

HINENI YOM KIPPUR JOURNAL HASHIVENU





השיבונו

HASHIVENU – 'BRING US BACK'

The 4th edition of Hineni's annual Yom Kippur Journal, a compilation of short essays from Madrichim and members of the community



שר החינוך
Minister of Education
وزير التربية والتعليم

Jerusalem, August 27, 2017

Dear Madrichim, Chanichim and the entire Hineni community,

Traditionally the *chagim* of Tishrei are a time for not only rejoicing, but also for introspection. Over Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kipur and Sukkot, Jews around the world welcome the New Year, atone for their sins and gather for prayers, meals and celebrations.

As a Modern-Orthodox Zionist movement dedicated to bringing young Jews closer to their culture and religion, this is an opportunity for Hineni to take pride in what it has achieved so far, learn how to improve in the future and strengthen its ties with the wider community.

This year's theme for the Hineni journal is *Hashiveinu*, and I too hope Jews around the world choose to return – to their rich heritage and to their homeland, the Land of Israel.

As Minister of Diaspora Affairs I'd like to take this opportunity to wish the Australian Jewish community a good and sweet new year.

שנה טובה ומתוקה,


Naftali Bennett

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Editorial

By Guy Sussman

Yom Kippur represents a “homecoming” for our community, an almost “class-reunion.” In the lead-up to Yom Kippur we are commanded to conduct teshuva. Teshuva is typically translated as “repentance” and understood as asking for forgiveness for our broken vows, mistakes and transgressions since last Yom Kippur. However, Rabbi Jonathan Saacks offers an alternate insight, stating that teshuva truly means “returning, tracing our steps, coming home.” The divergent translations of teshuva stems from the biblical ramifications of sinning, which was accompanied by dislocation and punishment in exile. He explains that when one sins, the sense of guilt is overpowered by the feeling of being lost. A sin places one beyond the relations that they have come to know. They have lost all sense of belonging to one’s history, family and community. Teshuva serves

as the act of finding ones’ way home again.

In our quest for teshuva we say Slichot for the month preceding Yom Kippur. In this service, we exclaim:

“Hashiveinu Ad-nai aleicha venashuva kadesh yameinu kekedem” – Bring us back, O Lord, to You, and we will return. Renew our days as old.

Yom Kippur has become the catalyst for return in the Jewish calendar. We request for Hashem to “bring us back”- back to ourselves, back to our People and back to our G-d. It is a day when many of us who would usually not feel obliged to attend shul, feel a need to return and exclaim “I am here” (הינני).

I wish to take this opportunity to thanks the various members of our community for contributing to this journal. While Yom Kippur acts as a sign post drawing us back to our communal return, we only

come across this sign once a year. Fortunately, there are members of our community; Rabbonim, Madrichim and Chanichim, who are committed to continuously building and strengthening the Jewish community so that there is always a place for us to return to. These articles exemplify how the youth of our community are engaged and deeply committed to our common religion and homeland.

"The gates of prayer are sometimes open and sometimes closed, but the gates of teshuvah are always open." – Rabbi Samuel Ben Nahman

As stated by the Midrash the gates to return home are always open. However, in order to truly-return, we must ask ourselves who we are and where we truly belong? We hope this journal will spark your mind and cause you to ask and re-evaluate these questions.

Guy Sussman is a member of shicvat Oz and participated in Hineni's Shnat program in 2013. He is currently the Federal Rosh Chinuch and previously served as the Rosh of Sydney Hineni in 2016.



Hineni Sydney

By Rebecca Metzger & Michelle Shmailov

The month of Elul calls upon the Jewish Nation to reflect on our year – on the successes and adventures we have fulfilled as well as the areas in which we can improve.

Upon reflecting on our past year, we are able to say that we have truly lived up to our name; הינני (I Am Here). This year Hineni Sydney has reached incredible heights and made an everlasting mark on our community. As a movement, we strive to provide a welcoming space for the youth of our community to develop their Jewish identities and feel connected to the enriched community that surrounds them.

