



Kol Kehilla

Kahal Zera Avraham wishes you and your family all brachos for a Kesiva v'Chasima Tova, for a year filled with joy, good health and nachas.



**Parshas Netzavim – Rosh HaShana – Aseres Yimei
Teshuva
27 Elul/ September 4**

We thank Mrs. Barbara Fine for her sponsorship of this week's Eruv l'n her late husband, Rabbi Arthur L. Fine, HaRav Aharon Leib ben Ephraim a"h

We thank Rabbi and Mrs. Hillel and Naomi Erlanger for their sponsorship of this week's Eruv l'n Yitzchok Elchonon ben Yaakov a"h

We thank Rabbi and Mrs. Hillel and Naomi Erlanger for their sponsorship of this week's Kiddush l'n Yitzchok Elchonon ben Yaakov a"h

We thank Mr. and Mrs. Dan and Jeannie Kravitz for their sponsorship of this week's Kiddush in honor of their birthdays and l'n his father, Reuven ben Avraham a"h.

Please daven for our chaver, R' Shlomo Melamed, Shlomo Yaakov ben Sara

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- Vaad Article, Courtesy of Rabbi Levi Lebovitz and The Vaad Project
 - Q & A with HaRav Miller
 - Rabbi Shmuel Gluck of Areivim
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This Week: A Shabbos of Chizuk

Leil Shabbos

Oneg Dessert for the Family 9:30

Shabbos Afternoon

HaRav Plotnik with bochurim, grades 5-8 3:30 - 4:15

Harav and Rebbetzin Plotnik with girls, grades 4-8 4:30 - 5:00

Chizuk Shiur for Women with Harav and Rebbetzin Plotnik 5:00 - 5:30

Chizuk Shiur for Men with Harav Plotnik 5:40 - 6:10

Mincha 6:10

Community Shalosh Seudos for the family after Mincha.



PRESENT

A SHABBOS OF CHIZUK

FINDING STRENGTH IN CHALLENGE



HaRav Henschel Plotnik
Rebbetzin Elisheva Plotnik

of Chicago, IL

*Rov Emeritus, Kahal Bais Tefila
Rosh Mesivta, Yeshiva Keser Torah*

SHABBOS PARSHAS VAYELECH - SEPTEMBER 4TH

Leil Shabbos

Dessert for the Family 9:30

Shabbos Afternoon

HaRav Plotnik with bochurim, grades 5-8 3:30 - 4:15

Harav and Rebbetzin Plotnik with girls, grades 4-8 4:30 - 5:00

Chizuk Shiur for Women with Harav and Rebbetzin Plotnik 5:00 -5:30

Chizuk Shiur for Men with Harav Plotnik 5:40 - 6:10

Mincha 6:10

**ALL EVENTS
AT ZERA
AVRAHAM**

Community Shalosh Seudos for the family after Mincha.

FOR MEN, WOMEN AND CHILDREN OF OUR CITYWIDE COMMUNITY

Coming from another side of town? We would love to host you and your family for Shabbos.

Please call Mrs Tamar Kravitz at 323-898-3536 and we'll set you up.



HaRav Zev Cohen, shlit"a

Rov Adas Yeshurun Chicago
Rosh Kollel Choshen Mishpat

Did you miss this?
View it [here](#).



2nd Nightly Maariv - at 8:30.

Weekday Davening Times

Shachris

Sunday - 6:30, **8:00**

Mon, Thurs - 6:10

Tue, Wed - 6:20

1st Mincha - 7:20

1st Maariv - 13 minutes after Shkiah

2nd Maariv - 8:30

Weekday Learning Times

1st Daf Yomi - R' Yoil Unger - Sunday 7:15 / M-F 5:20

2nd Daf Yomi - Rav Steinberg M-F 7:10-7:55

Kinyan Masechta Avoda Zara - Rav Steinberg M-Th 6:30 pm -
Mincha

Mishna Masters - Rabbi Chernitzsky - Mon and Wed 6:45-7:30

6th Grade Night Seder - Rabbi Flax - S-Th 7:45 - Maariv

7th Grade Summer Learn, Daven, Play Ball - Rabbi Weitz - S-
Th 7:00 - Maariv

Shmiras HaLashon - R' Menachem Zussman -
S-Th after Maariv

Sunday Morning Breakfast and Shivti Chabura

S-after 8:00 Shachris

Kinyan Masechta Chazara - Rav Steinberg - Sun 9:00 - 10:00

Shabbos Davening and Learning

Candlelighting (Earliest, 18 minutes) - 6:23, 7:21

Leil Shabbos Dessert for the Family 9:30

Community Shalosh Seudos

for the family after Mincha.

