**Rosh Hashana night**

* Discuss Har Grizim
* Chofetz chayim on power of that blessing (including to not stab and uphold the Torah)
* Explain how Hashem has given us the power of blessing
* When we say the simanim, we pray, when we bless everyone with a sweet year we need to pray from our hearts
* Discuss lamnatzeach livnei Korach – how allah Hashem, it is our shofar which greets Hashem, and Ashrei ha’am – How our hearts cannot but fill with Love for Hashem
* We find one other time that Hashem is our King – vayehi biyeshurin melech – if we are so important to Hashem, so are our brothers and sisters – in unity
* Reb Shmuel red tie on Yom Kippur
* Summarize, may Hashem look at us and proclaim that we are children who are full of faith, his sons and daughters, who he will have mercy and we will be his people.
* May Hashem bless everyone with a sweet year

**Leining** - Avraham started out with nothing, Hashem promised him three, and he realized it here.

**Rosh Hashana morning**

* I want to share a fascinating medrash
* Tamid is a summary of all of the torah – shema, anochi, vaahavticha, Zos Toras (esoteric) – ben pazi
* Rabbi Frand – relationships
* Fun Joe vs Angry Joe
* Relationships with Hashem – constant mitzvot – Shabbat Candles, Tefillin, Proclaiming Hashem’s kingdom in shema, davening
* This is what it means to accept Hashem’s Kingdom
* As we spoke yesterday – doesn’t mean we will change, but we will accept
* Yiddish expression
* Rabbi Yisroel Salantar – shema
* Shofar to wake up
אַף עַל פִּי שֶׁתְּקִיעַת שׁוֹפָר בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה גְּזֵרַת הַכָּתוּב רֶמֶז יֵשׁ בּוֹ כְּלוֹמַר עוּרוּ יְשֵׁנִים מִשְּׁנַתְכֶם וְנִרְדָּמִים הָקִיצוּ מִתַּרְדֵּמַתְכֶם וְחַפְּשׂוּ בְּמַעֲשֵׂיכֶם וְחִזְרוּ בִּתְשׁוּבָה וְזִכְרוּ בּוֹרַאֲכֶם. אֵלּוּ הַשּׁוֹכְחִים אֶת הָאֱמֶת בְּהַבְלֵי הַזְּמַן וְשׁוֹגִים כָּל שְׁנָתָם בְּהֶבֶל וָרִיק אֲשֶׁר לֹא יוֹעִיל וְלֹא יַצִּיל,
* Some people go throughout their entire life, even if they do all of the right actions, without a relationship
* Same with their relationship with Hashem – love, joy, relationship
* R Aaron Dov Friedman – Avinu Malkeinu
* Interwoven in Malchus is our father – interwoven in the rosh Hashana service and the welcoming Hashem’s presence is that He is our father
* Right after we blow the Shofar, Hayom Haraas Olam (Birthday, R Bechaya Birth Pains) – the last year was not great, we need a better year.
* Sons / servants, etc.
* We must start by treating Hashem as our King, and as our father as well.
* What is this double approach
* R Moshe Eisemann – There are two aspects, the body – can fear but never awe (jungle)
A servant fears a son can have awe.
* That is who we are. Kingdom mixed with Relationship
* The first step is we must view Hashem as our father and as our King, then we can ask for mercy
* A child is one who promotes Hashem, a servant is one who does what he needs to regardless. We ask Hashem first as one who is a child, and then as one who has carried His name.
* We are about to blow Shofar, we are about to welcome our king
* Hashem is our King, for all of the big occurrences, but for all of the constant ones, not that they are not important , repeat, davening – etc.
He is our daily King and our daily father.
* We cannot just view him as our king and keep a distance, which if we think about how beyond He is, part of our heart is how can we approach Hashem, but we must, as He is our father, we must create that connect as a child.
* And if we accept him as our father, we can ask Hashem, saying, we will do the special and the constant mitzvot as a son as a daughter, to build that connection, to develop a real relationship and affinity, then we can likewise ask Hashem, that when we hear the shofar, to judge us favorably, as a servant who holds fast to what their king asks of them, but even more than that, we can ask Him to please have mercy on us, as a father has mercy on his child.

Leining – Michtav Meeliyahu – the ashes of Yitzchak

**Rosh Hashana II morning**

* The world is created on Tishrei – hayom haras olam – birthday, Rabeinu Bechaya – birth pains
* Ramban
* It was a new year and a day of justice since the days of Adam
* R Gedaliah Schorr on the world started with Adam’s creation, that Man can proclaim Hashem as the king
* So is Mashiach going to be decided on RH or Nissan?
* Moshiach – I don’t know when the judgement for that will be
* Necessity of Mashiach from R Weinberg
* Rambam part of believing is pining for Mashiach
* When one does not understand the pain, as if it were, that Hashem is in, as He watches His world burn, then he is lacking in his faith and in his heart that desire to come close to Hashem
* Medrash with Avraham watching the world burn
* During the Mussaf davening, we are not only acknowledging that Hashem is the creator and gave us the Torah, but that He is the King, and there will be a time that His name is one.
* With all that come with it (the uvechains)
* That is the service
* Story with Minchas Elazar and grandson crying
* To answer original question, I don’t know, but beita Achishenu
* However, it is up to us. Even if He decides not to bring it this year, we need it in ourselves to ask for it. That is what Malchiyus means
* Need ending story (Maybe R Chaim Soloveitchik, Russian Soldier