Our Sydney branch has seen records broken this year with our numbers soaring. Our Winter Camp, 'Machane Olami – Camp Around the World' was attended by 90 junior and over 50 senior chanichim. Our passionate

madrachim were able to host our largest and most successful winter camp. Chanichim experienced and investigated aspects of our Jewish life such as Kashrut and Shabbat, developed deeper understandings for the importance of Israel and some even overcame their fear of heights on our giant swing. Additionally, our largest Junior Adventure Camp was held before Pesach where chanichim swam and bowled their way around Sydney and had the opportunity to engage with our madrichim on a fun day out. These camps have allowed us madrichim to witness the development of Jewish leaders and creation of lifelong friendships in our unique environment.

More recently, Hineni Sydney was privileged with the opportunity to engage with the Canberra Jewish community. Our madrichim

facilitated an inspiring Shabbaton for over 20 Canberra chanichim and we look forward to strengthening our relationship with them.

The Central Synagogue has provided us with the foundations to do what we do - inspire our youth. This relationship has flourished over the year as together we organised a Purim Carnival for the Jewish community with more than 300 children and adults attending. Furthermore, we are actively drawing in children from both Jewish and non-Jewish schools, through the doors of The Central Synagogue. Every week this year we have run Sunday activities for students from years 2 - 6, where we combine elements of fun and education. Chanichim have interacted with our education through hamantaschen and matzah baking, packing bags for the homeless, havdallah making and photography workshops to name a few.

This year has also seen the return of our senior year-group programs, allowing our senior chanichim to engage with our madrichim and our educational aims. Our year 9 chanichim have been a part of our Na'aseh program - a social action based initiative that has focused on food wastage and inclusion.

Our year 10 chanichim have almost completed the hadracha program, where they have learned the skills to become inspiring leaders of our movement in the future.

Over the year we have held larger events for our seniors. For Lag Ba'Omer years 7-12 gathered at The Central Synagogue for a night of Jewish learning and a bonfire. Additionally, following our Machane Olami, our seniors were welcomed back to the Hineni semester with a Kabbalat Shabbat minyan and dinner. Here our chanichim were once again able to be immersed in the beauty of Shabbat and be involved in mini 'shiurim' that discussed topical issues around the world.

Despite fulfilling so much, there is still plenty to come! Moving forward we look towards our upcoming junior camp from the 18th-22nd December, our Senior Adventure Camp to be held just after Rosh Hashanah, on the 25th-26th September, and continuing our weekly peulot for our chanichim.

At Hineni we strive to create an environment where the community feels comfortable to be Jewish as well as share and grow ideas and opinions.

On behalf of Hineni's chanichim and madrichim, we'd like to thank the entire community for their continuous support, because without you we could not function. May we go from strength to strength and be inscribed in the book of life.

Shana Tova u'Metukah,



Hineni Melbourne

By Rebecca Ellinson & Joel Baruch

As individuals, we use the time between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur to reflect on what we have achieved over the past year. As a youth movement, we look at where we can improve in our ability to positively influence young Jewish Australians through the framework of the countless events and activities we run.

Hineni has held a diverse range of successful events this year. We started the year with a rock climbing event for our junior chanichim and a beautiful Kabbalat Shabbat service followed by a senior welcome back dinner, where everyone reunited with their friends from summer camp. Next came our annual fun-filled Purim seudah, where over 60 chanichim attended in costume. We are proud to say we have continued with these strong numbers throughout the year.

After Purim came Pesach

where we held an inaugural Pesach Fundraiser, as well as inviting our junior chanichim to a matzah bake. The remainder of the semester contained exciting events such as a graffiti workshop, tie dye, Yom Haatzmaut Israeli shuk, drumming session and a social action fair. Our junior movement has grown from strength to strength with more than 65 new juniors attending our programs this semester. Hineni also celebrated the month of Iyar in style, showing our ruach (energy and spirit) at the multitude of community events celebrating Yom Haatzmaut.

This was followed by Hineni's Lag Ba'Omer celebrations where we gathered around a massive bonfire, with marshmallows and drums. For Shavuot, we held our own Tikkun Leil with over 80 people learning together, discussing and posing questions late into

the night.

Semester two culminated in our annual winter camp, Machane Derech Hayim (Camp Way of Life). Chanichim explored Judaism, Israel and the world around us through the lens of the life cycle. Over 60 chanichim from grades 3-12 explored Hineni's ideology, covered each other in shaving cream during the manoeuvre, danced themselves silly before each meal and overall had an amazing time making new friends and creating lifelong memories.

