

High Holidays 2022

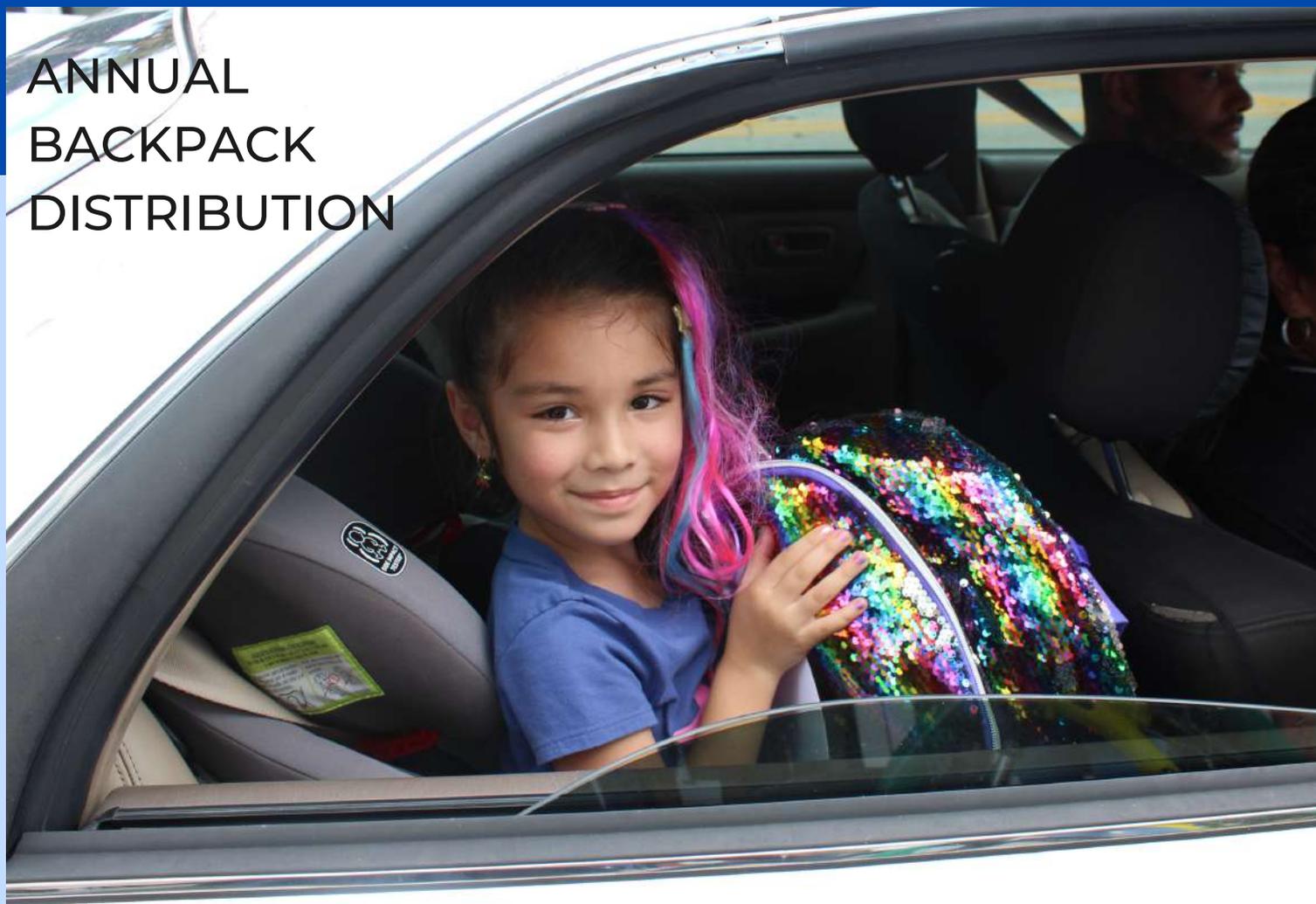
ISSUE 10

Las Olas

Jewish Life

A LITTLE NOSH FOR THE SOUL

ANNUAL
BACKPACK
DISTRIBUTION



INSIDE:
FULL GUIDE FOR A
SWEET NEW YEAR

US NAVY SHABBAT
SUMMER CAMP FOR ADULTS
WITH SPECIAL NEEDS



DEDICATED TO THE LOVE
AND INSPIRATION OF
THE LUBAVITCHER REBBE

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Dear Friend,

Consider this our oversized Rosh Hashanah greeting card with hand-written wishes for a sweet and happy New Year for you and your entire family. This time of year provides us the perfect opportunity to connect with our Jewishness and each other.



I always feel a deep sense of community each new year as we stand together in prayer and wish each other the traditional greeting of "may you be inscribed in the book of life."

We hope you enjoy this greeting card High Holiday edition that explores the profound meaning behind many of our New Year celebrations. Plus, thought-provoking articles by Susan Cain, David Sacks, and Sara Crispe will move and inspire you.

In addition, our holiday guide takes readers through the origins and history behind the customary foods and traditional items on your High Holiday to-do list.

Please join us for the high holidays and RSVP by calling (954) 780-6770 or visit our website at www.jewishfl.org.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Chaim and Chayale Slavaticki

Directors, Las Olas Chabad Jewish Center

CREATE A LEGACY
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FOR MORE INFORMATION
ON PLANNED GIVING
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What's new about the JEWISH NEW YEAR?



I love the mad rush leading up to the High Holidays, starting with my guest list and food prep that always includes a last-minute search for the head of a fish. Rosh Hashanah is that time of year when I see old friends at the service and try to figure out how to build my sukkah. To me, the Jewish New Year is a beautiful season that envelops you like a warm hug from your Jewishness.

This year made me ponder what exactly is "new" about the Jewish New Year? People often say that Rosh Hashanah marks the birthday of the world. But according to the Torah, the world was "born" six days before the first Rosh Hashanah. So apparently, plenty of action was happening on earth before the last day of Creation, when Adam and Eve came about.

In fact, the Torah tells us that the oceans and rivers were loudly swimming with fish, and colorful wildlife roamed freely through mountains and hills, drinking the clean spring water. And I'm sure they enjoyed the gorgeous sunsets too. Yet, that wasn't enough, we had to wait for Adam and Eve to come along before we celebrated a New Year.

If you think about it, there are four primary life forms, known philosophically as the "Four Kingdoms," ranging from inanimate rocks and water to the growing trees and vegetables to the animal kingdom and human life. Interestingly enough, the Rebbe, in a 1953 letter, points out that in a world made of mineral, vegetative, animal, and human life, the timing of the Jewish New Year is precisely on the day humanity was created. Only at the birth of society does the Prophet pronounce, "This is the day of the beginning of Thy works!"

The Rebbe sees the "Four Kingdoms" as a compelling idea because

▼ *The real celebration can only start
once your
humanity is born* ▼▼

we all have the four within us. We all journey from inanimate life to the growth stages and wild, animated existence, but the lesson is that the real celebration can only start once your humanity is born.

In other words, I could drive a nice car or eat an expensive steak, but the real party will only start once I discover my human spiritual purpose. If you look at the calendar date for Rosh Hashanah, it's clear that the world itself sees the "mentsch" with a higher purpose as the real cause for celebration.

