

# Living Jewish



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## Tell your Children

### The Sound of Silence

The Jews from a small town near the city of Ushomir, in the Ukraine, suffered greatly from the antagonism of the estate manager where many of them worked. Nothing they did could meet with the man's approval, and it seemed as if he pursued them day and night in order to find fault with them. He even reduced their salary at every opportunity, each time citing a different picayune reason.

This seemingly anti-Semitic manager was actually a Jew himself. None of the Jews in the region knew where he had come from, or anything about his past. The present, however, was clear: he was a Jew by accident of birth only, and even that seemed to be a bit too much for him to bear.

A week before Rosh Hashana, a visiting tzadik arrived in Ushomir, Rabbi Mordechai-Dov of Hornisteipl. It was his habit to travel around to the cities and towns in his area during the month before Rosh Hashana in order to arouse the people to repent and turn closer to G-d in preparation for the awesome Day of Judgment. He planned to spend Shabbat in Ushomir, and to speak in its main synagogue.

### Flocking to Ushomir

As the word spread that the famed chassidic master would be in the city, Jews from all the neighboring towns and villages flocked to Ushomir. The Shabbat was as spiritually exhilarating as everyone had hoped for, and after the closing havdalah ceremony, all the guests lined up to take leave of the Rebbe and to receive his farewell blessing.

The Jews from the small town that suffered from the estate manager agreed among themselves that they would each mention the situation to the Rebbe. Rabbi Mordechai listened with full attention to each one, and they could feel that he shared in their woe. They also saw that his sorrow was even greater from the awareness that the oppressive manager was himself a Jew.



*Slichot at the Kotel*

He gave each one the same answer: "be patient until tomorrow, and we will see what can be done."

### The Surprise Visit

The next day, after the morning prayers, Rabbi Mordechai told his attendants to immediately prepare to depart. But to everyone's surprise, he instructed them not to travel in the direction they had originally planned, but instead to head for the nearby village. The villagers who hadn't yet returned home were also taken by surprise, and they hurried to pack their wagons in order to travel together with the Rebbe.

Soon a long caravan snaked along the dusty road, with the carriage of the Hornisteipler Rebbe leading the way. As soon as they arrived, the Rebbe asked for directions to the residence of the estate manager.

As they approached the impressive house of the estate manager, all those accompanying the Rebbe, as well as many from the village who had joined the procession, waited breathlessly to see what he would do. The locals wondered if perhaps the holy man would cast his gaze on the source of their misery and turn him into a heap of smoldering bones!

Meanwhile, the estate manager stood, unmoving, on the expansive balcony of his home. The pipe in his mouth and his general appearance testified to his haughty attitude, but as they drew closer

they could see from the expression on his face that he was a bit puzzled. What was the meaning of this extensive delegation rolling towards his property?

The Hornisteipler Rebbe instructed his coachman to drive right up to the entrance of the house. This he did, as all the other carriages lined up behind his in a long row stretching back onto the road.

Only then did the Rebbe raise his eyes and, after a glance at the fancy house, stare straight at the estate manager on the terrace.

### The Tear

The manager looked back at him. The Rebbe's gaze didn't waver, and for an endless few minutes the two stared at each other.

Suddenly Rabbi Mordechai climbed down from his carriage and walked firmly towards the door. The estate manager quickly disappeared within the house, and a few moments later the door swung open from within. All the bystanders watched excitedly from their places to see what would happen next.

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### Shabbat Times

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat
Jerusalem	5:49	7:05
Tel Aviv	6:11	7:06
Haifa	6:00	7:06
Beer Sheva	6:11	7:06
New York	6:26	7:22

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## Solid Backing

In the first of this week's Torah readings, Nitzavim, Hashem tells the Jewish people, "You are all standing today before Hashem your G-d: the leaders of your tribes, your elders and your officers, every man of Israel; your young children, your women, and your convert who is within your camp, your woodcutters and your water drawers, so that you may enter the covenant of Hashem your G-d. (Devarim 29: 9-11)

The purpose of this covenant was to enlist every Jew as a guarantor that his fellow Jews will observe the Torah. (see Ohr HaChaim; Rashi on 29:28) As our Sages taught, "All of Israel are guarantors for one another" (Talmud, Shevuot 39a); meaning, every Jew bears personal responsibility for his fellow.