Mincha/Kabolas Shabbos - 6:25

Mishna Brura Hilchos Chol HaMoed Shiur - Rav Steinberg -
8:00

Shachris- 8:30

Sof Zman Krias Shema - 9:07, 9:43

Sefer HaChinuch Shiur - Rabbi Hillel Erlanger -3:40

Daf Yomi Shiur - 4:00

Gemora Pesachim - Rabbi Rosskamm - 5:00 - 5:40

Hilchos Shabbos B'Iyun - Sugyas Neiros - Rav Steinberg - 5:00 -
5:40

HaRav Plotnik with bochurim, grades 5-8 3:30 - 4:15

Harav and Rebbetzin Plotnik with girls, grades 4-8 4:30 - 5:00

Chizuk Shiur for Women with Harav and Rebbetzin Plotnik

5:00 -5:30

Chizuk Shiur for Men with Harav Plotnik 5:40 - 6:10

Mincha - 6:30

Any Question, Any Subject Halacha Shiur - Rav Steinberg - 8:07

Maariv - 8:27

Rosh HaShanah, Tzom Gedalia and Aseres Yimei Teshiva

Erev Rosh HaShanah - Sept 6

Selichos - 5:45

Shachris - 7:15

Hataros Nedorim - after Shachris

Rov's Daf Yomi - 8:30

Chatzos - 12:58

Candlelighting - 7:04

Mincha - 7:09

Maariv - 7:35

First Day - Sept. 7

Shachris - 8:00

Sof Zman Krias Shema - 9:08, 9:44

10 minute Kiddush

Tekias Shofar – 11:00

Mincha - 6:05

Tashlich – After Mincha

Maariv - 7:35:

Candlelighting and Begin Prep for Next Day (50 Min.) 8:12

Second Day - Sept 8

Shachris - 8:00

Sof Zman Krias Shema - 9:08, 9:44

10 minute Kiddush

Tekias Shofar - 11:00

Mishnayos l”n Mr. Auerbach - 6:00

Mincha - 6:35

Maariv - 8:11

Tzom Gedalia - Sept 9

Fast begins - 5:23

Shachris/Selichos - 5:35

Mincha - 6:40

Maariv - 7:53

Fast Ends (50 minutes) - 8:08

Selichos Aseres Yimei Teshuva

Friday - 5:45

Sunday - 6:00, 7:25

Monday - 5:35

Tuesday - 5:45

Erev Yom Kippur - 6:15



MORNING BRUNCH EVENT

10:30 AM

Rooftop dinner at 1515 Flats

COVID THOUGHTS

Submit your inspiration and reflections from COVID. Visit zeraabraham.com or send to dinner@zeraabraham.com.

EVENT SPONSOR \$5000

COMMUNITY PILLAR \$1800

PATRON \$540

SPONSOR \$360

SUPPORTER \$180

CHILDREN'S MUSEUM

5:00 pm

Hotdog supper available for purchase

AUCTION - \$25/1 ticket \$100/5 tickets

#1 \$250 East Side Kosher Deli #2 \$250 Southwest Airlines #3 \$250 Target

Reserve at zeraabraham.com





Due to recent events,
our Shul Nishmas dinner is now rescheduled for October 10th.

We have had many and varied experiences during this time. Hopefully, many of the impressions we have formed are positive and inspirational.

As a community, we can share perspectives before they fade and put them to print in our upcoming dinner commemorative journal, "Kovid v'Oz – Honor and Courage" so that they can continue to inspire us and those around us for years to come.

Your ideas are valuable!

Please send your submission. Your submission can be from one paragraph to two pages long. Please allow for some minor editing.

What lessons did you glean?

What new appreciation for something/someone have you obtained through your experiences?

Was there an unexpected gain that came about during this time?

Was there something you found a benefit in losing?
Can you share an inspiration for the change of something
in your life for the good?

We welcome submissions from community members of all ages. We ask that submissions from those 15 and under be labeled by age and/or grade. We encourage parents to ask their children about their thoughts – the answers may surprise you!

Submissions are due by **October 3rd** to office@zeraabraham.com, or given directly to Nechama Darrow. We hope to have the journal ready in conjunction with our Nishmas Dinner, as an additional way of publicizing our thanks to HKB”H!

All submissions will be entered into a drawing to win a **\$150 Visa Gift Card!**

For additional details, please reach out to Nechama Darrow at **720-933-8903** or at office@zeraabraham.com.

Courtesy of Agudath Israel of Illinois
View and Download:



שפה ברורה

The Halachos of the Yomim Noraim
Rosh Hashana, Aseres Y'mei Teshuva & Yom Kippur



A Project of the
Midwest Agudas Yisroel
Council of Synagogue Rabbonim

Women's Seating

Do you have a specific request for a seat during Yomim Noraim? Please contact Mrs. Naomi Erlanger. H: 303-893 -2372, C:303-396-2547.

5782 Calendars from Home Again Furniture

Want one? Contact Dan or Isaac Kravitz.