This idea can be tremendously helpful if you ever experience chaos or get so busy that you lose focus. That's because we not only live in a world made of the "Four Kingdoms," we all go through the kingdoms daily. Things like push-ups, eating oatmeal with fresh blueberries, and filling the car with gas, for example, only involve mineral, vegetative, and animal life. But when we pray, study, and help others, we quickly discover the true humanity in our day.

It all started 5783 years ago on the sixth day of Creation when G-d created Adam and Eve. When they were "born," Adam and Eve immediately proclaimed: "Come, let us worship, bow down and kneel before G-d our Maker." At that moment, they inspired the whole universe to work towards a higher purpose of creating an abode for the Divine on earth. At that moment, the human ability to serve a higher power uplifted, engaged, and ultimately allowed everything around them to click.

Adam and Eve demonstrated that our purpose and mission to make the world an abode for the Divine is how the "four kingdoms" seamlessly merge into one. The fragmented parts of our lives find wholesomeness specifically through our ultimate purpose. That was the first Rosh Hashanah. Happy New Year!

(Based on a 1953 Rosh Hashanah message from the Rebbe)



Friendship Circle is a "Labor of Love"

Originally Printed in the Jewish Journal

By Linda Chase | Associate Editor - Judaic Advisor

The Friendship Circle of Greater Fort Lauderdale at Las Olas Chabad Jewish Center can best be described as a "Labor of love" for all involved.

When I attended a recent dinner honoring the special needs organization's supporters and volunteers, inspirational speeches, music and good food made for an amazing evening. Genuine support and camaraderie filled the synagogue. Through applause, smiles and some tears, you could definitely feel the electricity and excitement in the air.

As it is inscribed on its website, Friendship Circle's unique approach

brings together teenage volunteers and children with special needs for hours of fun and friendship. These shared experiences empower the children, while enriching the lives of everyone involved.

Rebbetzin Chayale Slavaticki was obviously overcome with emotion as she gave her opening remarks telling those in attendance that the program's focus is on "abilities instead of disabilities." I just had to contain myself from running up to the Rebbetzin as she spoke with so much passion.

"What is imperfection if not another form of divine perfection?"

At the Friendship Circle, our volunteers truly embody this message and are able to tap into the perfection in each and every person and accept them for the beauty they contain, which allows them to create incredible bonds



and the truest of friendships with each of our special friends," said directors Rabbi Chaim and Chayale Slavaticki.

"The Friendship Circle is one of the most heartwarming programs in South Florida," Mayor Dean Trantalis said. "At the circle, neighbors and friends gather to build an inclusive community for young adults who have special needs, and together, they are creating an environment that fosters personal growth and lifelong relationships. I'm thankful to the 85 volunteers of the Circle for being leaders in the world with their selflessness and devotion for our children and young adults with special needs."

Ahead of the awards ceremony, entertainment was provided by Bob, Terry and Dan who make up the Harmonicats band. The trio dedicated their time weekly to help the young adults feel part of something special.

"Dan, Terry and I have been working together for years playing and singing for our hospitalized pediatric oncology patients (we continue to this day)," said Bob. "When the world was shut down, we were at a loss; we did live shows via zoom, but wanted more." "I called my friend Rabbi Chaim Slavaticki and asked if there were any opportunities at the Chabad to play for the friends. Serendipity put us together, and the dedication of Rabbi Chaim, Mrs. Slavaticki and their amazing team made us realize that we were supposed to be here," Bob continued.

"We have a lot of musical fun with our amazing friends and observing the natural team dynamics develop in our 'Harmonicats' is what life is about. Terry, Dan and I often discuss how fortunate we are to have found our musical family at the Friendship Circle. Folks like to tell us that we are doing good



things and our friends get a lot out of it. That may be true, but we know and answer, that we get a lot more out of our magical musical time with our Friendship Circle family than anyone could ever imagine. We are blessed and grateful."

During the awards presentation, honorees, including volunteer Evelyn Gill, shared inspiring stories. "At 14, when I was diagnosed with ADHD, it was Friendship Circle that taught me that even though I may be different, it's my differences that make me unique," said Evelyn. "Every time I walk into Friendship Circle, I'm greeted with such love; even if I'm having the worst day, seeing my friends and feeling accepted puts me on a high that nothing else in life brings. Many people believe that volunteering at the Friendship Circle is to help others, but the friends you make here will help change your life forever!"

"My friends love me unconditionally, no matter what I have going on, and I love them just the same," Evelyn concluded. The evening ended with each person in the room pulling out the lights beneath their seats and waving them in the air.

"When 100 people get together in one room to celebrate a night of Friendship, this is 100 flames strong. Together we shine more brightly and more strongly. Together our flames can warm more hearts. And together we are unstoppable," concluded Rabbi Chaim and Chayale Slavaticki.

The Friendship Circle of Greater Fort Lauderdale is located at the Las Olas Chabad Jewish Center, 1302 E. Las Olas Blvd. Fort Lauderdale. For more information or to join our amazing team of volunteers today, visit FriendshipFL.org or call (754) 800-1770.



Fleet Week Shabbat Dinner: A Truly Special Evening

Originally Printed in the Jewish Journal
By Linda Chase | Associate Editor - Judaic Advisor

I was honored to experience a truly inspirational Shabbat at the Las Olas Chabad, the Fleet Week Shabbat Dinner.

The brave men and women of the US Navy arrive in port on their vessels annually during Fleet Week in Fort Lauderdale, seeking respite from shipboard duties during their stay here.

The Fleet Week Shabbat, hosted yearly by Chabad, has become a tradition where the local Jewish community is given the opportunity to show their hospitality and gratitude to our brave men and women.

“Today more than ever, it is so important to support

our military and law enforcement officers,” said Rabbi Chaim Slavaticki, spiritual leader of Las Olas Chabad Jewish Center. “It’s been an honor for all of us at Las Olas Chabad to show our appreciation by hosting this annual dinner which is made possible by our dear friends and community members, the Stahl Family. Our hope is that the heroes who serve and protect us will see the admiration and gratitude we have towards them, and that the community will have a deeper appreciation for all that they do.”

Alan M. Starr, Senior Chief Cryptologic Technician USN Ret, and past Chairman of the Fleet Week Board of Directors, served in the Navy for 28 years. He participates in this festive celebration each year.

When asked how he first got involved in the Fleet Week Dinner, Starr replied, “One of the Fleet Week sponsors brought up the idea to the Rabbi who immediately offered his support.



"We had 35 personnel members on hand for the occasion. They included US Navy Officers, Chief Petty Officers, and enlisted Sailors, Marines, and US Coast Guardsmen from local area commands, including Coast Guard Chaplain Rosenberg."

During the dinner, Starr introduced each of his 35 military attendees followed by Stahl presenting plaques of appreciation.

When asked what he finds most meaningful about the Chabad Shabbat, Starr responded, "It offers service people the opportunity to attend Shabbat Dinner as a cultural event, not a religious event."

Often as a young sailor, I would find a *Shul* to attend to make me feel at home. When members of the military who are away from family and friends are welcomed by the Jewish community, it gives them a feeling of being welcomed home."

During the week, Starr shared, tours were given of visiting ships. Over 5,000 people visited the warships USS Lassen and USS Black. Each ship has a crew of 350 men and women.

"Shabbat Dinner at Las Olas Chabad Center is a truly special occasion," said congregant Dean Myerow, who was seated at my table.

When members of the military who are away from family and friends are welcomed by the Jewish community, it gives them a feeling of being welcomed home."