**Shabbos Shuva night**

* Spoke about – Teshuva and compared it to Chesed and Torah

**Shabbos Shuva**

* Joke about beer – you stand to the side
* Every year it is the same – what can be done if we try but never change
I was hoping someone can give me advice
* Sometimes you run against a wall, it is easier to look for a doorknob
* Three approaches
	+ Atomic Habits – James Clear – 1%
		- Noticing, wanting , doing and liking
		- Noticing – think lack motivation, need clarity – no plan
		- - when where and how – failure pre-mortem
		- Wanting – set your environment instead of keeping environment
		- Doing – make sure you can repeat, optimize starting line
		- Liking – bring reward present moment – best way to change long term behavior is with short term feedback – wall calendar – don’t break the chain
		- If we repeat, we can become something new, and we believe it based on actions, based on who you are.
		- Every action that you take is a vote on who you want to become
		- Goals not to run a marathon, but become a runner. Instead of doing, habits change being the person we want
	+ Positive Psychology – Martin Seligman
	Rabbi Shabbos Teshuva Drasha – about how special you are

To push this brief description a bit further, positive psychology is a scientific approach to studying human thoughts, feelings, and behavior, with a focus on strengths instead of weaknesses, building the good in life instead of repairing the bad, and taking the lives of average people up to “great” instead of focusing solely on moving those who are struggling up to “normal”

Positive psychology focuses on the positive events and influences in life, including:

* Positive experiences (like happiness, joy, inspiration, and love).
* Positive states and traits (like gratitude, resilience, and compassion).
* Positive institutions (applying positive principles within entire organizations and institutions).

As a field, positive psychology spends much of its time thinking about topics like character strengths, optimism, life satisfaction, happiness, wellbeing, gratitude, compassion (as well as self-compassion), self-esteem and self-confidence, hope, and elevation.

* + Shifting the battleground
	Michael BenEzra – my boss once told me I don’t need to
	+ There must be fifty ways to leave your sins and vices
* Gemara with no excuses (see if R Shmuelovits speaks about it)
* Medrash with Yosef
* Dirshu 2 meaning
* Joke about long distance
* This is Shabbos Shuva now is a double opportunity – we must find a path and take advantage

**Yom Kippur evening**

* Yom Kippur Tov – The day of attonment, …repentance, purification, … rebuilding burnt bridges
* Rabeinu Yonah – Hashem gave us a present to escape from our mistakes and sins
* Many steps to completely purify our souls, but four basic steps
* Vidui, confession to Hashem is an integral mitzvah and part of repentance
* Medrash those who confess in a regular court and Hashem’s court - my glove
* Medrash – R Yonah with hole in jail, explain that it is obvious you don’t care
* Once watched a place that gave it to people as an honor –spooked me
	+ Friend – 20 years, I wronged a friend/ don’t beat wife
* Go through the Ashamnus – Rabbi Tendler, Chayei Adam
* We start off - **Elokeinu V’Elokei Avoseinu**- We say it so freely because we say it every day in the first Beracha of Shemoneh Esrei. What are we really saying?
* **Elokeinu** - Our G-d, You created me, You gave me a purpose, there is Schar V’Onesh. This should evoke a strong emotion in terms of Who we’re talking to and what we’re going to say…
* **V’Elokei Avoseinu**- Not necessarily our Avos, but also our ancestors. We’ve gone through so many periods of persecution, and our ancestors never gave up their commitment to being part of the Am Hashem. We who have everything, how much more so do we have to commit ourselves to HKB”H, and be prepared to sacrifice to keep the Torah.
* **Tavo L’Fanecha Tfilaseinu** - Our Tefillos should come to you. Some times you get mail in the mailbox, and you toss it straight into the wastebasket. Please consider my Tefillos, and don’t discard them.
* **V’Al Tisalem MiTchinasaynu** - Please don’t look aside. Please pay attention to my heartfelt Tefillah.

We say at the end of Shemoneh Esrei- Yiyu L’Ratzon Imrei Fi, V’Hegyon Libi LeFanecha, may my words and my thoughts be desirous to You. What if someone wasn’t thinking during his Tefilos? They were still said! Please don’t turn away from them!