Kashrut.com Alerts

from the COR Detroit:

- **HONEY:**
 - Standard honey goes through a filtering process, which removes the non-Kosher bee parts. Even “raw and unfiltered” honey is usually strained, to remove the bee parts. However, some completely unprocessed honeys are neither filtered nor strained. If the label or the manufacturer states that the honey is not strained, or if bee parts are visible, that honey should be avoided or should be strained by the consumer.
 - “**Forest honey**”, “**Honeydew honey**”, and “**Beechwood honey**” (or honey named after other types of trees such as Pine, Fir, Oak, etc.), generally refer to honey produced by bees that have consumed the non-Kosher excretions of aphids and scale insects left on trees (as opposed to standard honey produced from flower nectar). These are not considered Kosher according to some opinions, and should be avoided.
 - “**Royal Jelly**” is a bee product that, unlike regular honey, is an actual secretion of the bee. Some Poskim therefore rule that it is not included in the permitted category of “honey”, and it should be avoided.
- **FISH HEADS:**
 - The frozen **Rainbow Trout fish heads** now being sold at Superior Kosher Meats are completely fresh water raised, and do not need to be checked for lice.
 - **Rainbow Trout from Norway** are heavily infested, and require thorough cleaning and checking [see below].

The following is from New Square Kashrus Council:

- **White fish:** White fish heads are free of infestation concern.
- **Salmon/Baby salmon:** Salmon heads [even farm raised] are commonly infested with salmon lice (small brownish parasites ranging in size from approximately 1-3 cm).
 - The entire gills must be removed. (It may be easier to first cut the head in half before cleaning).
 - Rinse the head thoroughly with water while rubbing all surfaces of the head (inside and outside), including all cracks, crevices and folds, and under and around the tongue. Inspect the head to make sure it is clean.
- One who wants to avoid the checking process may just rinse the head and cook the head in a separate pot, take a small piece from the flesh of the head, and visually inspect it before eating to make sure there is no foreign object on it.
- **Carp:** Carp heads may be infested with very small transparent insects called Argulus that are very hard to detect. There is no known method to clean infested carp heads properly, and they should not be used unless checked by an expert.

BLACK EYED PEAS are often infested and require careful checking. The following is the Star-K procedure for checking dried, canned or frozen black eyed peas, and applies even if the product bears Kashrus certification. (Note: All canned peas and beans always require Kashrus certification, for general Kashrus concerns.)

- **Dried black eyed peas** should first be put in a pot with an ample amount of water (about 3 times the volume of the peas), bring them to a boil, then turn off the flame and allow the peas to soak in the water for 2-3 hours. The peas will swell and the peel will become translucent. Then check as below.

- **Canned or frozen pea** may be checked straight out of the can/bag; there is no need to boil or soak.
- **To check (all types):** Take the black eyed peas and inspect for holes or dark-colored stains, as this may indicate an insect beneath the thin peel. If there is a dark spot on the peel, remove the thin skin and check if there is a cavity with a bug in it. (The black "eye" spot is not a sign of infestation. Similarly, orange colored stains on the surface are not signs of infestation; only dark or black stains are of concern.)

[Note: For those who prefer not to rely on checking, some Poskim advise that the Rosh Hashana simanim custom can be fulfilled without eating the item, by placing it on the table and looking at it.]

The cRc's 2021/5782 Guide to a Kosher New Year

- **Honey:** Requires might be packaged kosher certification hot on equipment as retail honey used for non-kosher products.
- **Carrots**
 - **FRESH** carrots): With OR no **FROZEN** questionable (including additives baby are acceptable without hashgachah.
 - **CANNED:** Requires kosher certification.
- **Leek:** Cut along full length of the leek so every leaf is separated. Wash each leaf thoroughly under running water.
- **Cabbage**
 - **FRESH GREEN:** Remove and discard 4 outer green leaves. Remove remaining green leaves (if any) and rinse them thoroughly under a stream of water. The remaining white leaves may be used without any further checking other than a cursory inspection for obvious insect infestation.
 - **PRE-WASHED:** Acceptable without certification; no further washing is required.
- **Beets**
 - **RAW** A general inspection is needed to rule out obvious infestation.
 - **COOKED, CANNED OR JARRED** Requires certification.
- **Pomegranate**
 - **FRESH** A general inspection is needed to rule out obvious infestation.
 - **FRESH ARILS** With no questionable additives are acceptable without hashgachah.
- **Dates:** **FRESH** or **DRIED** Acceptable without a hechsher. Slice open a handful from the container and check inside. If no insects are found the rest may be eaten without checking. This applies to all dates which are either grown in the United States and/or are pitted.
- **Gourd**
 - **FRESH** A general inspection is needed to rule out obvious infestation.
 - **CANNED:** Requires kosher certification.
- **Raisins:** All domestic do not require certification, unless need they are oil treated or flavored. Does not need special infestation inspection.
- **Fish / Head of Fish**
 - **RAW FISH** It is preferable to purchase raw fish in a kosher fish store. If this isn't possible, one must first make sure the fish is, in fact, a kosher species. The only reliable method of determining that a fish is from a kosher species is by inspecting its scales to be

sure that they are the type that can be removed from the fish without ripping any flesh. (One notable exception is salmon where the flesh-color is unique and is considered a clear identifying mark of the kosher, salmon fish.) Secondly, the knives used to scale, eviscerate, fillet and/or cut the fish may have been previously used for non-kosher fish. To avoid this issue it is necessary to ask the store employees to clean the knife and work on a clean piece of butcher-paper. If this isn't possible, there is basis to permit the purchase of pre-cut fish but it is necessary to scrub clean any surfaces that had been cut.

