sukkah without making the special blessing upon the Sukkah.

**CUSTOM:** Sometime before sundown, it is customary to go into the Sukkah, have a bite to eat, and “bid farewell” to its holy shade. As the sun sets and *Simchat Torah* begins, we no longer use the Sukkah. All eating and drinking returns to our homes.

## Simchat Torah

**DEFINITION:** **Simchat Torah** means the “The Joy of the Torah.” It is the most joyous occasion, as we celebrate our Divine inheritance and our intrinsic inner connection to the Torah.

**OBSERVANCE:** *Simchat Torah* features the **Hakafot**, held on both the eve and the morning of *Simchat Torah*. This is when we march and **dance with the Torah** scrolls seven times around the reading table in the synagogue. We won’t be celebrating by studying the Torah, rather, we will be dancing with the Torah while it is closed, showing that the joy is from our inner connection to the Torah.

**CUSTOM:** Children dance with *Simchat Torah* **flags**. The custom is to eat stuffed cabbage on *Shemini Atzeret* and *Simchat Torah*.

**BUY:** Find the perfect *Simchat Torah* dancing partner on [www.TheRabbiShop.com](http://www.TheRabbiShop.com) and choose from plush Torah scrolls to decorative *Simchat Torah* flags. 🍅



Words Rabbi Shmuel Marcus • Artwork by Annita Soble

# KOSHER

## Life's Most Important Ingredient

If you're considering going kosher, **this is your sign.**

Garlic stuffed olives. Pam Cooking Spray. Diet Peach Snapple. When Moses introduced kosher to the Jewish people, no one could have imagined that in the future, people would be eating sliced tomatoes that were grown, packed, canned, and shipped from across the globe. Yet, with the modern industrialization of our food supply, products like Jell-O Pudding and Hunt's appeared on store shelves worldwide, and the Jewish nation collectively wondered, "Is it kosher?"

Almost one hundred years ago, a New York food chemist named Abraham Goldstein was one of the pioneers of kosher certification, with his fledgling agency, Organized Kashrut Laboratories (OK Labs). Yes, that little OK symbol would certify that all the ingredients and processes were kosher. Moses himself would be happy to know that together with the world's first supermarkets came the first kosher certification agencies.

Over the years, Rabbi Berel Levy OB" M and his son Rabbi Don Yoel Levy OB" M expanded the OK globally with the highest adherence to Jewish law and a solid grounding in food chemistry. Soon, iconic products such as Snapple and Domino Sugar proudly displayed the OK kosher symbol.




The OK brought kosher into the 21<sup>st</sup> century by harnessing the power of technology and creating a comprehensive database

of kosher food products that are considered the most advanced of their kind. Today, OK Kosher Certification prides itself on a global team of rabbis that maintains the highest level of kashrut.

In our conversation with Rabbi Sholom Kesselman, director of the West Coast Food Service Division of the OK, it quickly becomes apparent that kosher is a unique mitzvah. "Kosher, like Shabbat, is associated with the core identity of the Jew," says Kesselman. "The laws of kosher bring a Divine holiness into our homes and daily lives, unlike any other mitzvah."

Kesselman wants our readers to know that it's much easier to keep kosher today than when he was a kid. "I would estimate that almost half the items at your local grocer are kosher. If you make a cost-benefit analysis," says Kesselman, "you'll see that the blessings and holiness that kosher brings to you and your family outweigh any extra cost."

### UNDERSTANDING SOME OF THE SIGNS

-  means kosher and parve
-  means kosher and kosher for Passover
-  means kosher, but contains dairy

For more information on the world of kosher visits [ok.org](http://ok.org)



# MEET MICHAL OSHMAN, THE HEAD OF COMPANY CULTURE AT TIKTOK

**ON HER FIRST DAY AT FACEBOOK, MICHAL SAW A SIGN, A LITERAL SIGN POSTED ON THE OFFICE WALL, THAT READ, "WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WEREN'T AFRAID?" THAT SIGN SPOKE TO HER PERSONALLY BECAUSE ALTHOUGH MICHAL'S SUCCESS LED HER TO BE RESPONSIBLE FOR INTERNATIONAL LEADERSHIP AT FACEBOOK, SHE WAS SECRETLY TERRIFIED.**

"I KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO BE LOST, TO FEEL DEPRESSED. AND I KNOW WHAT IT FEELS LIKE TO FEEL SHAMEFUL OF ALL OF THAT BECAUSE, ON THE SURFACE, EVERYTHING LOOKS FINE," SAYS MICHAL.