* **Sh’eyn Ano Azei Ponim U’kshay Oref** - We’re not going to look you in the face and claim to be Tzadikim, You know the truth! We and our forefathers sinned. This is the **Ikkur of Viduy**…
* **Plural** – it shows complicity, it shows that we didn’t care, we are all responsible for another, if we would have elevated ourselves, they would not have done it before us
* **Ashamnu** - “V’Ashmaseinu Gadlah Ad Lashamayim”. A Chet is an Avlah, a Kilkul in the world. Another Pshat in “Ashamnu” is that we have made ourselves desolate, Shemama – we have waisted the precious time that Hashem gives to s, and filled it with matters that separate us from Hashem and from reality. When we say “Ashamnu”, we are saying that we are destroying the beautiful Neshama that Hashem has given us.
* **Bagadnu** - We are Kofuy Tov. If someone does you a favor and you repay with bad, this is Bagadnu. Hashem created us, we’re living, we have wisdom, eyes, feet, but we don’t appreciate them.
* **Gazalnu** - The simplest understanding of this is borrowing someone from someone without permission, or if I found something and didn’t give the loser the opportunity to retrieve it. Also, the Gemara says that if someone steals to tease someone, this is still Geneivah. If a vending machine, washing machine, or payphone is broken and you take advantage of this, you are a thief.

To train ourselves, to be Zahir, not to be a Gazlan. We have to train ourselves to be concerned about money that isn’t ours.

* **Dibarnu Dofi** – We complained against Hashem, we spoke to people in one manner, while in our heart we knew we would not keep them.
* **He’Evinu** - we have gone slightly off the straight path. (You have to understand that if you go slightly off and you keep on going, you end up way off!!) HKB”H created us to go straight- but we’ve gone off, and our Chaveirim have followed us off! Nowadays, there are so many things that destroy a person’s mind, nowadays just about anything goes!
* **V’Hirshanu** - After we started going off, and took our friends with us, we started doing things for which we are called a Rasha.
* **Zadnu** - We’ve done things B’Mayzid. If you push someone, if you cause someone aggravation, embarrass someone, if I wasted my time. We can smile about it now, but when we look back at our lives we see that we wasted them. Without any plan to create a plan to fix what we are doing wrong.
* **Chamasnu** - We grabbed. The textbook case of this is if you grab something from someone and pay for it, even though he doesn’t want to sell it to you. I’m only concerned about myself, not about others. I’m selfish.
* **Tafalnu Sheker** - I keep on doing one thing B’Sheker, and to cover it I keep on lying. I became a friend of people whose lives are Sheker, and I’m Toful to them, without being Michazek myself to do that which is right and tear myself away from them.
* **Yaatznu Ra** – We sinned in the area of loving our friends like ourselves, and either didn’t care or gave them advice that we would not want given to us. We set a bad example, thus encouraging others to turn away from the Torah
* **Cizavnu** – We promised to Hashem so much, and we never even tried to implement or keep what we promised when the challenges came to us.
* **Latznu** – We disparaged and made fun of advice that was given to become better people and when we were given advice on actions to take to come closer to Hashem
* **Maradnu** – If we were to stop to think about the fact that there is a Creator and we are His creations, then every time that we sin, we are rebelling against Him. We sinned even when there wasn’t a string desire to sin, just because we didn’t care or wanted to rebel
* **Neatznu** – We made our Father, our Creator, the One who has given us life angry at us
* **Sararnu** –
* **Avinu** – We have twisted a straight and righteous path into a path that has become second nature for us. We switched a way of life to live a life of perversion
* **Pashanu** –
* **Tzararnu** – We caused pain to our friends and family, and didn’t even care that we caused them pain
* **Kashinu Oref** – in our own personal lives, we stayed the course, even when we knew that it was against Hashem’s wishes. We say a friend in pain, and we didn’t attempt to help or pray for them, bullied, and we didn’t stand up for them
* **Rashanu** – We took actions that made us evil (ie hitting someone). We dedicated our lives to physiciality, even when it was destructive and against Hashem’s will
* **Shechasnu** – We took actions that destroyed our soul that Hashem gave us
* **Teavnu** – We became disgusting
* **Tainu** – We strayed and never even tried reaching out to try to fix ourselves. Hashem helps those that try, and we didn’t even care to try
* **Teitanu** – The hardest is when a son or daughter strays, and the parent gives up and lets them stray. We have caused Hashem pain, as if it were, that we have “forced” him, to let us and watch us stray
* Charles Bosk Sociologist - Neurosurgery
* We repent as a way of growing and fixing relationships, not as a way to feel sad about them
* Hashem tells us He will forgive, and you will be able to have a fresh start
* Most of vidui and prayers are not in the siddur
* The necessity to believe in repentance
* Discuss Mikvah Hashem - hope purification

**Yom Kippur – Yizkor**

* Story – after WWI, R Yechiel Michal Weinberg, the Seridei Aish, Berlin Yom Kippur, Walter Rathenau, Emil, Yaakov, the place where my fathers prayed, Hashem is everywhere, yet he understood importance of connecting prayers to one’s parents, should not be scorned. even though this was the place of beis hamikdash that was not reason to return, but because his father and grandfather had prayed there. Rabbi Weingot, was in a shull in hamburg was captivated, went to Israel became religious. – merit both ways. Rav Shach – only if we link to the past do we have hope of connecting to the future.
* We are trying to find ways to earn merits for our parents and loved ones, and subsequently connect. May we have a merit both ways (expound)