- **SMOKED / COOKED / PROCESSED / JARRED / CANNED**
Requires certification.
- **Head of Sheep: Requires Certification.**
- **Black-eyed Peas:**
 - **RAW** A general inspection is needed to rule out obvious infestation.
 - **COOKED, CANNED OR JARRED:** Requires certification.
- **Fenugreek:**
 - **FRESH** Use cRc cleaning thrip- cloth method, as directed below.
 - **SEEDS** Ground, chopped, powdered or whole are recommended without hashgachah.
- **Spinach**
 - **FRESH or PREWASHED** Use cRc cleaning thrip- cloth method, as directed below.
 - **FROZEN OR CANNED** Requires certification.
- **Thrip-cloth Method (using a silk cloth)** You will need a large bowl, dish soap, 2 strainers, a thrip-cloth (a fine silk cloth that can be purchased from the cRc), and a light box.
 1. Separate the leaves and place them into a bowl of water.
 2. Put enough dish soap (a good choice would be Seventh Generation 0%fragrance) or kosher vegetable wash into the bowl until the water and leaves become somewhat slippery.
 3. Agitate and soak the leaves in the soapy water for 1- 2 minutes.
 4. Remove the leaves from the bowl and discard the water.
 5. Repeat steps 2-4. Alternatively (instead of repeating steps 2-4) one can wash each leaf under running water (both sides) and then place leaves into a new bowl of soapy water.
 6. Remove leaves and pour the water through a thrip-cloth that is sandwiched between 2 strainers.
 7. Check the cloth carefully on top of a light box or similar apparatus. If a bug is found, repeat. If no bugs are found, rinse and enjoy

Checking simanim to be used on Rosh Hashanah, provided by Rabbi Moshe Vaye Shlita, updated for Rosh Hashanah 5781 from Jerusalem Kosher News on September 2, 2020. [Click here for the PDF.](#)

From the COR Detroit:

PAS YISROEL: The K-COR wishes to remind the Kosher consumer of the accepted custom to be stringent on Pas Yisroel during Aseres Yemei T'shuva. Please be advised that many K-COR certified establishments produce or sell some bread and cake products that are not Pas Yisroel. Please ask the Mashgiach or call the K-COR office for details regarding specific establishments.

- **MILANO BAKERY** bread and rolls that bear the K-COR symbol are Pas

- Yisroel*, except for **Milano Bread Sticks** which are not Pas Yisroel.
- **SIMPLY NATURE KNOCK YOUR SPROUTS OFF SPROUTED 7 GRAIN BREAD** at Aldi with an **OK** symbol is Pas Yisroel*.
 - **FOOD FOR LIFE EZEKIEL SPROUTED GRAIN BREADS** with the Kof-K symbol are Pas Yisroel. The **Pocket Bread**, however, is not Pas Yisroel.
 - **NATURAL OVENS BAKERY** - The following Natural Ovens breads with an OU are Pas Yisroel: **Whole Grain Right Wheat, Whole Grain Multi-Grain, 100% Whole Grain, Better White, Oatmeal, Keto-Friendly White Bread**. [NOTE: Natural Ovens Organic 100% Whole Grain Wheat Bread with CK (Cincinnati Kosher) certification, sold at Costco, is not Pas Yisroel.]
 - **S. ROSEN'S** breads, buns and rolls with an OU are Pas Yisroel*.
 - **TRADER JOE'S** brand of **CHOCOLATE BROOKLYN BABKA, CINNAMON BROOKLYN BABKA, and HALF MOON COOKIES** that bear OU Pareve are Pas Yisroel. (They are no longer Yoshon.)
 - **TRADER JOE'S SOFT BAKED PEANUT BUTTER CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES** bears OK Pareve and states Pas Yisroel* on the label. (It is also Yoshon.)
 - **MATT'S BAKERY COOKIES** with OK Pareve are Pas Yisroel*.

* per the “glow-plug method” [an electrical heating element turned on by the Mashgiach], which most Kashrus agencies consider Pas Yisroel. (The OU, however, does not accept this as Pas Yisroel, based on the psak of Rabbi Yisroel Belsky zt'l.)

Additional information on Pas Yisroel and Yoshon is found on www.kashrut.com/consumer/baked_goods/#PasYisroelYashonProductLists

From the COR Detroit:

LUDEX'S and many STORE BRANDS of THROAT / COUGH DROPS (e.g., CVS, Rite Aid, Kroger, Meijer, etc.) were in the past produced on dairy equipment and stated OU-D on the label. The manufacturing process has changed, and now they are being produced on dedicated pareve equipment and are fully pareve. New labels therefore bear a plain OU. Stores may have a mixture of OU and OU-D labeled product; **check each package for its correct status.**

From the cRc:

Mission Foods tortillas & related products are certified kosher by cRc ONLY when produced in USA. Mission Foods has recently started importing similar non-certified products accurately labeled “made in Mexico”. Check for cRc logo on packaging for cRc-certified #kosher products

From the Vaad of Kansas City:

Creamy Hollandaise sauce mix produced by Riege Foods has mistakenly been labeled pareve. The product is dairy, as indicated on the ingredients list. The product is being relabeled.