AS A CHILD, MICHAL SUFFERED FROM EXTREME ANXIETY AND SHAME.

SHE GREW UP IN ISRAEL AND SERVED AS AN OFFICER IN THE IDF, RECEIVED DEGREES IN PSYCHODYNAMIC AND SYSTEMIC THINKING, SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY. STILL, HER TERRIBLE ANXIETY REMAINED JUST BELOW THE SURFACE. MICHAL'S COURAGEOUS JOURNEY FROM THERAPIST TO THERAPIST EVENTUALLY LED HER TO DISCOVER JEWISH WISDOM AND CHABAD PHILOSOPHY. AND THAT'S WHERE SHE FOUND SOME ANSWERS.

THE IDEAS SHE FOUND COME TO LIFE IN HER NEW BOOK, *WHAT WOULD YOU DO IF YOU WEREN'T AFRAID? DISCOVER A LIFE FILLED WITH JEWISH PURPOSE AND JOY THROUGH THE SECRETS OF JEWISH WISDOM.*

MICHAL SHARES MANY OF HER PERSONAL EXPERIENCES, INCLUDING HER COMPLICATED RELATIONSHIP WITH HER MOTHER AND HER DEVASTATING BREAK-UP WITH A MAN SHE THOUGHT, WAS "THE ONE." IN A VERY DOWN-TO-EARTH WAY, SHE THEN REVEALS HOW SHE HAS COME TO UNDERSTAND THE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FROM THESE EPISODES.

MICHAL HAS ABSORBED THE CHABAD TEACHING THAT, FAR FROM BEING PERFECT, LIFE IS FULL OF STRUGGLE, AND THAT IS OKAY; IMPERFECTION IS A POSITIVE TOOL FOR GROWTH. BUT THE ISRAELI-BORN AUTHOR, WHO NOW LIVES IN LONDON, WANTS YOU TO STEP OUTSIDE YOUR COMFORT ZONE AND DISCOVER YOUR POTENTIAL. IN HER BOOK, MICHAL REMINDS US ALL THAT "IF YOU CHANGE NOTHING, NOTHING WILL CHANGE."



# STRANGE THOUGHTS

BY MICHAL OSHMAN

The year I first reconnected with my Jewish faith, I dug deep into my soul during those weeks of preparation before Yom Kippur. I followed the brilliant *60 Days: A Spiritual Guide to the High Holidays*, a book written by Simon Jacobson, that includes daily practices and reflections. I asked my friends and family for forgiveness for any hurtful things I had said or done to them that year, and I planned to arrive at the holiest of days ready to become the best version of myself. I even travelled to Israel with my family, wanting to experience this special holy day with my parents and sister, in my childhood synagogue.

When Yom Kippur arrived, I headed to synagogue with my husband and parents and embarked on twenty-five hours of fasting, praying, and focusing on internal commitment for change. But as I entered the prayer hall and positioned myself on my chair, ready to dive into my prayers, my eyes landed on a woman I knew. She was an old friend from high school, always popular, always top of the class—someone who had long been my “idol.”

Over the years, I’d continued to hear about her talents, successes, and achievements. She remained a woman who repre-

sented “perfection” to me, a woman to admire and also, if I am honest, a woman to envy.

Although I was supposed to be praying, I found myself secretly watching her. My eyes followed her movements. I strained to overhear the conversations she quietly had with a few women. I observed how she gracefully waved to her husband who sat a few rows away from her. I scanned her clothes, her body. I watched how she held herself, how she acted. When one of her children approached her, asking a million questions, she replied patiently and calmed him down in no time. She seemed to hold herself in an effortless way, looking so comfortable in her own skin, sure and confident in every move. She was pretty, too, in an effortless manner. She had it all.

Then I caught myself.

What am I doing? I thought. This day is about asking for forgiveness from my family, my friends, and G-d and starting afresh, trying to become a kinder, better version of myself, and here I am feeling jealous of this woman who I have hardly spoken to in years. What is wrong with me? Why do I even care? Why am I obsessively thinking about her? Now? On today of all days?