We hurdled straight into second semester with a Zumba fundraiser for Chofesh which was extremely enjoyed by all who came. To celebrate the ten-year anniversary of the relationship between Hineni and Caulfield Shule, we organised a Caulfield Shule "takeover" during a Shabbat morning where madrichim ran the service and Hineni supporters came to celebrate the momentous occasion. Our year 10s and 11s joined the AZYC Jamboree inter-movement seminar and we also thoroughly enjoyed Chodesh – a one month competition between year levels during Sunday programs where we explored the impact technology has on our daily lives.

We have initiated a Tikkun Olam Tzevet, whose aim is to organise volunteering and social action opportunities for Hineni. So far we have partaken in the following projects: Volunteering at Arcare with the residents, volunteering

at Darchei Shalom, initiating a clothes drive, blood drive and being regular participants at phone-a-thons for local community organisations.

This year has also seen our P&F committee grow larger than it ever has before and continue to provide such valuable support to the movement. Earlier this month, the ex-bogrim committee organised an event for Hineni Alumni. It was incredible to see over 70 ex-bogrim over the past 20 years in the same room, socialising and reminiscing. Furthermore, this year saw the introduction of monthly Shabbat programs where senior chanichim come to Hineni activities on Shabbat instead of Sunday. They have been incredibly well received and it is a beautiful time to reconnect with fellow madrichim and chanichim, as well as experience Hineni through the Shabbat atmosphere.

It has been an incredibly journey and while we are sad the year is ending, there is always a lot to look forward to in the whirlwind of the Hineni calendar!

Gmar Chatima Tova,

Teshuva – How it empowers us

You can change. I can change. All of us can change.

That is the radical message at the heart of teshuva, or repentance.

Many people have tried to deny it – and understandably so. Think about it, how much easier would it be if we had no responsibility choice? If we had no choice? If every time our actions led to disaster, we could simply throw up our hands and say, “It’s not my fault!”

The American playwright Archibald MacLeish explored this question in his Broadway production, J.B.

Produced in 1958, the play is a modern retelling of the biblical story of Job. In it three figures, a Christian, a Marxist and a psychiatrist, approach J.B. and attempt to comfort him as he confronts misfortune.

The Christian says, “It is

not your fault. You are the victim of original sin.”

The Marxist tells J.B., “It is not your fault. You are the victim of economic determinism.”

The psychiatrist says to J.B., “It is not your fault. You are the victim of unconscious drives you can’t control. There’s nothing you can do.”

J.B., however, does not accept their arguments. He says, “No, I want to be responsible. I want to be my fault. Because that’s what it means to be a human being. I have the power to choose the moral content of my life. There is something I can do.” (J.B. reminds me of the Jew who says: “If I don’t feel guilty for a whole day then in the evening I feel guilty for not feeling guilty.”)

Kidding aside, J.B. acknowledges that there are many influences on us – economic, genetic,



**BY RABBI LEVI
WOLFF**

environmental. In spite of those influences, though, human beings are free, because we are made in G-d's image.

That freedom empowers us to transcend our limitations and become the person we are called on to be. Judah, Jacob's son, was the one who suggested selling his brother Joseph into slavery, but later he became the man willing to spend the rest of his life as a slave so that his brother Benjamin could go free! Esther the young, vulnerable, orphaned girl, found strength within herself and defeated Haman, the most powerful prime minister in Persia, saving her nation! Akiva, illiterate until he was forty, applied himself and learned, and became the most influential rabbi in the Talmud! There is nothing pre-scripted about our destiny.

Repentance is G-d's call to freedom: to be what we choose to be, what we could be, what G-d wants us to be: a vibrant Jew, and a blessing to others. We always have within ourselves the capacity to choose, the capacity to change.

Late one night, the 19th century Jewish leader Rabbi Yisrael Salanter walked past the shop of a shoemaker, and noticed that despite the late hour, the man was still working by the light of a flickering candle. "Why are you still working?" he asked. "It is very late and soon that candle will go out."

"Rabbi," the shoemaker answered, "as long as the candle burns, one can still do some mending."

That became Rabbi Salanter's motto as father of the Musar movement: As long as the candle of our soul still burns, we should not despair. It is never too late to do Teshuva, to set right all that we have done wrong, to change ourselves, and the world, for the better.