From the COR Detroit:

V8 ORIGINAL 100% VEGETABLE JUICE in bottles (12, 32, 46 and 64 oz. sizes), and in 5.5 and 11.5 oz. cans, is OU certified and bears the OU symbol on the back. However, the 46 oz. can is not certified and does not bear an OU. Information from the OU:

"We only stand behind those with an OU on its label.

There are a variety of reasons why a product may sometimes appear with an OU and sometimes without. Here are a few of those possibilities:

- Different sizes of the same product are made on different production lines or at facilities that are not certified.
- The product without the OU symbol is manufactured in a non-certified plant.
- The product without the OU is an old batch that was manufactured prior to OU supervision."

From the Kof-K:

Dare to be Different Broccoli Crusts:

Printer applied **incorrect** nutritional information to the ingredient panel which includes Mozzarella and Parmesan Cheese. The product does not contain any dairy components and is correctly labeled as Pareve.

Corrective action as been taken to update packaging.

100 Brachos a Day

לעילוי נשמת יהושע יונתן בן יבלח"ט דוד שלום נ"י | באלאבאן



Welcome to 100 Brachos a Day!

What is the program?

After signing up for 100 Brachos a Day, participants will receive their choice of checklist, as well as a complimentary book on the subject. Each week, a newsletter with inspiration and stories, as well as a summary of that week's corresponding pages in the book, will be sent out. Printed editions will be available as well. B'Ezras Hashem, this year-long Brachos program will lead to a greater understanding and appreciation for the Brachos we say and why we say them. Any growth, learning and inspiration derived from this program will serve an aliyas neshama for Yoshi Balaban a"h.

Click [here](#) to access the signup form for 100 Brachos a Day.

Share with your friends!

Sign up here!

Saying Brachos with Intention

Source: Guidelines – Questions and Answers about the Laws of Brachos

Before reciting a bracha, consider whether it is required, and if so, which is the right bracha to make. This takes just a moment, but can save you from making the serious mistake of a bracha livatala.

There are many things to keep in mind before saying a bracha. At the very least, take a moment to realize that you are thanking Hashem for the food you are about to eat! To say the words by rote with no thought at all is a sin that could arouse Hashem's anger, *chas veshalom*. The *navi* Yeshayahu criticized B'nei Yisroel in his time for honoring Hashem merely with lip service and doing the mitzvos meaninglessly and by rote.

Since reciting a bracha is a form of service to Hashem, it must be done with proper reverence. Saying a bracha by rote and without proper attention is at best disrespectful, and at worse an outright disgrace to Hashem's Name, while saying a bracha with thought and care is an honor and glory to Hashem.

In the following weeks we discuss the following categories and how they relate to brachos: pronunciation, concentration, dress, hygiene, and respectful place.

Book Summary

100 Brachos: counting your blessings 100 times a day

Chapter 9: 63-65

In the following three brachos, we thank Hashem for allowing an enabling us to be involved in Torah learning.

Bracha #20: Blessings for the Torah

The Ben Ish Chai, in his *Sefer Halachos on Chumash*, suggests that if one works for eight hours a day, he still has eight hours to learn (which includes learning with his children), and eight hours to sleep. Women also say these brachos because, although they do not learn as in depth as the men do, they still have plenty to learn regarding all of the *halachos* that apply to them.

Bracha #21: Blessings for the Torah

In this bracha, we ask Hashem to help us enjoy the *geshmack*, the pleasure of Torah, which is the greatest *geshmack* there is. When we take part and indulge in the Torah's sweetness, we will ultimately develop to become "Those who know Your Name and who learn Torah for its own sake." Torah study is also the only mitzvah – and the sole pleasure – for which the preliminary bracha is mid'Oraysa, a Torah requirement.



Professional shiur and program
now for boys in 3rd through 5th grades led by

Rabbi Elie Chernitzky

each Monday and Wednesday Evening
from 6:45-7:30 pm

Continues August 15th!

Maseches Zevachim

With exciting sheets, diagrams and prizes.

For details and questions,
please call Rabbi Chernitzky or the Rov

Sponsored anonymously l'n
Mr. Chuck Esralew, Yechezkel Dovid ben Chaim a"h

RESTARTING TONIGHT at 7:45

Night Seder for 7-8th Grade Bochorim
with
RABBI WEITZ!

Now Learning Maseches Sotah
Nightly Refreshing Cold Drinks

Sunday - Thursday

7:45

Followed by Maariv

Learning! Chazara!

Ball games, Kugels, Oneg Shabbos and more!

No need to bring your own Gemorah - just bring your bren and chaishek!



Teshuvah-ology

The first step toward achieving lasting teshuvah

Courtesy of Rabbi Levi Lebovitz and The Vaad Project

Remember the 5782 goal you chose last week?

Have you thought about how you're going to make it happen?

Teshuvah is challenging. Maintaining your new level even more so. There's a science to it – a science that we're going to be analyzing over the next few weeks.

Our lessons will be quite hands-on. Lesson One, in fact, involves a dissection. A dissection of you.