**Leining** – The Parsha speaks about how we can remove the sins from the Jewish people. First the Cohen Gadol removes the stench of our sins from the Mishkan or mikdash, the location of our connection to Hashem, and then through the service, he separates the sins from ourselves and the best part of ourselves, and discards them. The reading ends that then it is our responsibility to atone and be pure before Hashem.
We make this up with our reading and davening, analogous to a couple …

**Yom Kippur**

* Yom Kippur – The culmination of the days of judgement.
* We know that on Rosh Hashana we are written in either the book of life and blessings, or nonlife and hardships and that will be sealed today. The appeal to make the judgement better is today.
* As we say in the prayers, everyone walks before Hashem, who is not judged on this day. And on countries it is written, who for peace, who for war. We just witnessed a country that in a week went from peace to subjugation.
* Who will live, who will have hardships, who by plague, who by stone, who by water, who will live in serenity, who will live in stress
* Three times, we were hit with collapsing buildings, Covid
* We complain about the world often, but today we can actually make a difference about it. Prayer and repentence
* Rambam look as if the world is 50 50 – quality not numbers

It is, therefore, necessary for every man to behold himself throughout the whole year in a light of being evenly balanced between innocence and guilt, and look upon the entire world as if evenly balanced between innocence and guilt; thus, if he commit one sin, he will overbalance himself and the whole world to the side of guilt, and be a cause of its destruction; but if he perform one duty, behold, he will overbalance himself and the whole world to the side of virtue, and bring about his own and their salvation and escape, even as it is said: "But the righteous is an everlasting foundation" (Prov. 10. 25), it is he, by whose righteousness he overbalanced the whole world to virtue and saved it. And, because of this matter, it became the custom of the whole house of Israel to excel in alms-giving, in good conduct and in the performance of duties during the intervening days of Rosh ha-Shanah and Yom ha-Kippurim above what they do during the whole year.

* While we do not always know or understand the calculations of Hashem, but still one prayer one repentance can shift everything over, health, marriage, loss of car, or property
* We all know the actions of one person, whether from leaking the covid, or eating a bat, can change the world WWI started because of 3 anarchists, and we have seen much unrest in the US triggered by the actions of one or two people. That is today, and that is up to you.
* Story I wish to share which is beyond me, beyond my understanding, but I will share it anyways
* Rabbi Yehuda Amital
* It’s even more important
* Even though that story is about men and women in the guise of angels, but what is the most important is to ask Hashem to be close to Him, because if you are far, what good is everything else
* The books of closeness and distance Tosfos
* What is the first step – we want to come close to Hashem, we know that Hashem is opening his hands - Ramban on vayelech –
* First step admit what is wrong and when you confess them and understand whom you are before that will penetrate your heart to at least yearn in that direction
* R Hirsch - confession separates it from you so you can remove it from yourself
* R Soloveitchik – we start Ana as even though Hashem is offering this kindness to us, we do not barge in, but we ask him for this
* Kabbalists - Yom Kippur is beyond nature. In nature when something is broken, or a friend, it does not easily come together
* We can make this decision now
* I need to end with one more thought
* This week – guilt - Yom Kippur is a day of joy, how many regrets do we have in our life, now we can honestly start anew, kindness of Hashem

**Neila**

* Title – Teshuva is the foundation of the world
* We are all here together on Neila the time when the gates are closing
* Purpose of the year … is neila
* Open the Machzor to Birnbaum pg 143 Artscroll – 294
* Read Tefillah Limoshe (until shuvu, and summarize our response back, and give us joy)
* What does that mean – repentance was created before the world
* Hashem, before creating the World, said I need to set up the foundation, the fundamental purpose of the world
* Allow man to choose good in order to reward him
* He created the World in a way of free choice and repentance – place into creation that man can return and I will take them back.
* World set up to have repentance accepted – this is a fundamental truth Hashem tells us I will always except it.
* The laws of nature and the world (with all of its chaos, and harmony, beauty and majesty) it was set up in a way that we could always return
* If someone said it is too late, it is not my nature, they are denying this fundamental truth, because we were created in a way that we could repent. Before the world was created
* Moshe telling us Never too young, never to old, never impossible, never too hard
* Second understanding – He created everything, repentance first, takes precedence and takes pride.
* Not that man sinned and therefore created repentance
* Let us look at the first verse – home abode
* Imagined a teenager slams the door leaves home goes to real world, parents waiting behind the door
* Child who is potched, still runs back to that parent - warmness of home
* Teach me how
* Tehuva is translated as repentance to return from their sins. Yes this is true, but it means more, it means to return to Hashem, the door is never closed. Hashem is waiting for you, pining for you, don’t think that it is useless or too hard; to recreate.
* Yom kippur as mentioned is that holiday to have a fresh start, a new beginning
* Hashem set up the world that way, and I treasure and hold your repentance high, I made that before the world and I set that up as the foundation.
* Now is the time. Return to me, I will accept it. Even as a judge, I will be merciful, I will pull strings. Come back to me. Come home
* Now is that time, if not now then when, now is that time.