A guarantor is presumably in a better position than the person he is backing, which is what makes him more dependable than the person whose commitment he is standing behind. For example, a wealthy person could serve as a guarantor for a poor person's loan, but not vice versa.

Hence, if "all of Israel are guarantors for one another," evidently, each and every Jew, from "the leaders of your tribes" down to "your water drawers," has a unique strength that qualifies him as a guarantor for the others.

This can be understood in light of the Alter

Rebbe's teaching (Likutei Torah, Nitzavim 44a) that the Jewish nation is "one complete figure," comparable to a human body in which every limb and organ completes and complements the other. The head and brain are ostensibly "superior" to the other parts of the body, yet the legs support and give mobility to the entire body, including the head.

Similarly, every single Jew has a quality with which he, and only he, can serve as the guarantor for the rest of the Jewish nation, due to his extraordinary strength in that particular area of observance.

## The Pact

Every year we read Nitzavim on the Shabbat before Rosh Hashana. Implied is that Nitzavim addresses the themes of Rosh Hashana, and reading it enables us to experience the holiday properly. In the first verses, we read that the entire Jewish nation assembled to enter a covenant with G-d. The Torah mentions specifically that from the leaders to the water-drawers, all of Israel stood united as one—"all of you."

What is the purpose of a covenant? If two friends are concerned that their relationship might sour at some point, they may enter into a covenant—a pact to remain loyal to each other forever, even if future events or discoveries about one another cause them to lose favor in each other's

eyes.

This, essentially, is the theme of Rosh Hashana—a renewal of the covenant between G-d and the Jewish people. On Rosh Hashana, when our love for G-d is strong, (after our heartfelt teshuvah during the month of Elul,) we commit ourselves to G-d unconditionally. We pray that G-d will enter this covenant with us, committing Himself to us unconditionally, even if later in the year our love may not be as obvious.

The covenant of Rosh Hashana requires, however, that all members of the Jewish nation unite as one, just as the Jewish people did—men, women and children, from the elders to the converts—in Nitzavim.

For in order to evoke G-d's unconditional commitment to us, we, too, must behave in a manner that transcends any reason or conditions.

We do this by showing our sincere love and respect for all of our fellow Jews, despite our understandable differences.

*Adapted from the teachings of the Rebbe, reprinted from Ohr HaChassidus.*

## From our Sages

*Gather the people together, men, and women, and children... (Deut. 31:12)*

According to the Minchat Chinuch, the mitzva of Hakhel (the commandment for all Jews to assemble in Jerusalem on Sukkot following the Sabbatical year, to hear the king recite the Book of Deuteronomy) is incumbent on every Jew from birth. A child's Jewish education must likewise commence from birth.

*(the Rebbe)*

*And the L-rd your G-d will circumcise your heart (Deut. 30:6)*

Elsewhere it states (Deut. 10:16), "and you shall circumcise the foreskin of your heart," i.e., that the individual Jew must perform the "circumcision" himself. The first stage of the "circumcision," i.e., removing the "obstruction" that separates the Jew from G-d, must be initiated by the individual.

The second stage of completely transforming the heart to good, can only be done with G-d's help.

*(the Kotzker Rebbe)*

*But the word is very near to you... (Deut. 30:14)*

This teaches that it is in every Jew's power to bring the Torah closer to him. It is only dependent on our will, that we observe it with our "mouth" and "heart."

*(Sefat Emet)*

*But I will assuredly hide My face on that day (Deut. 31:18)*

A person can only hide if the other person is unaware of his presence. It's not hiding if we know that someone is concealing himself in a certain spot, even if he is well hidden from view.