We've all made a certain hypothesis about teshuvah: that it lives in the realm of action. We've *done* things wrong, so now we have to switch *todoing* them

right. Snapped at your spouse? Speak more nicely. Not learning enough? Start Daf Yomi. Stingy with your charity? Start answering phone solicitors.

But experimentation proves us wrong. Because when all we alter is our actions, our changes don't last much longer than the month of Tishrei. That's because the foundational battlefield of teshuvah isn't in the world of action. It's in our internal world.

The Mesillas Yescharim describes teshuvah as "akirasharatzon," the uprooting of our will. Our drives. Our desires. The inner factors that spawn our external behavior. Our actions aren't born in a vacuum. They're direct byproducts of what's going on inside us.

There's a reason we spoke that lashon hora. Maybe it's because, deep inside, we don't consider other people's dignity important to us. Maybe it's because we're so desperate for approval that we're willing to step on others' reputations to boost our own.

If we want to build a strong foundation for teshuvah, we need to open ourselves up and look inside. What's behind our actions? What inner desires, feelings, urges, or biases are driving our mistakes?

Like all dissections, this one will likely make us queasy. Why? Because who wants to stare their inner ugliness in the face?! Sure, we make mistakes – like all humans. But when we actually confront the dark depths of our own human nature, we want to squirm. Run away. End the study, close the experiment.

When that happens, we need to remember that the same humanity that makes us so fallible also makes us something else: *mi'od*.

Take a look at Bereishis, perek alef, pasuk lamed alef (1:31): "And Hashem saw everything that He had done, and it was *tov mi'od* – very good."

Our Sages, looking at the word "mi'od," "very," point out that it's made up of the same three Hebrew letters – mem, alef, and daled – as the word "adam," man. What is the relationship between man and "mi'od?"

"Very" is a word that suggests abundance without limits. Unfettered by amounts, it conveys a sense of endless magnitude.

At our core, explain our Sages, we humans are "mi'od." We are endless – endless in the depth of our strength, in our capacity to constantly access new levels of potential.

We think of ourselves as – ourselves. The people we are right now. But we need to realize that we're missing something. Our perception of our abilities is nothing but a tiny glimpse of our true essence. Our flaws don't define us. Every day, every moment, we have another opportunity to perfect them more, to reach higher, to grow further. Endless layers of greatness reside within us.

How do we bring those layers to light? Through our struggles. Through spiritual fighting. Through encountering challenges that seem impossible to overcome – and pushing past them. Because we can. We have it in us. We are *mi'od*.

When we turn inward, when we take a good hard look at those parts we'd rather ignore, we must remind ourselves that those flaws aren't *us*. They're simply part of the toolbox Hashem gave us to help us activate the greatness within. Because without struggle, there can't be growth.

If we keep this in mind, our dissection-queasiness will fade.

Q&A with HaRav Miller

Q: What could we learn from the hurricane that was supposed to come today? {this question was referencing either Hurricane Gordon or Hurricane Helene of late September 2000}

A: The hurricane first of all is a test, will you come hear the lecture? They say a hurricane might be coming, and everyone is all nervous and excited, and despite that you came. You get more reward for that. לפום צערא אגרא, according to the effort required, so too will be the reward.

Secondly, from the hurricane we learn ובכן תן פחדך השם אלוקיני על כל מעשיך — “Hashem, put Your fear on the world” (Rosh Hashana Amidah). Hashem does it to create fear. You have to be afraid of Hashem. A hurricane, chas v’shalom – much worse could have happened. It turned out it didn’t happen; it’s nice and quiet, boruch Hashem. But the fear of the hurricane is enough. The fear of the hurricane is enough to make you a changed man if you’re wise enough to use the opportunity.

You know, I always say, there’s a din in the Torah of the ben sorer u’moreh, a son who is disobedient and he steals from his parents’ money and buys meat and wine. So his parents can accuse him before beis din and they whip him, they give him malkus. And if he does it a second time, his parents bring him before beis din and they kill him. A little young boy of twelve years old. And everybody pelts him with stones. All the people of the town come and they throw stones at him and kill him.

Now this scenario has so many conditions in the gemara – so many conditions that must be fulfilled in order to kill him, that some say that it never happened. It’s so hard to fulfill because there are so many conditions attached, so it never even happened. But if it never could happen, why is written in the Torah?

The answer is that all the little boys who learn chumash, all the little boys in cheder are frightened to death by it. They learn the chumash with their rebbi and they’re frightened. Oh, it’s wonderful! That lesson is wonderful — to be afraid of being wicked. “If I’m wicked, this could happen to me,” the little boy is thinking. He doesn’t know the lomdus in Mesichta Sanhedrin, all the conditions and difficulties, the chumrahs that make it impossible. He doesn’t know about that. To be afraid is a tremendous thing. Learn to be afraid of Hashem!

And that’s why, when we study the principles of the Torah, even if it’s things that won’t happen in our days, nevertheless the fact that it did happen once, is a tremendous opportunity.