"Our goal at the synagogue is to make our proud service people feel like family regardless of their religion, background or ethnicity. During our Shabbat Dinner, our guests come to understand a bit about the Jewish religion, its customs, traditions and food. It's one of my favorite events of the year!"

Another congregant, Eric Donner said, "It was wonderful having the service men and women of the United States Navy join our Las Olas Jewish Center for Fleet Week Shabbat Dinner. With many of them experiencing their first Shabbat ever, it was truly an unforgettable experience."

For both the members of the US Navy and the congregants at Chabad, Fleet Week Shabbat was a deeply moving and meaningful experience that won't soon be forgotten.

The Shul is located at 1302 E. Las Olas Blvd in Fort Lauderdale.

Call (954) 780-6770 for more information.



LAS OLAS
JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER

FILLING A DESPERATE NEED

On July 31, 2022, Fort Lauderdale residents flocked to Chabad of Las Olas for the Third Annual Backpack and School Supply Distribution. Cars were seen lining up on Las Olas Blvd for over a mile as parents waited with children of all ages to collect a backpack filled with school supplies for the upcoming school year. The backpacks and supplies were kindly sponsored by DxWeb, Norman and Bettina Roberts Foundation, and WeatherTech.

With the rising cost of school supplies, the need this year was keenly felt. For many parents, providing basic necessities has been exceedingly tough, and the joy felt by proud children receiving their very own backpack was easy to see.

As the mother of one young boy shared, "My son was embarrassed to go to school with the same worn out backpack from last year. This distribution could not have come at a better time for us. This means the world to him."

Sponsor John Diprato, who allocates an annual budget for the drive, says he is inspired by Las Olas Chabad's ongoing efforts to provide support and assistance to the community. When he witnessed how much community outreach Director Rabbi Chaim Slavaticki was doing during the Covid-19 outbreak, he insisted on meeting him to team up for the backpack giveaway. Three years in, their efforts are reaching further than ever!

"This year, we gave out over 1,300 backpacks," Diprato said. "It's heartwarming to think that we were able to help so many children with their return to school."

The distribution team went the extra mile to make sure the backpacks are fashionable enough to appeal to middle and high school students. The result? An extra sparkle in the eyes of the children as they laid eyes on their stylish new school swag.



THE GROWING HEARTS OF ISRAEL HEART2HEART

Over the past 3 years, Israel Heart2Heart has been growing and evolving at a dizzying rate. With the increasing momentum and enthusiasm, there are many exciting developments expected in the near future.

In addition to aiding in the emotional stabilization of our soldiers who suffer from post traumatic stress, the organization places emphasis on helping them hone their vocational skills. Many IDF veterans who have been through trauma on the battlefield, struggle to find the proper career and networking success that can propel them forward in their lives. Recently, a major gift was given to the soldiers of Israel Heart2Heart.

Four months ago, the Rishon LeZion Foundation located just outside of Tel Aviv donated several towering spaces for the organization to use any time they wish. The soldiers can work, conduct meetings, and network with other individuals from Israel Heart2Heart without having to pay an office rental fee.

Another addition to the organization's resources, is the ability for soldiers to access Dani Farms, a beautiful horse farm located in a moshav in the heart of Israel. At the farm, the soldiers can enjoy yoga and therapeutic horseback riding and host family events and barbecues.

Last but not least, four soldiers who have been with the program for an extended period of time were selected for Israel Heart2Heart's new Ambassador Program. These ambassadors will train soldiers who were previously mentored in the United States to be able to counsel and guide other soldiers as they enter the program. The training of new mentors will allow the organization to accommodate the rapid growth expected in the coming years.

During this training, the four soldiers will spend time among the Las Olas Chabad community in order to learn essential mentorship skills and tools to help others. They will be learning how to teach business coaching and vocational skills, the benefits of yoga training, essential coping skills and networking skills.

To join this special initiative in helping our wounded IDF soldiers, email Office@Israelheart2heart.org today!





An Enriching Experience

Going to summer camp is a natural part of many children's lives. They look forward to swimming, horseback riding, arts and crafts and all of the fun and engaging activities that summer brings. But what if your child is not like other kids? What about when there are special needs that make going to a typical camp impossible?

This year at The Friendship Circle of Greater Fort Lauderdale, we answered a call - many calls - from parents struggling to find a solution to the long summers for their young adults with special needs. The answer came in the form of the Friendship Circle Life Skills & Job Training Summer Program.

Within a week of getting the word out, all spaces at the camp were full. A summer of fun and learning was about to begin! The young adults were geared up and ready to experience all things wonderful.

Over the summer, the young adults engaged in various activities and training including art, zumba, pony visits, yoga and relaxation techniques, interpersonal and communication skills, finances and reading, and best of all, hands-on training at the Friendship Cafe. In addition, they enjoyed outings to Butterfly World, NSU Art Museum, and the International Fish Game Association where they learned to fish on their own!

This experience, it turns out, was just as enriching for the volunteers as it was for the students.

"I leave feeling so full," said Sheryl Weiss, who had a career in special education before becoming a volunteer with the Friendship Circle. "I love



working in the kitchen, the music and the art. Having conversations with the students is the best, and I love the hugs!"

Volunteer Paula Vickers agrees. "The big takeaway for me is the acceptance, love and reward of working closely with the students and watching them learn a new skill. Whatever the curriculum is, it's working!"

Denise Gorlechen has been a long time volunteer for The Friendship Circle of Greater Fort Lauderdale and has watched it evolve. It is a cause very close to her heart and has become a major part of her life. "The participants are so happy, productive, cared for and treated with the utmost respect. Everybody wants meaning in their life and this summer camp provides that for them, while developing everyday life skills.

I love watching their individual development as they are exposed to a new responsibility for the first time, and then learn to take ownership over the next days, weeks and months. It really has an effect on their independence. I love seeing how confident they become with the volunteers, their classmates and staff."

Come visit us at The Friendship Cafe to say hello and cheer on our special friends. While you're at it, dig into the delicious food with a special cause behind it! To place catering orders, contact 954-999-9676.



JEWISH LIFE HAPPENINGS



Celebrating their accomplishments at the Bear Family Hebrew School Graduation!



Spending time with our maritime friends at The Annual Fleet Week Shabbat Dinner!



Soldiers from Israel Heart2Heart doing some therapeutic yoga!



A child excited to pick up her backpack at the Las Olas Chabad Backpack Distribution!



Exciting activity at The Friendship Circle Life Skills Summer Camp!!



Rabbi Slavaticki performing Israel heart 2 heart ribbon-cutting at Dani Farm



Women Gathering at the Las Olas Jewish Women's Circle.



Proud of his art at The Bear Family Las Olas Hebrew School!



Showing off some stylish backpacks at the Backpack Giveaway!



Thank you to one of our amazing Friendship Circle founders - The Rice Family!



Daughter and Mother at our annual Lag Baomer BBQ!!



All smiles to receive backpacks at the Las Olas Chabad Backpack Distribution

JEWISH LIFE HAPPENINGS



Our friends in the Friendship Cafe Life Skills & Job Training Summer Program learning to fish!



We are so proud of each of our Bear Family Hebrew School students for the amazing progress they've made this year!



Team Students vs. Team parents!
Guess who won!!



The Shakey T Band jamming it out with all our Friendship Circle friends.



Butterfly World here we come with all our amazing Friendship Circle friends!



Another incredible year at the Bear Family Las Olas Hebrew School!