**Sukkah Day 1**

**Stories:**

Rabbi Yehuda Amital z’l (1924-2010, Holocaust survivor and Rosh Yeshiva Yeshivat Har Etzion) teaches, “Yet I have to ask – and I pray that I am not crossing a line – does the fear of divine punishment (yiras ha’onesh) really lead to fear of Heaven (yiras Shomayim)? … On Yom Kippur we seek to attain fear of Heaven, but it is not certain that fear of punishment, thinking about the Books of the Living and of the Dead that are opened, is the right way to go about it.

“My friends, during the darkest time in Jewish history, the Holocaust, Jews saw with their own eyes that ‘וְיֵ֥שׁ נִ֜סְפֶּ֗ה בְּלֹ֣א מִשְׁפָּֽט – some die without judgement’ (Mishlei 13:23). Not only individuals but millions died, as it were, without judgement. But something extraordinary happened: Jews who saw with their own eyes the murder of innocent babies, men, and women, whose children were snatched out of their arms, Jews who lost all hope of ever emerging alive from that hell – they all came together on Yom Kippur in the bunkers and prayed! What inspired them? Was it fear of judgement? These Jews experienced the worst concealment of G-d’s face in history, yet they stood and cried out, as Iyov did: ‘הֵן יִקְטְלֵנִי לוֹ אֲיַחֵל – though He may slay me, yet I will trust in Him’ (Iyov 13:15).

“Whatever else is true, for those Jews on that Yom Kippur, their fate in this world was of no concern. What, then, were they feeling and thinking as they prayed? The answer is to be found in the concluding words of Maseches Yoma, where the Mishna teaches: Says R’ Akiva: אַשְׁרֵיכֶם יִשְׂרָאֵל, Happy are you, O Israel! Before Whom are you purified; Who purifies you? Your Father in heaven, as it is written, ‘Then I shall sprinkle pure water upon you, and you shall be pure’ (Ez.36:25), and it is written, ‘The hope of Israel is Hashem’ (Jer.17:13). Just as the mikvah purifies those who are defiled, so the Holy One, blessed be He, purifies Israel (Mishnah Yoma 8:9).

“R’ Akiva was killed during a very dark time in Jewish history (in the aftermath of the destruction of the Second Temple). For that very reason his words – אַשְׁרֵיכֶם יִשְׂרָאֵל, Happy are you, O Israel! – are a source of inspiration for the entire Jewish people, even during the most difficult periods.

“During the Holocaust, no one felt the fear of ‘who will live and who will die,’ but rather the exaltation of ‘Happy are you, O Israel.’ It was this feeling that made Jews declare, ‘יתגדל ויתקדש שמה רבא – May His great name be magnified and sanctified.’ I was fortunate that when I prayed on Yom Kippur, there was already hope of being saved. [Ed. note – On Yom Kippur 5707/1944, R’ Amital hid in a cellar in the city of Grosswardein while the Hungarian army was already preparing for the coming invasion by the Russian army. He was liberated from the labor camp on Simchas Torah 5705.] But even those who had no such hope stood on Yom Kippur and prayed together with all of Israel, ‘And so place the fear of You, L-rd our G-d, over all that You have made… And so grant honor, L-rd, to Your people.’

Charles Bosk, a sociologist at the University of Pennsylvania, once conducted a set of interviews with young doctors who had either resigned or been fired from neurosurgery training programs. He wanted to understand what differentiates the top 1% of neurosurgeons that have lowest number of deaths and the best surgery outcomes. What he found was that it wasn’t their MCAT scores, dexterity skills, etc. The top predictor was how they handled their mistakes. The top neurosurgeon wouldn’t go home until they changed setback to feedback, they would rethink everything that they’d done and how they could have done it better, while the bottom 1% would externalize the blame. Bosk said, “In my interviewing, I began to develop what I thought was an indicator of whether someone was going to be a good surgeon or not. It was a couple of simple questions: Have you ever made a mistake? And, if so, what was your worst mistake? The people who said, ‘Gee, I haven’t really had one,’ or, ‘I’ve had a couple of bad outcomes but they were due to things outside my control’—invariably those were the worst candidates. And the residents who said, ‘I make mistakes all the time. There was this horrible thing that happened just yesterday and here’s what it was.’ They were the best.”

Rabbi Baruch Rabinovitch of Munkacs, told the story of his his late father-in-law, Rabbi Chaim Elazar Spira, known as the “Minchas Elazar.”