Let’s say it happened once in Europe. A terrible destruction happened once in Europe, and we should be afraid. You know, I was in Europe before it happened. I was there. Nobody thought it would happen. Nobody dreamed about that. That they would wipe out towns?! They took the men of every town out to the fields and they shot them down. They shot them down. And three weeks later, they came back, took out the women, and shot the women down. They shot down the men and women. In some places they made a hole in the ground, and they put the people in the hole, and shot them in the hole. Who even dreamed of such a thing?! And before they killed them, the Jews were hiding in their homes starving. They were starving and frightened to death. And the Germans ran around the town, banging on the doors. The German banged on the door, “Give me your child!” “My child?!” “Yes, give me your child. If not, I’ll shoot you all to death immediately.” And the Germans took the children and put them into the back of a truck, and they would drive the truck out to the

forest. And on the way out to the forest, the exhaust of the truck, the monoxide fumes, were pumped into the interior of the truck, and the children were gassed to death. And they were dumped out in the forest. And then the truck went back for more. The Germans ran around with their guns pulling children from their mother's arms, to gas them. Who would have dreamed of such a thing?! A meshuganeh world! In our wildest nightmares, we wouldn't think about something like that.

Now, I must tell you something. The Mirrer mashgiach, zichrono l'vracha, in the old Mir said the following: People forgot about Gehenom altogether. Even frum Jews stopped talking about Gehenom. So Hakodosh Boruch Hu gave a little sample of Gehenom in this world. That's what he said. That it was a little sample of Gehenom in this world. Not Gehenom; Gehenom is much worse than that. But it's a sample. And we have to think about that.

We're here, enjoying all luxuries, with plenty to eat. We have liberty, we have safety, we have equality, everything – and over there they're burning Jews. Destroying them in terrible, brutal ways. And we have to think, why are we any better than they are? So we have to say, "Ribono Shel Olam, we are learning to fear you. We are trying to make our way of life better, just because of that. We want to use their deaths as a stimulus to improve our lives to be more loyal to you." We should always think about that. You should think, "Why should I be the survivor, when they were destroyed so terribly?" And the answer is, "I have to learn from the example, the lesson, that was offered, by this terrible catastrophe in Europe. I have to learn how to utilize my life, and I have to say, 'I'm going to serve You Hashem, and improve all the days of my life just because of that.'"

So it doesn't matter if it's a destruction in Europe or a hurricane in America, you have to make sure to see Hashem, and become more and more afraid of Him all the days of your lives. The gemara tells us (Yevamos 63a) אין לאל ישראל פורענות באה לעולם אלא בשביל ישראל – Misfortune comes to the world only on account of the Am Yisroel. The hurricane is for the Am Yisroel. The earthquake is for the Am Yisroel. The Holocaust is for the Am Yisroel. And Rashi (ibid.) says, כדי ליראם – to make us afraid, so that we should do teshuva. TAPE # E-201 (September 2000)

Q: Rashi in Beitzah (16a) explains that the purpose of the neshama yiseirah, the additional soul that Jew gets on Shabbos, is so that a person should be able to eat more on Shabbos. I think that's a very strange reason to get an additional soul.

A: Actually Rashi is saying something else. Rashi is saying that because of the neshama yiseirah we eat more on Shabbos – but not that it's the purpose of the neshama yiseirah. The neshama yiseirah means that we have an additional type of soul on Shabbos that gives us extra energy and enthusiasm which is intended to help us understand more of the Shabbos lessons; so that we should feel it more. And therefore, because of that neshama yiseira, we're more capable on Shabbos – if we utilize it, if we activate it, we're more capable of learning these great Shabbos lessons and many other lessons too.

But because there's an added energy now, so you're able to eat more. That's what Rashi is saying. When a man is in a good mood, you know he eats more; when he's dejected, he eats less. And therefore when the neshama yiseirah enters and causes a man to be enthusiastic, so he has more desire to consume physical foods and physical pleasures. But not that the neshama yiseirah is made expressly for the purpose of eating more.

Q: What happens to the original soul when the neshama yiseirah comes?

A: The answer is it's the same one only it's better.

Now, you have to know that when we talk about the soul, we're talking about an unknown quality. We're like blind men talking about colors. And therefore we use only figures of speech. When we say a neshama yiseirah, we actually do not know what we're talking about.

What we do know is that there is such an entity as a neshama – the Torah teaches us that very important principle at the beginning of the chumash. It says there that Hakadosh Baruch Hu breathed into mankind a spirit of life. He didn't breathe it into animals. It's only in human beings. And on Shabbos in a Jew that spirit is transformed in such a way that it's called neshama yiseirah, and it's capable of achieving that which the ordinary neshama cannot achieve. TAPE #106

I Am Responsible For My Brother

By Rabbi Shmuel Gluck, Areivim

This isn't as Yomim Noraim-related a topic as readers may expect and I assume that I will figure out how to tie it in before the article is complete. I have noticed that people have very different views in regard to what their areas of responsibilities are. This question begins as a conceptual one and has value regardless of how many, or few, opportunities people have to help others. That's because people should do their best if they are accountable and should not help, even if they are able to, if they are not accountable. Therefore, it is the starting point for many daily decisions people make regarding themselves and others.

How responsible am I for the world? What about to my parents and siblings? What about to my spouse and children? Finally, what about to myself? Even if people are capable, are they expected to utilize the capabilities of others?