May you all be blessed with a sweet and healthy New Year!

Shana Tova!

Rabbi Levi Wolff has served as the chief Rabbi at The Central Synagogue for the past 16-years. He also serves as the spiritual leader of Hineni Sydney, regularly running shiraim for Madrichim and Chanichim.

“Hineni!”

It's one of the simplest words in the Hebrew language; it takes three English words to express it. It's simple, it's sharp as a blade, succinct as a proverb: Hineni, here I am, I'm ready. No evasion, no prevarication, no procrastination.

It's what Abraham said at Moriah, Moses at the burning bush, Isaiah to God, God to Isaiah, Isaac to Jacob, Father to son, son to Father, parent-to-child - : “I'm here Dad , open, aware, attentive and available”. And like a bell it rings and resonates at critical moments in Jewish history: the binding of Isaac, the call to leadership of Moses, the promise of redemption to Isaiah.

It's the word that resonates on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur when the Chazan starts the long Musaff prayer: הינני Here I am standing before you God, in trepidation carrying this community on my frail shoulders.

It's the sound of the chorus at the end of Leonard Cohen's last album. Singing together with Montreal's Cantor Gideon Zelermyer and the Shaarei Hashamayim Shul Choir: Hineni, Hineni, I'm ready my Lord.

It challenges us all on Yom Kippur, this most light and daring of Jewish nights: Are you ready to say Hineni? Are you pumped and passionate about your Judaism? Are you ready to stand up proudly for Israel and to say, “Here I am”?

To grow a heart-that is what Hineni is about. Our challenge is to grow a heart larger than our brains, a heart that reaches out to those who are different from us, to those who have wounded us, to make peace with ourselves and rapprochement with our enemies. Yom Kippur urges us to forgive ourselves, fix what is broken in you, so you can heal what is broken outside of you. And as Puck says in a



**BY RABBI RALPH
GENENDE**

Midsummer Night's Dream, "Gentles – do not reprehend; if you pardon we can mend"

On a recent visit to Israel I went on a tiyul outside of Tekoah in the Judean hills near Herodion. As we were walking in the hot sun towards the site of some monastic caves, we heard voices of children coming seemingly from under us... Our guide called out to them and then we discovered sitting in an old tunnel-like water pipe a group of school kids aged about 15 together with their teacher rabbi. He explained to us they were learning Tanach stories, Bible stories about this area where Saul had lived and Samuel and David had wandered. And it occurred to me that not only is this land so rich with our past, where each stone you stumble against has a history, but that unlike our enemies we don't build tunnels but bridges. This little tunnel was just a refuge against the sun and not a place where you burrow to bring violence and hatred; it was a place to learn of Judaism's great teachings of love and justice. And these fresh faces gave me renewed confidence in the future of Israel, the Hatikvah of our homeland. They are saying Hineni to Jewish continuity.

In 1967, during the dramatic Six Day War, the Old City of Jerusalem, the Kotel and Temple Mount returned to Jewish sovereign control for the first time in almost two millennia. The Chief Rabbi of the Israel Defence Forces, Rav Shlomo Goren, along with the young paratroopers who took the city stood dazed at the Kotel. How do you hold

on to a dream- like instant like this? You can capture the city but how do you capture the moment? How do you Hineni an historic epiphany?

Goren did one simple but unforgettable thing and thereby seized and forever encapsulated this intense, yet fleeting event. He blew the shofar. He blew, Tekiah, Shevarim, Teruah and called out: "This year, at this hour, in Jerusalem!"

לשנה הזאת בשעה הזאת בירושלים!

Shofar, smooth to the touch, twisted and curly like the heart, deep resonant as the soul. Ancient and primeval in its prevenience, contemporary and cutting edge in its relevance.

So, ask not whom this shofar sounds – it tolls and calls for you and me. Let's ensure we always respond with our very best "Hineni."

May the members of the proud Hineni movement always be forerunners in declaring a loud Hineni to the Jewish present and future!

Shana Tovah

Rabbi Ralph Genende is the senior rabbi at Caulfield Hebrew Congregation. He joined the synagogue after serving as a rabbi Auckland, NZ and as the college Rabbi of Mount Scopus. He continues to provide Hineni with wisdom, warmth and an open door.