For a period of time, Reb Baruch and his wife lived in Warsaw. Later, when the Minchas Elazar became ill, he begged them to come back to Munkacs, in Czecho-slovakia, which they did.

Rabbi Baruch had a son named Tzvi Nosson Dovid. Baruch would often recall that his father-in-law loved this boy—the Minchas Elazar’s dear grandchild—in an “exaggerated way,” in part due to the fact that they had waited a long time to have that ﬁrst child. He would play with and “spoil” the child, and Tzvi would sit on his grandfather’s lap at the Shabbat gatherings.

In the ﬁnal year of his life, the Minchas Elazar took the shofar on the ﬁrst day of the month of Elul and tested it to see whether it was in good condition. Tzvi was in the room and was visibly excited by the shofar and its sounds.

He asked his zeide for one more blast, and his zeide gladly obliged. From then on, for the remainder of the month, this became a ritual; the Rebbe blowing the shofar once each day for little Tzvi. On the day before Rosh Hashanah, Tzvi was there, awaiting his daily blast, but he was disappointed.

“Today is the day before Rosh Hashanah,” his grandfather explained. “Today we do not blow the shofar. Tomorrow morning, we will blow the shofar in the synagogue.”

The child did not comprehend the reasons. He knew no reason. He kicked and screamed, “Just one blast! Just one blast!”

After a while, the grandfather softened at the sound of his favorite grandchild crying, and he took the shofar and blew one blast.

On Rosh Hashanah, the custom in Munkach was that the Rebbe spoke before blowing the shofar. That year, the Rebbe went up before the ark, opened it and said: “Ribono Shel Olam, I cannot blow shofar. Shulchan Aruch says that on the day before Rosh Hashanah one mustn’t blow shofar, yet I did.”

He began to sob uncontrollably and called out: “But Master of the Universe, do you know why I transgressed this custom? It was because my young grandchild lay on the ﬂoor begging and crying that I should only blow one blast of the shofar for him. My heart melted, I couldn’t bear to watch him cry like that, so I blew once for him, though I shouldn’t have.

“Tatte, how can you stand by and see how millions of Your children are down on the ﬂoor, and crying out to You, ‘Tatte, just one blast! Sound the blast of the great shofar which will herald the ﬁnal Redemption!’? Even if the time is not right for it yet, even if the time for Moshiach has yet to arrive, Your children cry out to You: how can You stand by idly?!”

One Yom Kippur night, Rav Shmuel Kamenetsky came into the yeshivah before Kol Nidrei wearing a red tie.

A red tie, on an older rosh yeshivah! A red tie on the man Rav Elya Brudny has publicly referred to as “America’s kesser Torah?!” It was perplexing, but there were other things to be busy with that night, so the mystery remained — until after Yom Kippur, when a ninth grader, a sweet, sincere bochur, related a question he’d posed to the rosh yeshivah on Erev Yom Kippur. He’d asked the rosh yeshivah if it was proper to wear a red tie on Yom Kippur, since that was the tie he had. Rav Shmuel assured him that it was and wondered why he was asking. “My friends were teasing me and telling me that it’s not appropriate,” the bochur admitted.

Rav Shmuel wished him well. And then the Rosh Yeshivah, using not a single word, found a way to make a young man feel so big, on the holiest of nights.

Anatoly, a young Russian boy, grew up in Odessa in a completely secular environment. After moving to Los Angeles he met some people who introduced him to the beauty of Torah and Torah life. It did not take long for a spark to be ignited in the impressionable teenager and before long he was on his way to becoming a full fledged baal teshuva. He went to learn in in Eretz Yisrael, where he created a new life for himself and his family, one that was filled with richness of Torah and Yidishkeit.

On his way from Israel back to Los Angeles, he stopped off in Odessa. Not much had changed in the many years since he had been there. As he walked through the street he passed an old man who recognized him and pulled him aside. The elderly old man spoke to him about how difficult it was to be a Jew when he had been young. Finally, he left him with a present, “Young Man, now that you left Odessa it is time to take a part of Odessa with you…”

Anatoly looked down and saw that the man was handing him a Yom Kippur machzor. He leafed through the pages. It appeared to be just a regular old machzor, so old, in fact, that the pages were yellow and brittle. Then something caught his eyes. He looked carefully and was shocked at what he saw. One the page of Avinu Malkeinu he noticed that every “Malkeinu” was crossed out and replaced with the word “Czar.” And then the word “Czar” was crossed out and replaced with the word “Stalin”; and then the word “Stalin” was crossed out. It was absolutely astonishing. Clearly the machzor was well used by someone who not only went to shul but davened as well. However, this person must have felt very threatened by the Czarist and Communist governments and so changed the text based on their demands and threats.

R’ Aron Dov Friedman, the person who had been mekarev Anatoly shared the following insight. The word Malkeinu had been crossed out and in its place was substituted the names of the intimidating forces that feigned to be the true king in the place of God. But, no one can dare to replace Avinu. The title “Our Father” belongs to Hashem Alone, and no one can ever change that.