I hated myself for having these thoughts but the more I wanted to be rid of them, the more I obsessed over them. I assumed

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**I HATED MYSELF FOR HAVING THESE THOUGHTS BUT THE MORE I WANTED TO BE RID OF THEM, THE MORE I OBSESSED OVER THEM. I ASSUMED THEY STEMMED FROM MY OWN INSECURITIES, FROM MY OWN NEGATIVE THOUGHTS ABOUT MYSELF, FROM MY FEAR OF NOT BEING ENOUGH. IT FRUSTRATED ME THAT I COULDN'T JUST BE HAPPY WITH MY LOT. WHY DID I STILL HAVE THESE DESTRUCTIVE THOUGHTS? WHY DID I HAVE TO ALWAYS CRAVE MORE?**

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they stemmed from my own insecurities, from my own negative thoughts about myself, from my fear of not being enough. It frustrated me that I couldn't just be happy with my lot. Why did I still have these destructive thoughts? Why did I have to always crave more?

I was very miserable on that Yom Kippur. I felt like such a failure. I was actively trying to grow as a person and there I was, thinking petty, jealous thoughts—on Yom Kippur of all days! I now know that I was too harsh on myself and that these types of thoughts are common, particularly at solemn moments. In fact, I have since learned that the Baal Shem Tov himself talked about this phenomenon of “strange thoughts” that surface when you are trying to concentrate.

Do you know that feeling when, during prayer or meditation, or when you are trying to fall asleep, just as you find quiet and inner peace, some of the most negative and disruptive thoughts bubble up uninvited? Well, there is a reason why this happens, and it gives us an insight into how the soul works.

The reason these thoughts arise is because the soul wants to help us self-correct. It wants us to repair our negative thoughts, so it brings them to the surface at quiet, reflective moments when we are sure to notice them. The Baal Shem Tov taught that these negative thoughts should not make us feel ashamed or embarrassed, but rather should be looked upon as an opportunity for self-observation and self-correction. Our soul is showing us exactly what we need to work on.

The jealousy I felt is an example of internal brokenness, of those “strange thoughts.” When I acknowledged these thoughts on Yom Kippur, I felt broken, imperfect. But when I later encountered the saying, “There is nothing more complete than a broken heart,” I immediately sensed its deep wisdom. My soul wanted me to see where I was broken so I could fix it. There is endless potential for growth everywhere. Even the broken shards, even the most uncomfortable thoughts, even the brokenness of my own imperfection can eventually be transformed into something good.

This take on imperfection is a central theme of Chasidut. Im-



perfection is welcomed, even valued, as a positive tool for growth. In Jewish thought, the two opposing forces inside us are known as the yetzer tov, the good inclination, and the yetzer hara, the bad inclination.

The perpetual conflict between the yetzer tov as it encourages us to be kind and thoughtful, and the yetzer hara, urging us to be selfish or to hurt other people, can make us feel like we are broken inside. But actually, the struggle is what we are designed for: to learn, to self-correct, to grow. What feels like brokenness is what makes us human.

When we feel the evil inclination, we need to know that this is not our only voice. Yes, there are two opposing forces inside us but the choice is always ours—how we think, speak, and act—and that is what makes all the difference.

Acknowledging my jealousy on that Yom Kippur was an important journey of growth for me. Without that initial struggle, how would I have learned? Embracing those times when the yetzer hara got the better of the yetzer tov not only allowed me to accept myself, it allowed me to grow. When we look at our struggling, conflicted inclinations—really honestly and truthfully—we put ourselves in the best position to grow. The key is to never stop believing that we can improve.

*Excerpted from What Would You Do If You Weren't Afraid? reprinted by permission of DK, a division of Penguin Random House LLC. Copyright © 2021 Michal Oshman.*



# UNPRECEDENTED FAITH

A CANDID CONVERSATION WITH RABBI SIMON JACOBSON  
ON FINDING FAITH IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES

We all struggle to find answers to some of life's most difficult questions. The global pandemic has forced many of us to talk about spiritual issues in a way that we haven't done before. So our editors sat down for a meaningful chat about faith with Rabbi Simon Jacobson.