'Lachzor Be'She'ela'

'Lachzor Be'Teshuva' literally means to come back with an answer and it commonly refers to one becoming religious as they allegedly found the answer or the meaning of life. A Rabbi once told me: We are all 'Chozar Be'Teshuva'. He explained that every single day we face countless number of questions which the task of answering them is what defines us.

After I was discharged from my military service I had the opportunity to go on a short term shlichut to a summer camp in America. On the orientation seminar, I was asked for the first time: "What it means to be Jewish"? I was confronted and confused as no one ever asked me this question. When you live in Israel the answer is obvious. You speak Hebrew, you live by the Jewish calendar, and the falafel you eat is most

likely to be kosher. In Israel you naturally feel Jewish. Ask any Israeli. On Friday afternoon when the sun sets, there is a feeling as we get closer by the minute to Shabbat that time slows down.

My first Shabbat in the Big Apple, that feeling was gone. I was struck with the understanding that I now need to act Jewish in order to feel Jewish.

I attended Friday and Saturday's services, went to Kiddush, schmoozed with the local community and began to be stricter regarding Kashrut. The funny thing is that I went to shule a lot more here, than I ever did whilst living in Israel. I returned to Israel with Teshuva or to be more accurate, I came with more questions. Questions about my Jewish identity; what type of education I want to give my children? Those questions led



**BY ALON BAR
DAVID**

me into the path of becoming an observant Jew. I decided that I want to feel Jewish every second of the day, not just to feel Jewish, but act Jewish as well.

Shmil Atlas was a Hineni Shaliach approximately eight years ago. Recently he visited Sydney and when we had the opportunity to chat, he told me that when he completed his Shlichut, after four years of service, he only then realised how 'Australian' he became. Starting with work culture, patiently standing in line, but jokes aside, the most important thing that we are experiencing as Shlichim is the living within a community.

The Mishna explains the reaction of a metal tea spoon when it is dipped in boiling soup. The walls of the utensil expands with the heat and absorb the material around it. The tea spoon becomes 'fleshy'. As individuals we are very much like that tea spoon. We absorb the culture that surrounds us. And the community in many ways is the one to protect us. The community, the youth movements, the weekly activities, the Shabbat dinners, allow us to absorb the Jewish culture and its values.

In a year's time I will conclude my time in Australia. I would have completed three years of Shlichut and will return home filled with answers. I learnt a great deal from this community. The daily struggle to create a rich culture comes down to those who are willing

to sacrifice their time for the benefit of others. People like our Madrichim, who are in their early 20's, and giving endless weekends and their university breaks in order to facilitate a Jewish environment in which young Jews will feel naturally Jewish.

I often say to them that being away from my family and friends is not easy, but the power and energy to continue working under these circumstances is coming from them. They are the battlefront soliders in our community and in the coming future they will be the ones who will lead it.

Alon Bar David is the Israeli Shaliach to Hineni and The Central Synagogue. He's been serving for the past two years and future to finish his shlichot in a year time.

This article has been sponsored by the David & Sharon Duieb, proudly supporting Hineni Youth & Welfare

Judaism – a religion for community not an individual

We often forget to stop and think about the divine way in which our bodies operate. Our body, a single unit, is home to a broader network of cells and organs that gives the body life. Without the support of the networks within it, the body cannot function. It cannot operate. It cannot live. Each organ and mechanism within us plays a unique role, often different to its neighbour. However, each one of these elements share something so great that unites them like nothing else – a genetic code. This genetic code serves as a bond that provides identity and purpose, in turn, providing them with the means to operate.

Similarly, you and I share something so great some cannot comprehend. We share a bloodline of ancestry and history that unites us with an unbreakable sense of identity and mateship. We share a code of morals,

ethics and law that is not universal, but rather specific to you and me.

Judaism is unique in the way in which it demands of us to be a part of a community. Just like our bodies, each element within our community ensures our protection, be it spiritual or physical. The Sanhedrin offers an illustration of community life that provides for its members physically and spiritually.

“A talmid hakham (Torah scholar) is not allowed to live in a city that does not have these 10 things: a beit din (law court) that metes out punishments; a tzedakah fund that is collected by two people and distributed by three; a synagogue; a bath house; a bathroom; a doctor; a craftsman; a blood-letter; (some versions add: a butcher); and a teacher of children” (Sanhedrin 17b).