**Jokes** –

A man woke up in the morning deeply repentant after a bitter fight with his wife the previous night.

He noticed with dismay the crate of beer bottles that had caused the fight.

He took it outside and started smashing the empty bottles one by one onto the wall.

He smashed the first bottle swearing, "you are the reason I fight with my wife".

He smashed the second bottle, "you are the reason I don't love my children".

He smashed the third bottle, "you are the reason I don't have a decent job".

When he took the fourth bottle, he realized that the bottle was still sealed and was full. He hesitated for only a moment and said

"you stand aside, I know you were not involved".

A man came to the church and met the Pastor. "Pastor, I confess," he says.

"At last!" exclaims the Pastor. "Finally you repent too!"

"Listen, Pastor, I have stolen a chicken from someone's field"

"My my, that definitely is a sin."

"If I gave away the chicken to the church, will the priest accept it?"

"Of course not! You have to return it to the owner."

"But the owner refuses to take the chicken back, Pastor."

"Well then," muses the Pastor. "I suppose it is yours to keep then."

"Oh, okay. Thank you, Pastor."

Upon returning home, the pastor discovers that one of his chickens has gone missing.

Last Minute Joke: A rabbi waited in line to have his car filled with gas just before a long holiday weekend. The attendant worked quickly, but there were many cars ahead of him. Finally, the attendant motioned him toward a vacant pump. “Rabbi,” said the young man, “I’m so sorry about the delay. It seems as if everyone waits until the last minute to get ready for a long trip.” The rabbi chuckled, “I know what you mean. It’s the same in my business.”

Lying Joke: A rabbi told his congregation, “Next week I plan to preach about the sin of lying. To help you understand my sermon, I want you all to read Vayikra 28.” The following Sunday, as he prepared to deliver his sermon, the minister asked for a show of hands. He wanted to know how many had read Vayikra 28. Several went up. The minister smiled and said, “Vayikra has only twenty seven chapters. I will now proceed with my sermon on the sin of lying.”

A priest and a rabbi are discussing the pros and cons of their various religions, and inevitably the discussion turns to repentance. The rabbi explains Yom Kippur, the solemn Day of Atonement, a day of fasting and penitence, while the priest tells him all about Lent, and its 40 days of self-denial and absolution from sins.

After the discussion ends, the rabbi goes home to tell his wife about the conversation, and they discuss the merits of

Lent versus Yom Kippur. She turns her head and laughs.

The rabbi says, "What's so funny, dear?"

Her response, "40 days of Lent - one day of Yom Kippur . . .

so, even when it comes to sin, the goyyem pay retail!"

Speaking of technology and the holidays, a big baseball fan comes running to his rabbi before Yom Kippur. “Rabbi, I have a dilemma. The Sox are playing their big game on Yom Kippur. What do I do?” The rabbi replies, “Well, what do you think they invented VCRs for?” And the congregant replies, “Rabbi, that’s a great idea! But… I didn’t know Yom Kippur services were on cable

**From R Tendler**

In the beginning of Viduy, we say "Elokeinu V’Elokey Avoseinu, Tavo L'Fanecha Tfilaseinu, V'Al Tisalem Mitchinaseinu..."

 Elokeinu V’Elokei Avoseinu- We say it so freely because we say it every day in the first Beracha of Shemoneh Esrei. What are we really saying?

 Elokeinu- Our G-d, You created me, You gave me a purpose, there is Schar V’Onesh. This should evoke a strong emotion in terms of Who we’re talking to and what we’re going to say…

 V’Elokei Avoseinu- Not necessarily our Avos, but also our ancestors. We’ve gone through so many periods of persecution, and our ancestors never gave up their commitment to being part of the Am Hashem. We who have everything, how much more so do we have to commit ourselves to HKB”H, and be prepared to sacrifice to keep the Torah.

 Tavo L’Fanecha Tfilaseinu- Our Tefillos should come to you. Some times you get mail in the mailbox, and you toss it straight into the wastebasket. Please consider my Tefillos, and don’t discard them.

 V’Al Tisalem MiTchinasaynu- Please don’t look aside. Please pay attention to my heartfelt Tefillah.

We say at the end of Shemoneh Esrei- Yiyu L’Ratzon Imrei Fi, V’Hegyon Libi LeFanecha, may my words and my thoughts be desirous to You. What if someone wasn’t thinking during his Tefilos? They were still said! Please don’t turn away from them!

 Sh’eyn Ano Azei Ponim U’kshay Oref - We’re not going to look you in the face and claim to be Tzadikim, You know the truth! We and our forefathers sinned. This is the Ikkur of Viduy…

 The Viduy is in the plural. There are 4 reasons for this:

1. We are all complicit of not speaking up when seeing an Aveirah. Gramma B’Nizakin is Chayav B’Dinei Shamayim. Yodaya Eidus B’Chaveiro V’Eino Meyid Chayav B’Dinei Shomayim.