Karaoke with our friends at the Young Adults Circle



Some of our Friendship Circle moms enjoying an incredible Mom's Night Out put on by Mindy Postal & her fantabulous team!



Creating our very own race cars to race down the track at the Friendship Cafe Summer Program



Nothing like cheering & jumping around with our Friends at the Friendship Circle



Kicking back & enjoying the atmosphere at the Lag B'Omer Celebration!



Our amazing Friendship Cafe students, aka The Harmonicats, performing at the Evening of Tribute.

YOU'RE A MASTER PIECE

A BROKEN TEENAGE BOY LEARNS A LIFE LESSON ABOUT ART FROM THE REBBE AND QUICKLY DISCOVERS THAT HIS IMPERFECTIONS CREATED THE MOST PERFECT, MOST VALUABLE MASTERPIECE.

Suffering from typical adolescent angst, a teenage boy once went to the Rebbe for advice. He asked the Rebbe: How come G-d didn't just create us as angels? If He had, we would be perfect and wouldn't make mistakes and create problems.

The Rebbe explained that G-d doesn't want us to be perfect; He wants us to be unique individuals who grow and learn from our experiences and mistakes. Then, the Rebbe asked the boy if he understood the difference between a photograph and a portrait.

"You take a picture when you want to capture a perfect replica of something you see. A portrait, on the other hand, is always filled with inaccuracies. It can never be a perfect reproduction of something like a photograph can. If anything, the better the portrait, the more creative license that went into it to bring out the meaning, color, and beauty that does not always exist in the surface look."

That's why portraits can sell for millions. People pay for the artwork because it is a reflection not only of the subject but of the artist. The Rebbe explained that angels are G-d's photographs. We, however, are G-d's portraits.



SARA ESTHER CRISPE

travels the world as a motivational speaker, is a relationships coach, serves as the Chief Content Creator for the wellness company, Opyrus.com, and is the Co-Director of the educational non-profit, Interinclusion.org. A mother of four, she lives with her husband in Danby, Vermont where they run Jewish experiential retreats.

WELCOME TO THE COMMUNITY

SARA ESTHER CRISPE

HOW CAN WE CREATE A HEALTHY COMMUNITY? HOW DO WE JOIN TOGETHER AND CONNECT WITH PEOPLE SO DIFFERENT FROM OURSELVES? AS SARA ESTHER CRISPE EXPLAINS, IT'S A JOURNEY OF SELF-REFLECTION AND ACCEPTANCE. JOIN HER AS SHE LEADS US THROUGH THIS PROCESS

The Torah portion read the Shabbat prior to Rosh Hashana, Nitzavim, begins:

“You are all standing this day before the L-rd, your G-d: the leaders of your tribes, your elders and your officers—every person of Israel.”

Prior to beginning the year from anew, we gather together as a group, as a community. One term for “community” is *tzibbur*, and it refers to piling and amassing diverse objects, assembling together different things.

As Elias Canetti, Jewish Nobel Prize winner for Literature, says: “Jews are different from other people, but in reality, they are most different from each other,” (*Crowds and Power*).

The 17th-century Kabbalist, Rabbi Nathan Nata Shapiro of Krakow, explains in his work *Megaleh Amukot* that the word for “community,” *tzibur*, should be understood as an acronym:

צ Tzaddik: Tzaddikim: Righteous

ב Beit: Beinoni: Intermediary

ו Vav: And

ר Reish: Rasha: Not So Righteous

To have a community, all categories must coexist.

It's easy to want to forget those who we don't feel are worthy of our respect, those we don't feel deserve to be included. Yet this is our reminder that everyone is part of our community, and no one can be left out.

And that is true about ourselves as well. We might categorize ourselves as fitting into one of these three categories, and then place another in a different box, but in truth, I am all three, and you are all three. Within each and every one of us exists the righteous dimension, the intermediary part, and the not-so-righteous aspects.

The letter that binds the righteous and intermediary with the not-so-righteous is the letter “Vav.” The letter itself is also a word meaning “hook” and a conjunction in Hebrew grammar. But more so, the Vav is known as *Vav Hahipuch*, a transformative letter that can be used to change the future to past and the past to future. By having the righteous connected to the intermediary and the not-so-righteous, both of them can be rectified and transformed to become righteous! That is the power of true connection.

But how do we connect to someone or something so different from ourselves?

The numerical equivalent of the word *tzibbur* is equal to that for the word *rachamim* = 298. *Rachamim* means “empathy,” and empathy is the key in order to truly connect. Empathy is not feeling sorry for the pain of the other, it is actually feeling the pain of the other.

Beautifully, we see that the root of *rachamim* is *rechem*, which means “womb.” When we feel that the other is a part of ourselves, we can experience compassion and empathy, and be open to working through issues. If you are told that the baby within your womb has a problem, it is not the baby's problem, it is *your* problem, and you love your baby and will do whatever you need to do to solve that problem.

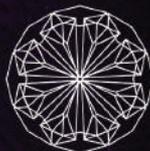
A community is a united group, an empathetic group, and one where each and every individual can recognize the strengths and weaknesses in themselves and accept those in the other so that we can grow, develop and rectify ourselves and the world around us. When we approach ourselves and others with love, that is when we can experience transformation.

This is why we read this statement, of how we all stand together before our Creator, right before Rosh Hashanah. He knows we are not angels, because He didn't create us to be perfect. But He did create us with the ability to connect with others and become better people. For, after all, a community is comprised of a diverse group of individuals, each with his or her own unique talents and abilities, and each an essential part of the whole.

Chag Sameach



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Are You Ready for the Family Reunion?

By Ben Sherman

There was a time when all Jews got together in Jerusalem for the largest family reunion of its kind. Surely it was the most talked about convention of its time, where royalty would be seen and heard, top military officials would be present, and everyone who was anyone was there, really. It was a massive convention all about being Jewish. Can you imagine the type of Jewish pride felt at that event? People must have gone home pumped to be a part of the holiest nation on earth with a mission so vital the world itself was depending on it.

The idea for this event is actually a commandment in the Torah and it's called Hakhel.

WHAT IS HAKHEL?

In Temple times, the entire Jewish family would ascend upon Jerusalem, as the Jewish king would read out loud selected passages of the Torah. The Torah instructs us to basically recreate the experience of the Giving of the Torah at Sinai. This mega event would be held on Sukkot while the visitors had already come from all over Israel to partake in the festivals. Afterwards, the crowds would disperse and go back to their homes throughout the land, having revitalized their reverence for being Jewish.

How often were these reunions called for? Just like there is a weekly cycle of workdays followed by a Shabbat, there is a seven year cycle where the Torah commands us to let our fields rest and to celebrate a shmita or sabbatical year. At the conclusion of the seventh year, there is a biblical mandate for the Jews to converge on Jerusalem to fulfill the mitzvah of Hakhel.

5783 IS THE YEAR OF HAKHEL

Hakhel literally means to gather together. Sadly, once the Temple was destroyed the actual Hakhel ceremony in Jerusalem was suspended for the duration of the present exile.

The idea and commandment of Hakhel is singled out in Sefer HaChinuch (Mitzvah 612) as "a strong pillar and [source of] great honor for our religion." And like all other mitzvot, its spiritual content applies at all times and at all places. And it's Hakhel this year! 5783 comes right after a sabbatical year in Israel.