This knowledge gives us a better grasp of the exile in which the Jews find themselves. We, having been forewarned, can better deal with the darkness because we know that G-d can be found even as He hides His face.

*(the Baal Shem Tov)*

*From our Sages reprinted from LchaimWeekly.org - LYO / NYC*

## The Sound of Silence

*continued from page one:*

The Rebbe and one of his attendants entered the house. After a few minutes they emerged and went back into their carriage. The driver tugged the reins, the horses reversed their direction, and they drove away.

Only at a later time were the townspeople able to find out, from the Rebbe's attendant, what had transpired inside the house. They learned that from the moment the estate manager opened the door to his house until the moment the Rebbe and his attendant stepped out, not a word had been uttered!

With a slight nod of his head, the manager signaled them to enter. Then, with a flourish of his hand he motioned the Rebbe to sit in a chair he had placed for him, while he himself sat in a chair opposite him.

The Rebbe placed his hands on the table between them, straightened his back and stared fixedly into the eyes of the estate manager. The latter looked back cynically.

Thus they sat long moments, unmoving. The stare of the manager, which had been defiant, began to soften. At the same time, the Rebbe's gentle gaze intensified and his pure, holy eyes seemed to harden.

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# Chassidus page

## Teshuva, Joy and Returning to our Source

“Repentance” means regret and contrition for sins or omissions of good deeds; and the resolve to start afresh. Many phrases in English literature [and in the literature of other languages] sound this theme of repentance: “to turn over a *new leaf*”; “to become a *new man*.”

“Teshuvah” means something very different. It emphasizes not the idea of “newness,” but of *return*. A Jew is intrinsically good and wants to do good; sin is completely antithetical to his nature. If he does transgress, the transgression does not impugn his essential self but is a foreign thing that has adhered to him.

Teshuvah, then, is the return to that essential, real self of a Jew. While a person is a composite of body and soul, in a Jew the soul is primary and the body secondary; and that soul is no less than “a part of G-d above.” Teshuvah is therefore the re-forging of the essential union between the soul and its source, a union which was *temporarily* in abeyance through sin. In other words, a Jew, through teshuvah, reveals his true self and reasserts the soul’s mastery over the body.

This is why teshuvah is relevant to all Jews, even the completely righteous. Teshuvah is not just “repentance,” the desire to atone for wrongdoing and start afresh, which would not apply to the completely righteous who do no wrong. Instead, the Alter Rebbe writes, teshuvah is the concept of, “the spirit shall return to G-d who gave it”; the soul continually strives to come closer to G-d, its source. And just as G-d is infinite, even the completely right-

eous Jew can rise ever higher in his apprehension of G-dliness. He, too, is always doing teshuvah — returning to his source.

Teshuvah is relevant also to the completely wicked. No matter how low he has fallen, hope is never lost. He can always do *teshuvah* for he need not perform any revolutionary act, create a new existence. He need merely return to his inner self.

*Adapted from the teachings of the Rebbe; adapted from Days of Destiny, reprinted with permission from Sichos in English*

### The Joy of Reunion

At the beginning of the Alter Rebbe’s leadership, he discontinued the practice of his chassidim to feel atzvut (sadness) over their wrongdoings. The chassidim thought they were also to do away with merirut (bitterness over sins) and were therefore constantly in a state of joy. Later, the Alter Rebbe wrote in Tanya that there is a benefit to be gained from feelings of bitterness over sins, for in fact it serves as a necessary prerequisite for joy. The chassidim then understood that it was only sadness and melancholy that the Alter Rebbe had negated.

The Rebbe once said that in our times we no longer have the emotional strength to do teshuva with bitterness; we must do teshuva with joy. The Rebbe explained that teshuva itself is a great reason for joy, for there can be no greater joy than finding oneself and being reunited with our Father, like a wandering prince who finally comes home, after a long separation, to his father, the king.