BY MICHELLE SHMAILOV

These qualities are core to our functioning as a Jewish people. The presence of a Beit Din helps to protect residents from falling victim to crime. A tzedakah fund aids community members who have fallen into poverty. A synagogue offers a place for prayer and communal gatherings. The bath house, bathroom, doctor, craftsman, blood-letter and butcher provide for the physical needs. The teacher ensures that the next generation is versed in Jewish tradition and

prepared to become the leaders of the community. Each cell of the community, ensuring its continuity and functioning.

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks discusses the idea of a kehillah. A kehillah is community that is made up of individuals who are different to those beside them. However, these individuals are “orchestrated together for a collective undertaking”. That is, they are involved in making a distinctive contribution to serve a particular purpose. Upon receiving the Torah at Har Sinai, our kehillah was given purpose. Rabbi Chaim Vital in Etz Chaim writes that “G-d wished to reveal the complete array and perfection of His powers and deeds” and for this to happen, we must elevate the mundane to the spiritual, through the fulfilment of mitzvot. This is our purpose.

Three times a day, we unite in a synagogue to fulfil the mitzvah of tefillah. In these moments, we take a seemingly selfish act and transform it into one of the most giving. Our prayers were written in such a way that inherently allow us to be a part of something greater. Many of our tefillot are written in its plural; Aleinu le'shabeach, “it is our duty to praise”. This form of tefillah emphasizes our responsibility to one another and highlights our interlinked fates. Even during the Yamim Noraim, the days of repentance, which focus heavily on self-reflection, we still unite and collectively ask for forgiveness. Together, our kehillah moves forward in our quest to fulfil the mitzvot.

Our community is rich in organisations that satisfy our intrinsic need to help those around us. Our kehillah has

founded many institutions that allow us to nurture the physical needs of the community, engrained in the values of tikkun olam (repairing the world) and gemilut chassadim (giving of loving-kindness). These values are so engrained in our beliefs that we are even commanded to invite people into our home. Hachnasat orchim, inviting guests into our home gives us a prime example of a kehillah at its best. Pirkei Avot tells us that “it is the duty of the host to be cheerful...and make his guests feel at home and comfortable”. The commandment to uphold these fundamental social values within Judaism ensure the support of one another within the kehillah.

The bonds we hold within our community are like no other. Our cells are united and have been coded to be a part of something much greater than ourselves. We are privileged to be a part of a belief system that asks of us to look up from our ‘ideologies’ that consume us, and be a part of a collective that requires the devices of all to work together.

May our kehillah continue to grow from strength to strength.
Shana tova ve'gmar chatima tova.

Michelle Shmailov is a member of shicvat Lavi and participated in Hineni's Shnat program in 2015. She is currently the Sgan Rosh Sydney and the incumbent Shnat Racezet (Israel program Director) for 2018

This article has been sponsored by the Baruch Family, proudly supporting Hineni Youth & Welfare

Jerusalem: the backbone for the nation with the scoliosis

No army battalion in the Israeli army has been more influential than the 55th brigade of the paratroopers (צנחנים). They captured the old city, crossed the Suez Canal and fought in Lebanon. Some left the kibbutz movement and founded big corporations, others founded NGOs, some started the settlement movement Gush Emunim, others pursued successful music careers and one even joined the PLO. The 55th brigade was a blended unit. These men came together from diverse religious and ethnic backgrounds. They, like the city they would ultimately capture, were unified. Not only physically, but culturally. Unification had its challenges. None more potent than the following story in 1967:

“The Temple mount is in our hands – הר הבית בידינו” proclaimed Mordechai

(Motta) Gur, a historic declaration rather than a military report. The centre of the Jewish imagination, the focus of prayer and inspiration had fallen under Israeli control. Ezra Orni, the chief communications officer of the 55th brigade retrieved an Israeli flag and asked Motta Gur if he could hang it over the Dome of the Rock, “Yalla” said Gur. They victoriously attached the symbol of Jewish self-determination to the crescent at the top of the mosque.