Jewish Unity and Jewish observance could always use a boost, and we can use this year to gather our friends and neighbors to recommit to our mission given to us at Sinai.

Although the historic Hakhel was observed on one day in the holiday of Sukkot, the concept applies throughout the year, and the entire year is known as the Hakhel year.

Likewise with the jubilee (Yovel) that was celebrated every fifty years, when bondmen returned to the freedom of their homes and fields were restored to their original owners. The entire year is called Yovel even though it centered around one high moment — the sounding of the Shofar on Yom Kippur.

Since the purpose of Hakhel is not the assembly in itself, but rather the heightened awe of G-d that results from it thereafter, the whole of that year is permeated with the spirit of Hakhel.

You can celebrate Hakhel by making mini family reunions. Why not start with your own family or just invite friends and neighbors. Think of it as a year of getting together. A year of Jewish unity. It's our year to reach out and recharge. ●

Looking for ways to celebrate Hakhel? Try some of these easy-to-do ideas:

10 WAYS TO HAKHEL:

1. Invite friends and family over for a Havdalah service.
2. Go online and do research about your favorite mitzvah and invite friends over to discuss.
3. Host a kosher wine tasting and talk about being Jewish.
4. Host a dinner party and talk about the blessings for food.
5. Invite friends over for Jewish Story Night and read to adults or kids.
6. Call an old friend for a virtual reunion.
7. Ask everyone to update their Facebook status with a mitzvah they plan to do.
8. Take group photo with a hand drawn "Hakhel" poster and tag your friends.
9. Create a hashtag #Hakhel for your events.
10. Look for a Hakhel event near you and attend.

Holiday Basics

Your Guide to a Sweet New Year

What's in the name?: Rosh Hashanah (Head of the Year). The Kabbalists teach that, 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. So what happens on Rosh Hashanah impacts the entire year.

AKA: Yom Hazikaron (Day of Remembrance) in our prayers, blessing at candle lighting, and in the Kiddush.

Observance: Hear the Shofar. The ram's horn, the Shofar, was used to warn people of danger or call them to return, regroup, and also coronate kings. The Shofar was heard at Mount Sinai, and the Shofar will herald the arrival of Moshiach. On Rosh Hashanah make sure to hear the Shofar on both days (unless one day is Shabbat).

Edible Traditions: Eat apple dipped in honey on the first night to symbolize our desire for a sweet year. (See blessing in Machzor page 46.) We have a head of a fish 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. Eat a new fruit on the second night and recite the Shehecheyanu blessing. (See Machzor page 46)

What is Tashlich?: On the first 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 symbolizes an ever-open eye, making it the perfect place to pray for Divine mercy. (See Machzor page 291.)



Rosh Hashanah
Sept. 25-27



Yom Kippur
Oct 4-5

Definition: Yom Kippur means "Day of Atonement." Yom Kippur is the holiest day of the year.

The 5 Don'ts: 1) Abstain from food and drink. 2) Do not wash your body. 3) Do not anoint your body with creams or lotions. 4) Do not wear leather footwear. 5) Abstain from marital relations.

How We Prep: In the early morning hours before Yom Kippur, we take a fish, or chicken, or money and give it to charity in the Kaparot ceremony. (See Kehot's Machzor for Yom Kippur, page 2.) Request and receive a slice of honey cake. Should you ever need to ask for anything this year, let it be for this 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: We wear white as a sign of purity. In addition, men wear a tallit during the Kol Nidrei and Yom Kippur eve service.

Historical background: Sukkot means "Huts." The Jews enjoyed the protection of the miraculous "clouds of glory" as they traversed the Sinai Desert following the Exodus. Therefore, G-d commanded us to dwell in a Sukkah for the duration of Sukkot (on the Jewish calendar Tishrei 15-21).

AKA: Z'man Simchateinu (The Time of Rejoicing). All holidays are joyous. However, Sukkot is the only holiday called "The Time of your Rejoicing."

Observance: Eat all your meals in the Sukkah hut, and otherwise regard it as your home. **SHAKE:** Take the Four Kinds: a) an Etrog (citron), b) a Lulav (palm frond), c) three Hadassim (myrtle twigs), and d) two Aravot (willow twigs). On each day of the festival (besides Shabbat), we recite a blessing bringing them together in our hands, and wave them in all six directions: right, left, forward, up, down, and backward. Taking the Four Kinds is also known as "Shaking the Lulav." For instructions, visit www.JewishNewYear.com.

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, but work is permitted.

Hoshana Rabbah: Great Salvation (Tishrei 21) is the seventh day of Sukkot, and it closes the period of Divine judgment that began on Rosh Hashanah. On this day, we encircle the Bimah (synagogue reading table) seven times while holding the Four Kinds. We also take a bundle of five willow branches and beat them against the ground after the Hakafof ceremony.



SUKKOT
Oct. 9-16

For more details on the High Holidays
visit www.JewishNewYear.com



shmini Atzret/Simchat Torah
Oct. 16-18

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." It is a day of unbridled joy, surpassing 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).

How to Celebrate?: Shemini Atzeret is a biblical holiday, with candle lighting 18 minutes before sundown and a festive meal that begins with Kiddush over wine. Shemini Atzeret evening service features the seven Hakafof and dancing with the Torah, similar to Simchat Torah. The morning service features the Yizkor memorial service after the Torah reading. It's not Sukkot, so there is no need for shaking the Lulav, but many have the custom of still eating and drinking 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 return to our homes.

Simchat Torah: "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.

Let's Dance: Simchat Torah features the Hakafof, held on both the eve and the morning of Simchat Torah. We march and dance with the Torah scrolls seven times around the reading table in the synagogue. Notice that we will be dancing with the Torah while it is closed, showing that the joy is not only from what the Torah teaches but from what the Torah is.

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 to send their letters for blessings to the resting place of the Rebbe.

WANT MORE
DETAILS?

Contact us or visit
www.JewishNewYear.com

SUNDAY

SEPT 25 | ELUL 29
Erev Rosh Hashanah

Shofar is not blown
Give extra charity.

Light candles 18 minutes before sunset.

Bless your friends with the words "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year."

MONDAY

SEPT 26 | TISHREI 1
Rosh Hashanah Day 1

Hear the Shofar
Do Tashlich at a body of water
Light candles after nightfall

Happy Birthday Adam & Eve.
On this day 5783 year ago G-d said:
"Let us make man in Our image."

TUESDAY

SEPT 27 | TISHREI 2
Rosh Hashanah Day 2

Hear the Shofar
Havdalah after nightfall
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.

OCT 2 | TISHREI 7

OCT 3 | TISHREI 8

OCT 4 | TISHREI 9
Erev Yom Kippur

Kaparot
Give extra charity.
Light candles 18 minutes before sunset.
Fast begins
Remove leather shoes
Kol Nidrei prayer

OCT 9 | TISHREI 14
Erev Sukkot

Light candles 18 minutes before sunset.
Kidush and all meals in the Sukkah, and dip challah in honey!
On Sukkot, supernal "guests" grace our Sukkah. These guests are known as Ushpizin.
Tonight's Guest: Abraham

OCT 10 | TISHREI 15
Sukkot Day 1

Shake the Lulav and Etrog
Kidush and all meals in the Sukkah and dip challah in honey!
Light candles after nightfall
Tonight's Guest: Isaac

OCT 11 | TISHREI 16
Sukkot Day 2

Shake the Lulav and Etrog
Kidush and all meals in the Sukkah and dip challah in honey!
Havdalah in the Sukkah after nightfall
Tonight's Guest: Jacob

OCT 16 | TISHREI 21
Hoshana Rabba

Shake the Lulav and Etrog
Perform Hoshanot
All meals in the Sukkah
Light candles 18 minutes before sunset
Outside of Israel:
Perform Hakafot

OCT 17 | TISHREI 22
Shemini Atzeret

Recite Yizkor Memorial Prayer
Begin Prayer for Rain
Light candles after nightfall
Perform Hakafot and dance with the Torah

OCT 18 | TISHREI 23
Simchat Torah

Perform Hakafot and dance with the Torah
Kidush and all meals in the house and dip challah in honey
Havdalah after nightfall



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.



WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SHABBAT
SEPT 28 TISHREI 3 <i>Fast of Gedaliah</i> Fast day mourning the assassination of the Jewish royal Gedaliah ben Achikam in 423 BCE	SEPT 29 TISHREI 4 Did you know? 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. We evoke Abraham's merit as we pray for a year of life, health and prosperity.	SEPT 30 TISHREI 5 <i>Light candles 18 minutes before sunset.</i>	OCT 1 TISHREI 6 Torah portion Vayeilech Shabbat Shuva, Shabbat of Return Passing of Rebbetzin Chana Schneerson (1879-1964), mother of the Lubavitcher Rebbe.
OCT 5 TISHREI 10 <i>Yom Kippur</i> No eating or drinking Sounding of Shofar at conclusion of Neilah Havdalah & break-fast after nightfall 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).	OCT 6 TISHREI 11 Start building <i>Sukkah</i> . Don't forget to order your set of the <i>Four Kinds</i> .	OCT 7 TISHREI 12 <i>Light candles 18 minutes before sunset.</i>	OCT 8 TISHREI 13 Torah portion Ha'azinu Yahrzeit of Rabbi Shmuel of Lubavitch, 4th Chabad Rebbe who authored many books and traveled throughout Europe to pressure the Czarist regime to halt its instigation of pogroms against the Jews.
OCT 12 TISHREI 17 <i>Chol Hamoed</i> Shake the Lulav and Etrog All meals in the Sukkah Tonight's Guest: Moses	OCT 13 TISHREI 18 <i>Chol Hamoed</i> Shake the Lulav and Etrog All meals in the Sukkah Tonight's Guest: Aaron	OCT 14 TISHREI 19 <i>Chol Hamoed</i> Shake the Lulav and Etrog All meals in the Sukkah Tonight's Guest: Joseph <i>Light candles 18 minutes before sunset.</i>	OCT 15 TISHREI 20 Torah reading for Shabbat Chol Hamoed No Shaking the Lulav and Etrog on Shabbat. All meals in the Sukkah Tonight's Guest: David



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:

Sha-bos ko-desh

ROSH HASHANAH:

Yom Ha-zi-karon

YOM KIPPUR:

Yom Ha-kipurim

FESTIVALS:

Yom Tov

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.



A Rosh Hashanah Sous Chef in Your Pocket

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THE MOST IMPORTANT JOB IN THE WORLD

It all started 5783 years ago when the Creator put the universe into orbit, intending to create an abode for the Divine in this physical world. And that's where you come in. You see, the Creator needs agents made of both Heaven and earth to accomplish this goal. It takes a soul and body, imperfect humans with a pure unstoppable Divine soul, to fuse spirit and matter, making this world an abode for the Divine. In other words, you are the agent to unite Heaven and earth. It's the most important job on earth, so we prepared this brief guide on how to be an agent of Hashem.

LOOK AROUND

"A man's steps are made firm by G-d." --King David, Psalms 37.

When you find yourself in any particular place, you may think it's for work or vacation, perhaps to buy a cup of coffee or visit an old friend, but in truth, it's for a higher purpose. As King David said, you're soul-mission is guided by the One who sent you, "A man's steps are made firm by G-d."

HUSTLE

Just like your body needs to work and earn a living to sustain your daily expenses, your soul also needs to work on "spiritual business" to make this

world a dwelling place for the Divine. That means your soul must also network, follow leads, and keep up with its contacts. But, most importantly, the soul must always be ready to find the mitzvah opportunities and "close the deal."

SOUL UNLIMITED

The inner nature of a Jew can be neither appreciated nor fathomed, for it is part of G-d's Essence, and when one grasps part of the essence, it is as if one has held it in its entirety. Therefore, just as G-d's Essence has no limits, so does your soul; that small "part" of G-d within you has no limits.

YOUR WEAPON

You're unstoppable in your mission because your power and strength come not from you but from the One who sent you.

YOU'RE A STAR

Years ago, G-d spoke about you, and He told your great-grandfather Abraham that his children would be like the stars that sparkle in the heavens. This light and sparkle help those traveling in the darkness of night find the right direction home.

You have the moral and spir-

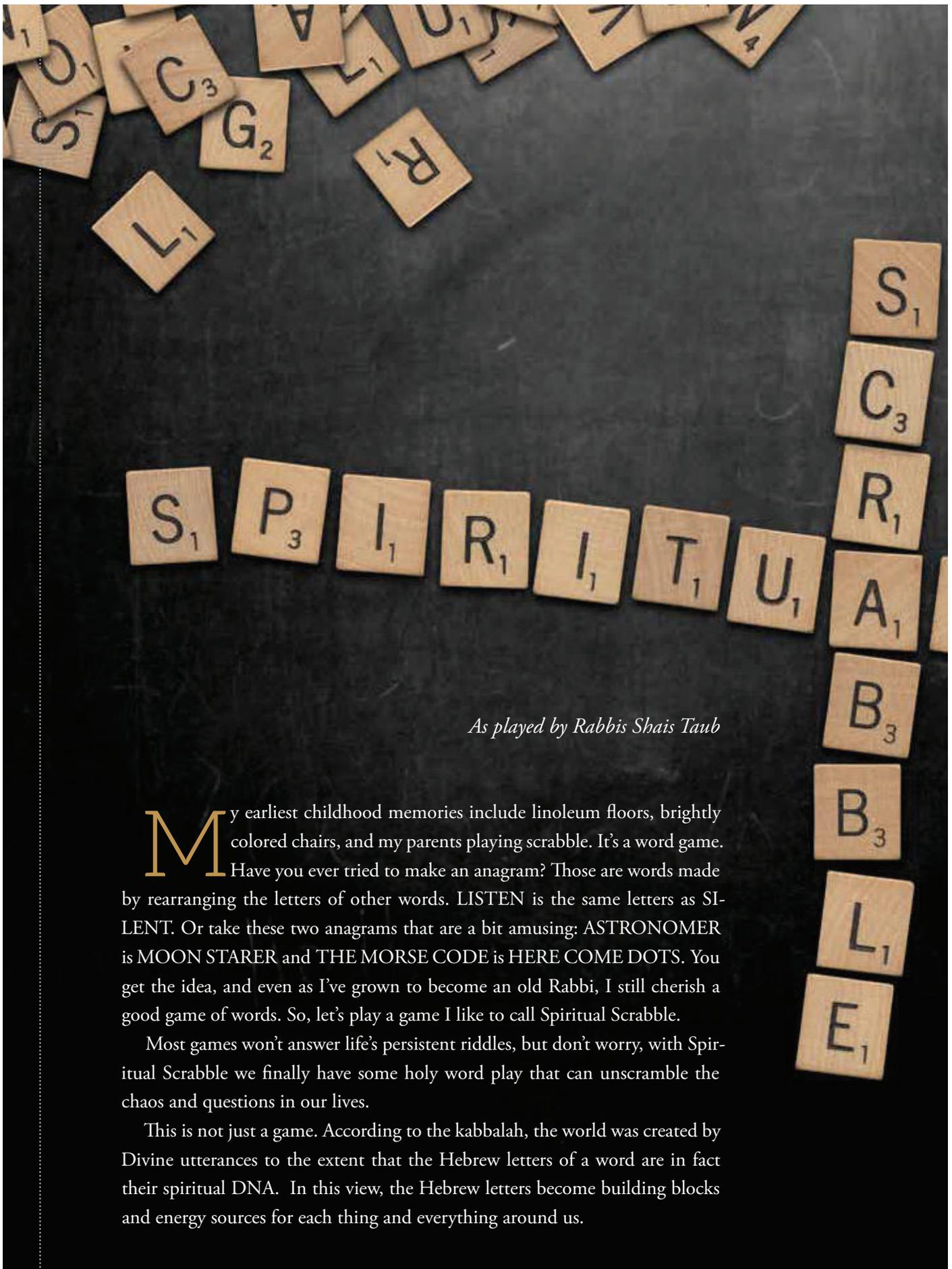
itual power to be a light to those around you. So share your light and sparkle with your co-workers and friends and help them find their way home.