## The Sound of Silence

*continued from page two:*

Then, to his surprise, the Rebbe's attendant noticed that the manager's eyes were moist. A large tear formed and rolled slowly down his cheek. At that moment, the Rebbe rose from his seat and walked to the door, still not having said a word. The manager remained frozen in his chair, as if paralyzed; he couldn't even manage to escort his guests out.

The Rebbe remained the rest of the day in the village. All those who missed the opportunity in Ushomir went to him to receive his blessing. Towards evening the lines thinned, and eventually the home at which the Rebbe was staying became empty of guests.

But a silent, shadowy figure was seen approaching the house. His soft knock broke the dusky silence. It was the estate manager. His frightened eyes and the manner in which he slipped inside made it seem as if someone were chasing him. He and the Rebbe went into an isolated room, and remained there for two hours.

That Rosh Hashanah, an unexpected visitor arrived at the shul to join the prayers of the Day of Judgment. This, of course, was the estate manager, who for the entire two days of the holiday practically didn't move from his spot. With a tallit covering his head and upper part of his face, he stood nearly the entire time, praying with copious tears.

The man who had been so alienated and removed from Judaism was from that day on a full penitent, and also acted with kindness towards his Jewish brethren.

*Source:* Translated by Yerachmiel Tilles from the popular Hebrew weekly, Sichat HaShavua.

*Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles of Tsfat is co-founder of ASCENT. His email list for stories is in its 27th year. To join the list a/o his WhatsApp group for Saturday night Audio, Video and Zoom stories, go to AscentOfSafed.com or WhatsApp +972-526-770-137.*

## Moshiach Now

### Holding On

The Mezritcher Maggid said, “before Moshiach comes, there will be a repeat of the confrontation between Eliyahu HaNavi and the prophets of the Baal on Mount Carmel. However, unlike that match, when a fire miraculously descended from Above on to the altar of the prophets of Hashem, this time the fire will descend on the other side. And that will be the greatest test of all.”

The Chozeh of Lublin once said, “before Moshiach arrives, it will be difficult for a Jew to hold on to his emuna. He will have to struggle to remain an upstanding Jew. It will be like climbing up a straight wall, grasping it with no more than pliers.”

*Moshiach Now! & Halacha Corner reprinted from The Weekly Farbrengen by Merkaz Anash, on-line at TheWeeklyFarbrengen.com*

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## Jewish Pride Mobile

Encampments, protests, and antisemitic rhetoric may be ramping up as students return to campus this fall, but something else is coming, too: a Jewish pride tour will hit colleges and universities across more than forty states and Canada, courtesy of Chabad on Campus.

The project, “Let HERE Be Light,” creates a complete Jewish pride festival, including stands with crafting, kosher food, Jewish swag, and an opportunity to buy your own letter in a Torah Scroll. More than eight thousand students are expected to join the tour along its stops. Last year, 73 percent of Jewish college students surveyed said they had experienced or witnessed some form of antisemitism since the October 7th Hamas attacks.

At Binghamton University, one of the tour’s first stops, 450 Jewish students enjoyed carnival booths, s’mores, ice cream and waffles, with music from the ChaBand, Chabad’s student band



and Jewish hip hop artist Nissim Black. At Cornell, University President Michael Kotlikoff addressed the fair, saying that the school’s vibrant Jewish student community is “an essential part of the Cornell community,” and emphasizing the school’s commitment to listen to Jewish students and ensure their safety.

“Many of us have forgotten what it means to have Jewish joy, and the Let HERE Be Light event brought it back,” says Eva Shrayner, a Jewish student at Cornell. “It was so fun to listen to music and spend time with community members.” Shrayner notes that the fair had a lasting effect, “a few days later Chabad was packed for Shabbat dinner and everyone was excited.”

At the University of North Florida, Rabbi Shmuli Novack sounded the shofar and University President Moez Limayem spoke warmly of Chabad’s impact on Jewish life at UNF.