The first thing you notice when you enter the Jacobson's Brooklyn home, is the books. It's practically wall-to-wall of well-worn and overly used Hebrew books that seem to range from Talmud to Kabbalah and everything in between.

Rabbi Jacobson has become the go-to guy when it comes to life's most challenging questions because of his unique relationship with the Lubavitcher Rebbe. Starting in the late '70s, Rabbi Jacobson would head the team of scholars that memorized and transcribed

the Rebbe's Shabbat talks, as writing or recording are not permitted on the Shabbat. In that position, Rabbi Jacobson was privy to work in close association with the Rebbe and publish many of the Rebbe's talks. Years later, Rabbi Jacobson distilled many of the Rebbe's insights into a veritable spiritual road map that has become the best-selling book *Toward a Meaningful Life, The Wisdom of the Rebbe Menachem Mendel Schneerson*.

Still today, Rabbi Jacobson heads The Meaningful Life Center, where he bridges the secular and the spiritual through a wide variety of live and online programming.

**Magazine: Thank you for taking the time to speak with us. The world is going through unprecedented difficulties and challenges. What would you say to someone who is struggling with faith right now?**

The word "faith" is often misunderstood. Some see it as weak or anti-rational, and many mistakenly think that faith is a passive acceptance of whatever life — or G-d — throws at you. As such, faith and struggle would seem to be antithetical, but they are not.

**Are you saying we can both struggle with our faith and also remain faithful?**

Yes. The truth is that faith is active and proactive, and it, therefore, goes hand in hand with struggle. The very nature of faith is a dialogue or even an "argument" with G-d: Expecting and respectfully demanding that G-d lives up to all His goodness and promises. If you are struggling with faith, that is a good sign that you are grappling with the highest truths of life: How can a good G-d allow human suffering?

Faith is one of our most powerful tools and assets. It draws from the deepest resources and reservoirs of our spirits, empowering us to go beyond the "norm." Faith is not the absence of reason but a force that goes above and beyond the limits of reason. It allows us to hope even when things don't look so hopeful. It enables us to dream even when logic may be skeptical. It prods us to aspire to the most incredible heights even when naysayers are negative. It allows us to achieve the impossible even when most people feel that it may not be possible.

**How can we find or access that "reservoir of our spirit?"**

We are all born with faith. It is neither acquired nor taught; it is our most natural state. A young child, for instance, has genuine faith. The problem is that as we grow older, we accept less and less at face value.

Our pure faith becomes obscured by reason, and after years of enduring hypocrisy and being lied to, you learn to distrust your own inner beliefs. As adults, experiencing our inner faith requires fuel — information about G-d and ourselves. We need to cultivate our faith through study and prayer and actualize it through good deeds and charity. I would suggest that people should talk about their faith with family and friends. In this climate of spiritual darkness, we all have the ability and responsibility to let our inherent faith shine forth and then integrate it into our daily lives.

**Does it worry you that so many people and I seem to struggle with finding their faith at this most challenging time?**

I believe that your faith is much closer to the surface than you imagine. If you struggle with faith in these challenging times, remember that you need faith now more than ever. The faith in a higher good — one that we may not immediately see — and the faith in yourself and others that you can get through any obstacle. Faith teaches us that even when we don't know the answers to many big questions, we firmly believe that we can forge ahead and come out stronger than ever. Faith teaches us to ask not why bad things happen but what we can do about them.



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Chabad Center For Jewish Life

## “IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME”

By Linda Wolfe

In 1989 Kevin Costner heard these iconic words in his blockbuster film, “Field of Dreams”. Many thought his decision to follow the voice was foolish, but he did build, and they did come... by the carloads, and truckloads to a newly constructed baseball field, in the middle of a remote Iowa farm surrounded by miles and miles of corn fields. And now 43 years later they continue to visit the location of the movie set itself.

Rabbi Sholom and Chaya Rivka came to Venice 16 years ago, young and eager to build something that did not exist and not knowing if they would come. Many thought Venice and North Port didn’t have not enough of a Jewish community to warrant a Chabad. But they did come and continue to come, a community of Jews from every walk Jewish life found their way to Chabad of Venice and North Port.