Many people don't even consider themselves responsible to themselves. They believe they have a right to decide whether they will eat healthy, smoke, or live in any other irresponsible manner. Someone proudly told me, "I'm exactly 100 pounds heavier than I was on my wedding night". I have heard many such ludicrous badges of honor that people have pinned on themselves.

I have found a pattern. Those who take care of themselves then often begin to concern themselves with their immediate surroundings and then expand further. Those that stop considering their responsibilities to others often, eventually, stop being concerned for themselves. It is often that I hear people tell me, "What is it anyone's business what I do to myself?". Is it a person's personal choice to decide what he or she considers to be their responsibilities?

The answer to this question is that people's responsibilities are not personal decisions. Most people are appalled when told, "Why do I have to take care of my child just because I gave birth to him? He's 18 years old and can make his own decisions." I have spoken to several parents who don't feel responsible, which is different than capable, to pay for their child's wedding or help them in a stressful time.

In those circumstances, most people would agree that a person's

responsibilities exist despite denying them that responsibility. If so, the question is only how much, to whom, and to what extent are people responsible to others?

The answer to this question is that we are responsible to everyone in Klal Yisroel. Of course, we can't take on everyone's burdens. Because of this practical limitation, we easily forget, as a starting point, that we are responsible. Even when we can help, we often do not give significant thought to consider what we can do.

People should acknowledge their responsibility to others, beginning as a personal value. Doing so will change how we think. Instead of thinking, "I need a compelling reason to worry about someone else", especially if you don't know them, we should begin the decision process by saying to ourselves, "I should help if I can make it happen. Can I?".

Instead of responding in one's mind to a child's request (whether still a teenager or an adult) with, "Give me a reason that I should buy you...", we should say, "Is there a good reason I shouldn't?". The shift in perspective causes people to naturally, even effortlessly, leave their comfort zone to help others.

Don't think that I am asking people to become self-destructive martyrs. Even if we consider our responsibility to others and are willing to split ourselves in multiple directions, we must realistically assess the depth of our resources: time, money and emotional strength. We then must gauge what we can afford and what we can't afford to give away.

Appreciating that we are responsible for others extends beyond what our resources will allow us to do. When there's nothing else we can do, feeling their angst is itself an act of sharing their burden. While it may seem like feeling someone else's angst doesn't help, it does, as it takes the form of an individual Tefilla, which Hashem then hears.

In addition, aware of our responsibility, we realize that we can still (as long as we don't internalize the angst to the point where it negatively affects ourselves and our families) share their burden with them by listening or doing small, unrelated favors for them.

The underlying message is that people often find it difficult to have the drive needed to do what they should do for themselves and for others. A part of the reason is that we don't feel responsible to act responsibly.

Rosh Hashana is in a few days, yet many lack the drive and don't feel accountable to themselves to escape their lives which they acknowledge they aren't happy with, and to realize that they can improve their lives if they change.

More surprising is the lack of effort during the Yomim Noraim from people who complain throughout the year about their Parnasah and the challenges they have with their children yet still can't muster the energy to invest in the Yomim Noraim. It seems to go against mankind's nature of survival. We have a problem and we have a solution. Yet, we don't connect the two.

Finally, there is the suffering many in Klal Yisrael face, particularly this year. The loss of life has been staggering, the result of several unrelated causes. It has been a year that Hashem has given us multiple reasons to self-reflect. Yet, to many, if it hasn't touched their doorstep, they can't find the "connection" between them and the rest of Klal Yisrael.

We must remind ourselves that we are responsible and, in the next few days, we even have the tools we need to change our own lives, that of our families, and even those who live across the country and overseas. Tefilla, and a commitment to personal growth, are some of our tools. But, before you can pick up those tools, you must care and then feel accountable. Please, care about each one of us, even if you haven't heard our names and don't know that we exist.

May we all merit a K'siva V'chasima Tova together with all of Klal Yisrael.

Parshas Nitzavim

Moshe Rabbeinu describes how we shouldn't worship idols made of stone and wood. He continues to say that we should also not worship silver and gold idols which people keep with them inside their houses. Rashi explains that people kept their wood and stone idols outside, and didn't worry about them being stolen. But they kept the gold and silver ones inside to protect them from theft.

It seems bizarre that people can appreciate their idols' inability to protect themselves and still consider them capable of protecting the people who own them. There's a similar contradiction with those that serve fire and water knowing that each one can be consumed by the other.

I find it fascinating that the human mind allows us to ignore compelling arguments to support our personal agendas. We don't even feel guilty when we do this. The Chochmo U'mussor refers to this as being Mamshich Emes L'rtzonchem, that people create a truth that will be consistent with their interests.

We consider a Rav smart unless his P'sak goes against our interests. We consider a Halacha to be relevant if it supports our agenda, and not as relevant if it doesn't. Sadly, our ability to create what we want reality to be is often a tool to manipulate others.

Instead, live objectively, always filter decisions, and ask yourself if you have an agenda. Otherwise, instead of serving Hashem you are, as the Passuk describes, Al Tiyu Bicho Eil Zor, don't place yourself to be an Avoda Zara, serving yourself instead of Hashem.