Stationed on Mount Scopus, Moshe Dayan observed the scene through his binoculars. He immediately radioed Gur, “do you want to set the Middle East on fire?” and instructed Gur to take it down. Neither Gur nor his senior officer Arik Achmon could fathom taking the flag down, so they instructed one of their men to do it.



**BY BENJAMIN
PRAWER**

The reunification of Jerusalem gripped the country in messianic fervour but the unexpected and resounding victory of the Six Day War resulted in a spontaneous concession. No story in the history of the Jewish people could be more emotionally complex. It is somewhat ironic that in the moment of reunification that the 55th brigade must have felt divided. Divided in their thoughts on the importance of controlling Temple Mount and divided

on whether they had done the right thing.

We are often confronted with the claim that Jerusalem was reunified in 1967. This is only half true.

In 1967 Jerusalem was geographically reunified. Reunited with their holy city, Jewish pride was restored. What does it mean that Jerusalem was reunified? Where is Jerusalem? Is it the Old City? Ma'ale Adumim? Ramot? Moshiko? If we pulled out the map of Jerusalem we would find it would be tattered and torn from being open and closed too many times throughout the ages. It would be covered in scribbles and eraser fragments, reminders of concessions, peace plans and fallen empires. Ultimately, the map is a vertical history book of conflict. Jerusalem's location has become a radioactive concept, avoided by some, weaponised by others.

The reunification of 1967 was an immense achievement but pales in comparison to our next task. Cultural reunification. Within the boundaries of the capital lie deep cultural, religious and socio-economic chasms. Chasms that divide every postcode, bus and tram stop.

Recently the Jerusalem municipality installed a tram, its route is a journey through the culturally divided Jerusalem. We start at Mount Herzl.

The next stop is: Kiriya Moshe – change here for a poor Mizrahi community.

Stay on the tram.

The next stop is: Yafa Street – change

here if you want to meet English-speakers.

Stay on the tram.

The next stop is: Damascus Gate – change here for fresh bagels and East Jerusalem.

Stay on the tram.

The next stop is: Shvtei Yisrael – change here for ultra-orthodox communities

Stay on the tram.

The next stop is: Shua'fat – change here for a suburb that doubles as a refugee camp.

Stay on the tram.

The last stop is: Heil Ha'avir.

No challenge is greater than the last step of reunification. We have been stagnant for 50 years deluding ourselves into thinking cultural reunification is borne of the physical unity. The bliss of returning to Jerusalem has paralysed progress and plagued us with inaction. Inaction that has allowed broadening and deepening of chasms.

התעוררי התעוררי – wake up, wake up! The time has come to act. We must finish the work of the 55th brigade. We must grow united as we build bridges from East to West and from North to South. From Bakkah to Mea Sharim and from Pisgat Ze'ev to Silawn. The messianic honeymoon is over.

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A Tale of Broken Pieces

The time of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is one of opportunity to reflect and try to engage with ourselves.

How do we bounce back in difficult times? What is it about our nature that allows ourselves to be resilient and how it is connected with hashivenu – to return.

There is a book called 'The Road to Resilience: From Chaos to Celebration' authored by Sherri Mandell, an American-Israeli who made aliyah with her family. In 2001 her son Koby and his friend Yosef Ish Ran went hiking in a canyon and were murdered by Palestinian terrorists, beaten to death by rocks. The book is about her experiences and how we grow from grief and how to thrive in the face of loss and trauma.

She writes that people misunderstand the concept of resilience, that it does not mean to bounce back or be strong.

Rather the concept of resilience in Jewish thought is that "it is not an attitude but a process. It's not just endurance or perseverance or stamina, the ability to stand strong and firm. Jewish philosophy teaches us that resilience is not overcoming. It's becoming." This means that we don't just hurdle over our troubles as if they are non-existent, but rather we allow them to be our teachers.

Yom Kippur is not a day all about atoning for all our misgivings, it is also a day to contemplate how we utilise those events in the past and elevate ourselves for a more a G-dly purpose.

This is the story of broken pieces. When Moshe came down from Har Sinai and saw the People of Israel dancing around the Golden Calf, in his frustration and disappointment he threw the luchot (10 commandments) down and in turn the tablets



**BY ELIEZER
MOSHEL**

smashed. However, the pieces were not disregarded, they were kept in the Aron HaKodesh, preserved and safeguarded inside the holy Mishkan.