START RIGHT AWAY

Your soul has waited for what feels like an eternity for this moment when it is gifted the merit of descending into a body because the soul appreciates what it can accomplish down here in the material world. Heavenly souls or angles cannot bridge the gap between heaven and earth and create an abode for the Divine within this world. Only a soul within a body can achieve this delight. So what are you waiting for?



BASED ON THE WORKS OF THE REBBE
ARTWORK BY APPLE RADISH MEDIA
WRITTEN BY RABBI SHMUEL MARCUS



As played by Rabbi Shais Taub

My earliest childhood memories include linoleum floors, brightly colored chairs, and my parents playing scrabble. It's a word game. Have you ever tried to make an anagram? Those are words made by rearranging the letters of other words. LISTEN is the same letters as SILENT. Or take these two anagrams that are a bit amusing: ASTRONOMER is MOON STARER and THE MORSE CODE is HERE COME DOTS. You get the idea, and even as I've grown to become an old Rabbi, I still cherish a good game of words. So, let's play a game I like to call Spiritual Scrabble.

Most games won't answer life's persistent riddles, but don't worry, with Spiritual Scrabble we finally have some holy word play that can unscramble the chaos and questions in our lives.

This is not just a game. According to the kabbalah, the world was created by Divine utterances to the extent that the Hebrew letters of a word are in fact their spiritual DNA. In this view, the Hebrew letters become building blocks and energy sources for each thing and everything around us.

THE CREATOR OF SPIRITUAL SCRABBLE KNEW THAT NOT EVERY PLAYER WILL BE DEALT A GREAT SET OF LETTERS. IN FACT, MANY PEOPLE TODAY ARE LIVING IN CHAOS DEALING WITH A VERY UNLUCKY SET OF CARDS.

When I speak nothing usually happens. When someone tells you “You’re all talk,” that’s not a compliment. Yet, when G-d speaks suddenly there is day and night, a sun and a moon. The very words of the Creator make reality happen. Conveniently, the Hebrew word for “thing” (דָּבָר) is the same Hebrew letters as the word “word” (דְּבַר). So you see where this is going.

On Rosh Hashanah we blow the Shofar (שׁוֹפָר) the ram’s horn that is sounded in synagogues around the world. The cry of shofar is a call for repentance, but is there a message in the letters of shofar itself? The Talmud says that shofar (שׁוֹפָר) also spells shifru (שִׁפְרוּ) which means to improve or polish. The message is clear. Whoever you are, there is a version of you that is really polished. The shofar reminds us to be the best version of ourselves.

The word “polished” is really key here. In life, the game is not about switching or replacing letters, it’s not about being someone else, it’s about being a polished and best you. Jewish philosophy doesn’t just believe that a bad situation can eventually be replaced by a good situation. Our Jewish faith is deeper than that, we actually believe that our weaknesses and failures, the negativity itself, can become good. We just need to “rearrange the letters,” so to speak.

The Creator of Spiritual Scrabble knew that not every player will be dealt a great set of letters. In fact, many people today are living in chaos dealing with a very unlucky set of cards. How can there be any Divine joy in playing that game?

One of the definitions of exile is a reality in which everything is jumbled up. Indeed, our people’s exile started with the destruction of the First Temple by the Babylonians and our people being taken as captives into Babylon. The name Babylon “Bavel (בְּבֶל)” literally means “bilbul,” (בִּלְבּוּל) something that is “mixed up.”

In Exile, we are confused. We lose our clarity and our vision. And, as a result, the world around us gets mixed up, too. But the true purpose is to not just get rid of the bad; we must somehow turn our mistakes into our successes, which was its true purpose all along.

It’s like what the founder of Chasidim, Rabbi Israel Baal Shem Tov taught on the verse “וְעַתָּה צָרָה הִיא לְיִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִשְׁעַ וּמִמֶּנָּה יִשָּׁע”—this is a time of distress for the Jews and from it they will be saved.” The simple reading is that the time of distress is followed by, and replaced by, a time of rescue and salvation. The Baal Shem Tov, however, reads it more deeply. The time of distress itself is actually the source of the salvation and becomes the salvation. Thus, the verse may be read “this is a time of distress for the Jews and from it [from the distress itself, it will come about that] they will be saved.”

The Baal Shem Tov goes further and explains that if you take the letters of tzarah (צָרָה) which means “distress” and you look deeply, you will see how they form a new word.

Do you remember on Noach’s Ark he had a window to let the light in? That window was called a tzohar (צֹהָר). That’s right, the tzarah, the challenge, is just a concealment. It’s like a brick wall in front of the truth. But you learn to see through the wall and that distress itself becomes like a window of truth and the tzarah becomes a tzohar.

So look at the letters in your life, perhaps, there is a good move you can make. ●

>Rabbi Shais Taub has delivered lectures to audiences on six continents. He writes a weekly column in Ami Magazine and is the author of *G-d of Our Understanding*. He currently serves as scholar-in-residence at Chabad of the Five Towns in New York.



MEET SUSAN CAIN

SUSAN CAIN'S BOOK, *QUIET*, HAS BEEN ON THE NEW YORK TIMES BEST-SELLER LIST FOR YEARS EARNING HER FAST COMPANY MAGAZINE'S TITLE OF ONE OF THE MOST CREATIVE PEOPLE IN THE BUSINESS, AND LINKEDIN CONSIDERS CAIN TO BE ONE OF THE TOP INFLUENCERS IN THE WORLD. IF YOU HAVEN'T READ HER BOOK, YOU MAY HAVE SEEN HER TED TALK (OVER 30 MILLION VIEWS) THAT BILL GATES CONSIDERS ONE OF HIS ALL-TIME FAVORITE TALKS. THE FOLLOWING IS FROM HER NEW BOOK, *BITTERSWEET* THAT EXAMINES HOW BROKENNESS CAN MAKE US WHOLE AGAIN.

SHARDS OF HOLINESS

BY SUSAN CAIN

I come back, always, to the metaphoric response of the Kabbalah — the mystical branch of Judaism that inspired Leonard Cohen's broken "Hallelujah."