2. If we didn’t speak up, it’s because that Cheit really doesn’t bother us. Ohavei Hashem Sinu Ra. We’re lacking in our Ahavas Hashem if it doesn’t bother us. His Chet is a Giluy on our Madreigah.

3. The Din of Arvus- Kol Yisroel Areivim Zeh LaZeh.

4. He is sinning because he is in a S’vivah that allows it. If we would have elevated our Sevivah, he would not have been Choteh.

* Ashamnu- “V’Ashmaseinu Gadlah Ad Lashamayim”. A Chet is an Avlah, a Kilkul in the world. Another Pshat in “Ashamnu” is that we have made ourselves desolate, Shemama. Sitting in front of a TV, we are wasting our lives away. A person detaches from reality when they are involved in meaningless activities, they are “spacy”, not in touch with reality. When we say “Ashamnu”, we are saying that we are destroying the beautiful Neshama that Hashem has given us.

 Bagadnu- We are Kofuy Tov. If someone does you a favor and you repay with bad, this is Bagadnu. Hashem created us, we’re living, we have wisdom, eyes, feet, but we don’t appreciate them.

Ae end of Shemoneh esrei we say “Asay L’Man Shemecha, Asay L’Man Yiminecha….” In Shemoneh Esrei we are Mispallel for health, wealth, etc. HKB”H asks, “OK, why do you want to be healthy? To go on a cruise to Bermuda? Why do you want wealth? To buy a Cadillac? You want me to give you money for that?!” Our request for health and wealth is so that we can use it to serve You!! L’Man Shemecha!

I once went to a hotel in Florida that hosted many retired people. I watched how people ate, watched a show, went for a walk on a boardwalk- they were just waiting around to die! They had nothing to live for!!

When my Rosh HaYeshiva was sick, the Bochurim in Lakewood took shifts to stay with him in rotation. I was already in Baltimore, but a Chaver of mine, Shmuek Klein, said he heard the Rosh Hayeshiva being Mispalel and crying. He said, “Please give me a few more years, there’s so much more that I can do!”

 Gazalnu- The simplest understanding of this is borrowing someone from someone without permission, or if I found something and didn’t give the loser the opportunity to retrieve it. Also, the Gemara says that if someone steals to tease someone, this is still Geneivah. If a vending machine, washing machine, or payphone is broken and you take advantage of this, you are a thief.

My Rosh HaYeshiva would tell us that it’s Geneivah if we would make use of a payphone to call collect and give a hidden message, such as to tell the other person you’ll call back at 3:30 when really you’re telling them you’ll be home at 3:30.

To train ourselves, to be Zahir, not to be a Gazlan. We have to train ourselves to be concerned about money that isn’t ours. Even from an institution, such as a Yeshiva!

 Dibarnu Dofi- The Gemara in Pesachim 113b says, there are 3 people that HKB”H hates. One of them is someone who is Echad B’Peh V’Echad B’Lev, as it says “Korov Hashem L’Kol Korov, L’Chol Asher Yikra’uhu B’Emes”, HKB”H hates hypocrisy, but is very close to anyone who is sincere.

 He’Evinu- we have gone slightly off the straight path. (You have to understand that if you go slightly off and you keep on going, you end up way off!!) HKB”H created us to go straight- but we’ve gone off, and our Chaveirim have followed us off! Nowadays, there are so many things that destroy a person’s mind. In my times it was TV. Today, it is internet, and just about anything goes!

Also, we’ve started dressing like Goyim. I can’t say it’s totally Goyish- but where did walking around with your shirt out of your pants come from? It began with wild guys who wanted to say- “Don’t tell me what to do!” This is why people put earrings in their ears, and then when it becomes commonplace they start putting them in their nose!! I actually recently saw someone in a service area as I was traveling to New York with an earring in his nose! How is he going to stick out? Just like a bull has a ring in his nose- he also wants to have a ring in his nose! He’Evinu means I start doing things that are not respectable- slightly going off! HKB”H created us to be respectable, Elokim Bara Es HaAdam Yashar- to be the Am Hashem!

 V’Hirshanu- After we started going off, and took our friends with us, we started doing things for which we are called a Rasha.

 Zadnu- We’ve done things B’Mayzid. If you push someone, if you cause someone aggravation, embarrass someone, if I wasted my time. We can smile about it now, but when we look back at our lives we see that we wasted them.

 Chamasnu- We grabbed. The textbook case of this is if you grab something from someone and pay for it, even though he doesn’t want to sell it to you. If you cut ahead of someone on line, this is Chamasnu. If there is food on the table and I grab it for myself, this is Chamas. I’m only concerned about myself, not about others. I’m selfish.

 Tafalnu Sheker- I keep on doing one thing B’Sheker, and to cover it I keep on lying. I became a friend of people whose lives are Sheker, and I’m Toful to them, without being Michazek myself to do that which is right and tear myself away from them.