From a Shul in the Rabbi and Chaya Rivka’s home with only two families, to a small storefront synagogue in North Port, to our 3,600 sq ft education building on our 4 ½ acre campus on Jacaranda Blvd, one only needs to attend high-holiday services, weekly Shabbat services or Sukkot and Shavuot celebrations to see the overwhelming growth our Chabad has seen.

We have outgrown our space three times now. But luckily, Chabad of Venice and North Port has our own “Field of Dreams” in the planning stage.

A new 12,000-foot Chabad “Center for Jewish Life” will soon become a reality, but only with the financial support of the community. Currently the dream exists only in an architect’s rendering on a billboard just outside the entrance. The next time you visit Chabad, take a moment to reflect upon the significance of the plans we have and how far we have come.



FLOOR PLAN - C

Rabbi Sholom and the building committee recently met the architect and his team to begin the next phase of making the dream a reality; finalizing drawings, determining space allocation and the creation of budgets and timelines were discussed and initial approvals were given. This project is a huge commitment and will take the entire community to reach our goal.

The completion of the new Shul is only part of the plan. How exciting to dream we could one day have a Jewish Day School, a pre-school, a holocaust memorial, a mikvah and even a Kosher Deli with great corned beef and pastrami sandwiches that rivals what NY offers.

And we can’t forget a social hall for weddings, Bar and Bat Mitzvahs, anniversary celebrations and Chabad sponsored dinners, galas and events completes the realization of a planned thriving Jewish community right here in our own backyard!

As we begin our fundraising efforts and capitol financial campaign, please remember this is our community and will need your financial support to realize this dream.

We wait for the groundbreaking event that marks the success of the capitol campaign and the ribbon cutting celebration that marks the opening of “The Center for Jewish Life” and the fulfillment of a dream Rabbi and Chaya Rivka had 16 years ago when they embarked on this journey.

The Jewish people are the largest family in the world with a shared heartbeat and soul. The completion of the new “Center for Jewish Life” and the growth and success of our future rests within all of us. Won’t you please help the dream come true?





# STUFFED CABBAGE

*Recipe courtesy of Ina Garten*

## LEVEL

Easy / Total: 1 hr 20 min / Prep: 20 min / Cook: 1 hr / Yield: 6 servings

## INGREDIENTS

- 3 tablespoons good olive oil
- 1 1/2 cups chopped yellow onions (2 onions)
- 2 (28-ounce) cans crushed tomatoes and their juice
- 1/4 cup red wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup light brown sugar, lightly packed
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 3/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 large head Savoy or green cabbage, including outer leaves

## FOR THE FILLING

- 2 1/2 pounds ground beef
- 3 extra-large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1/2 cup finely chopped yellow onions
- 1/2 cup uncooked white rice
- 1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme leaves
- 1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

1. For the sauce, heat the olive oil in a large saucepan, add the onions, and cook over medium-low heat for 8 minutes, until the onions are translucent. Add the tomatoes, vinegar, brown sugar, raisins, salt, and pepper. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer uncovered for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Set aside.
2. Meanwhile, bring a large pot of water to a boil.
3. Remove the entire core of the cabbage with a paring knife. Immerse the head of cabbage in the boiling water for a few minutes, peeling off each leaf with tongs as soon as it's flexible. Set the leaves aside. Depending on the size of each leaf, you will need at least 14 leaves.
4. For the filling, in a large bowl, combine the ground chuck, eggs, onion, breadcrumbs, rice, thyme, salt, and pepper. Add 1 cup of the sauce to the meat mixture and mix lightly with a fork.
5. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F.
6. To assemble, place 1 cup of the sauce in the bottom of a large Dutch oven. Remove the hard triangular rib from the base of each cabbage leaf with a small paring knife. Place 1/3 to 1/2 cup of filling in an oval shape near the rib edge of each leaf and roll up toward the outer edge, tucking the sides in as you roll. Place half the cabbage rolls, seam sides down, over the sauce. Add more sauce and more cabbage rolls alternately until you've placed all the cabbage rolls in the pot. Pour the remaining sauce over the cabbage rolls. Cover the dish tightly with the lid and bake for 1 hour or until the meat is cooked and the rice is tender. Serve hot.

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*Shana Tova!*

*May you and your loved  
ones be inscribed for a happy,  
healthy, sweet new year.*



**For High Holiday info and schedules, please visit  
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