That, in the beginning, all of creation was a vessel filled with divine light. That it broke apart, and now the shards of holiness are strewn all around us. Sometimes it's too dark to see them, sometimes we're too distracted by pain or conflict. But our task is simple — to bend down, dig them out, pick them up. And in so doing, to perceive that light can emerge from darkness, death gives way to rebirth, and the soul descends to this riven world to learn how to ascend. And to realize that we all notice different shards; I might see a lump of coal, but you spot the gold glimmering beneath.

When my father died of COVID, we held a tiny graveside service. The twenty-five-year-old junior rabbi delivering the eulogy, who hadn't known him personally but agreed to preside over a stranger's pandemic funeral, praised my father's love of G-d. I smiled, thinking: "He didn't know Dad."

My father was proudly Jewish, but he was impatient with formal religion. But even as I rolled my eyes, I realized that this was an outworn reflex; the way I saw it now, the rabbi's remark no longer seemed incongruous. My father did love G-d, but by another name — by many other names.

I see now that my father spent a good portion of his life gathering the shards of the Kabbalah's broken vessel. Like all of us, he was far from perfect. But he was constantly doing beautiful things just for their sake. He loved orchids, so he built a greenhouse in the basement. He loved the sound of French,

so he learned to speak it fluently, though he rarely had time to visit France. He loved organic chemistry, so he spent his Sundays reading "orgo" textbooks.

He showed me, by example, that if you want to live a quiet life, you should just live a quiet life; that if you're a humble person who has no use for the spotlight, to just be a humble person who has no use for the spotlight. No big deal. (These latter lessons later became the basis of my book *Quiet*.)

I watched, too, how he fulfilled his roles as a doctor, a father. How he studied medical journals after dinner, spent the extra hour sitting at the bedside of every last one of his patients in the hospital, and kept training the next generation of gastroenterologists until he was well into his eighties. How he shared with

his kids the things he loved, like music and bird-watching and poetry, so that one day we would love them too.

One of my earliest memories is asking him, over and over again, to play the "Chair Record" (Beethoven's "Emperor" concerto, whose name I was too young to pronounce). We're drawn to the sublime domains, like music, art, and medicine because they're beautiful and healing and manifest

love, divinity, or whatever you want to call it.

My father and I talked on the phone just before he died. He was in the hospital, trying to breathe.

"Be well, kid," he said, as he hung up the phone. And I intend to. And so, I hope, will you.

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“OUR TASK IS TO BEND DOWN, DIG THEM OUT, PICK THEM UP.”

Bartenura

Bartenura'le

Bartenura'chik

One Size Doesn't Fit All.



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The Last Laugh

BY DAVID SACKS

DAVID SACKS IS AN AMERICAN TELEVISION WRITER AND PRODUCER. HIS CREDITS INCLUDE 'THE SIMPSONS', FOR WHICH HE WON AN EMMY AWARD, AND '3RD ROCK FROM THE SUN', FOR WHICH HE RECEIVED A GOLDEN GLOBE AWARD. DAVID SHARES HIS THOUGHTS ON COMEDY AND THE ULTIMATE POWER OF JEWISH JOY.

The great Talmudic Sage, Rabbah, always began his lectures with a humorous statement. According to the Baal Shem Tov, humor ushers a person's mind from constricted consciousness to expanded consciousness.

A person in a place of expanded consciousness sees the totality of creation before him. He sees G-d's presence and goodness acting upon everything. And he realizes that anything and everything that happens is an expression of G-d's love for us, whether we understand it at the moment or not.

Constricted consciousness is, of course, the opposite, it's the understandable impulse to take things too literally, believing that they are not a part of something greater.

Humor's greatness is in its awesome ability to lift one out of depression into a place where G-d's unseen constant love and goodness becomes palpable and real.

Humor and laughter, while significant in themselves, are subsets of a more prominent topic, Joy! One of the surprising things I learned when I started studying Torah was the central focus our religion puts on happiness.

As Rebbe Nachman once said, people are sad because nothing is going right for them, but what people don't realize that nothing is going right for them because they're sad!

On the verse, "For you shall go out with joy" (Isaiah 55:12), the Kotzer Rebbe explains, "The beauty of joy is that it has the power to extricate us from all our troubles."

Joy means being in touch with the bigger picture, being in a state of expanded consciousnesses. The Chasidic revolution that took place in Jewish thought properly restored Joy to the forefront of Jewish values.

Many people think of Torah as an intellectual discipline, but there is a vital emotional component; Joy. And if humor is

the vehicle that transports us from constricted consciousness to expanded consciousness, then laughter is our reaction to that dizzying process.

Personally, from a comedy perspective, the surest way to get a laugh is by juxtaposing the expected with the unexpected. Thus, when we're convinced that the world is one way and the opposite happens the result is laughter.

Our patriarch Isaac (Yitzchak) corresponds to Gevurah or strength, yet Yitzchak is Hebrew for "laughter." So you might ask what gevurah/strength or discipline have to do with laughter?

When Issac's mother, Sarah, was a motherless woman of ninety the last thing you would expect is a baby! And what happens? A baby! Laughter itself! Thus, Yitzchak becomes the embodiment of the unexpected. That's the explanation from the comedy standpoint.

But, on a deeper level, Isaac represents the ultimate strength it takes to hold on to our dreams. As such, he becomes the spiritual repository of Abraham and Sarah's most intractable desires. And this is gevurah or strength itself.

Psalm 126 says that in the Messianic era, "our mouths will be filled with laughter." Why? Because laughter, in its highest and holiest expression, is our reaction to the realization that the world is so much bigger, deeper, and more beautiful than we ever gave it credit for. When we realize this, our only response will be to laugh.

The laughter Isaac represents is the ultimate goodness promised to us in the Messianic Era. The Kabbalists say that when this day comes, let it be soon, G-d will grant us the eyes to see that we never left the Garden of Eden at all.

Once we understand this secret, we're in on the ultimate joke, that it is all good and it always was.

"Joy means being in touch with the bigger picture, being in a state of expanded consciousnesses."

HIGH HOLIDAYS

At Las Olas Chabad Jewish Center - 1302 E Las Olas Blvd

5783-2022



ROSH HASHANA

Sunday September 25

- 6:45 PM Evening Services
- 7:15 PM Rosh Hashana Dinner
(RSVP Required)

Monday September 26

- 9:30 AM Services
- 11:30 AM Shofar Blowing
- 1:30 PM Kiddush/Catered Lunch
- 2:00 PM Tashlich @ The Intercoastal

Tuesday September 27

- 9:30 AM Services
 - 11:30 AM Shofar Blowing
- Followed by Kiddush/Catered Lunch

YOM KIPPUR

Tuesday October 4

- 6:46 PM Fast Begins
- 7:00 PM Kol Nidrei Services

Wednesday October 5

- 9:30 AM Services
- 11:30 AM Yizkor Memorial Service
- 5:30 PM Mincha Services
- 6:30 PM Neila Services
- Followed by BREAK-FAST Buffet

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Client: Pembroke Lakes
Mall
Project: Pembroke Lakes
Mall



HOSPITALITY

Client: J W Marriott
Project: J W Marriott
Marco Island Beach



MUSEUMS

Client: Frost Museum
of Science
Project: Frost Museum
of Science

www.ThermalConcepts.com

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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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