The tour will continue throughout the 2024–25 school year. “Bringing Jewish students together is so crucial,” says Shrayner. “In a time of darkness, we must lean on each other and strengthen the community from within.” *By Tzemach Feller, Lubavitch.com; reprinted from Anash.org*

## Cooking Tip of the Week

### Sweet Potato Kuggle:

Bake sweet potatoes and remove the "meat". Mix 2XL eggs, 1 tbs agave syrup (or brown sugar), salt, 1/2 cup apple sauce, cinnamon and 3 cups of the sweet potatoes. Bake the mixture and enjoy!

*Alizah Hochstead,  
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## Halacha Corner – Making an Eruv Tavshilin

It is forbidden to do melacha on Yom Tov for Shabbat. Therefore, anyone who will prepare for Shabbat on Yom Tov by cooking, baking or by doing anything else that may not be done on Shabbat itself—must make (or be included in) an eruv tavshilin. While guests may rely on their host’s eruv; those who sleep at home may need to make one of their own, depending on the circumstances, and should ask a Rav.

On erev Yom Tov choose two cooked foods that will be eaten on Shabbat to serve as the eruv. Customarily we use a challah or matza (a baked food) and a significant cooked food, such as a piece of meat or fish. One then recites the nusach as printed in the siddur. The eruv must be in existence when preparing for Shabbat, and we eat it on the Shabbat following the Yom Tov. The custom is to eat it during Shabbat’s final meal, and to also use the eruv challah or matza as the second of the lechem mishneh for each of the Shabbat meals. The eruv only permits food related preparations for Shabbat on the second day of Yom Tov, namely erev Shabbat. All foods cooked for Shabbat on Yom Tov must be ready well before the onset of Shabbat (before candle lighting time at the very latest).

**Question:** Asking for forgiveness is a big deal. It is humbling and one needs to mean what they say. Now we are in the time of Slichot and on our way to Rosh Hashana, the 10 Days of Teshuva and Yom Kippur. Day after day we will tell Hashem about our transgressions and ask for forgiveness. But I feel like we are all just reading the words and there is little true feeling. It’s like we are just “checking the box” that we did it and then can go back to life. Why do it?

**Answer:** A well-know mashpia in Eretz Yisrael said, half-joking: why is there a break on Yom Kippur (after Musaf, before davening Mincha)? To give people a chance to do teshuva!

When a person transgresses one of the commandments, his sin creates a spiritual body and soul of klipa (impurity). The body is formed from the action of the sin and the soul is formed from the desire and delight in doing the sin. As it says in Tehillim, “my sin is always before me.” This body and soul of klipa causes obstacles, challenges and difficulties in our lives. However, Hashem gives us teshuva and vidui (confession) to enable us to uproot and destroy this impurity.

Teshuva is comprised of: 1. resolving not to do the sin again (azivat hachet) and; 2. feeling remorse (charata). True remorse expresses an inner transformation. The person has uprooted their previous desire to do the sin. This change has the effect of destroying the *soul* of the sin, which was created from their desire. When a person learns Chassidus and gains a deeper awareness of Hashem’s greatness, his feelings of remorse intensify: “how could I have gone against the will of the Creator!”

Vidui is the utterance of the confessional prayer. Our physical words have the power to destroy the *body* of the sin. While it might seem we are just saying words, these words are an important part of the teshuva process. True, we want to feel remorse, yet saying words does have power.

About 30 years ago, I was frequenting Rabbi Posner’s Chabad House in Boston. I was beginning to become observant, but wasn’t fully on board. One evening, I confided to Rabbi Posner, “I haven’t put on tefillin for two days since I don’t even know why I am doing it.” I will always remember his response, “when you do not put on tefillin, you are like a nail in the drawer in the hardware store. When you put on tefillin, you are the nail that has been hammered into the building. You can now begin to understand how the whole structure fits together.” I never missed another day of tefillin.

True, we should strive for intentionality. Yet, as long as we are *doing*, we can come to feeling and understanding.

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