This is why the pieces in our lives that have felt shattered are actually our teachers. In Japanese art, there is a ceramic technique called 'kintsukuroi'. This creative method uses smashed pieces of broken objects to creatively recreate the original object. It is done by the method of gluing the pieces together by gold, in hand producing a beautiful work of art. It is a lesson that the 'broken pieces' may be given shape, a design, a closer discovery with G-d.

The Kotzker Rebbe teaches us that "there is nothing so straight as a crooked ladder." This is life. Yes, we do sometimes find ourselves in difficult situations and often wish to have regretted mistakes but there is a profound lesson to view those pieces as priceless and precious.

I wish you a healthy g'mar chasimah tova, a healthy new year, with much goodness, success and hatzlocha.

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Empty stomach, full mind – A guide through fasting and spiritual awakening

“... because on this day atonement will be made for you, to cleanse you. Then, before the Lord, you will be clean from all your sins.”
(Leviticus 16:29–30)

The practice of fasting on Yom Kippur aims to fulfil many desires spiritually, emotionally, personally and collectively.

As the services becomes increasingly trying, you have likely marked the 94 pages left of Neilah until you can eat. Is there more to this day than waiting out the fast?

The following are a series of questions which reflect deep and awakening thought processes, fashioned to follow the journey of Yom Kippur, testing oneself, reflecting on oneself, abstaining from food to achieve clarity and above all continue to question. Allow these

thoughts to permeate your mind, creating and questioning your own spiritual awakening and clarity of the mind.

As I stand at the beginning of a new year, it is incumbent upon me to draw near the path of תשובה (repentance) and bring healing to the world. Have I done that so far? עינוי נפש (affliction of the soul) is described in the Torah as the essence of Yom Kippur. Must I disconnect myself from pleasures to immerse in spirituality and connectivity with G-d so I can complete my personal missions? To bring תשובה, must I be deprived?

My relationship with G-d is essentially a gift. If one of the greatest gifts I can give to G-d is prayer, then why fast? Is prayer enough for me? Why do I fast? The collective goal of fasting on Yom Kippur is to correct



BY ARIA KLEIN

the wrongs of the past by changing behaviour in the future. Is this my call to action? Must I afflict myself and remind my body of its limitations, transcending my physical needs for Hashem? Is the journey of prayer in shule and abstaining from my normal pleasures enough?

Can I achieve spiritual enlightenment in a more personal, modern, irreligious or meaningful way? Is fasting right for me and the relationship I have with G-d? Must I abstain from food to keep me from selfish and carnal desires like the Bahai? Can I go for weeks without food, enabling a truly meditative state like the Buddhists? Is fasting a tool to achieve Godward focus and to test my reality of G-d, like it is for the Christians? Should I fast to become focused on my body, dreams and sense of self, testing my patience, endurance and strong will like the Indigenous people? Like Islam, is it integral to omit lies, arguing, fighting and having lustful thoughts on a day of fasting? Or is it as simple as the Sikh who discourage fasting as it tortures the body rather than allowing it to contemplate wisdom?

When I fast, am I doing it for myself? In today's increasingly materialistic and gluttonous world, do I benefit from fasting from time to time? Am I doing it as a collective to Jewish people everywhere who come together to pray, fast and break the fast together, no matter the denomination? Or am I doing this for G-d? Food is G-d's gift to man. The verbs used in Genesis explain that G-d "creates", "says", "names", "blesses" and "declares". What is the first thing G-d "gives"?

Food. Today, what is my connection between G-d and the gift of food I have been blessed with?

Above all, what is the clarity I am trying to achieve? Has my recent month of introspection and growth reflected on this day? Have I made long lasting change through fasting? Have I completed the ultimate reason for fasting, תשובה? Instead of withholding, has this abstinence strengthened and broadened my spiritual muscle? Did the feeling of hunger on a physical level help me access the concept of desire and need on a spiritual level?

Today I have heard these words repeatedly recited תשובה צדקה תפילה, has my understanding of these words changed from the first repetition? As the final shofar blows, has my empty stomach allows the shofars vibrations to resonate through the rest of myself? Is the sound of this blow different to the one I heard a month ago? How has this sound offered me so many different perspectives?

Today my stomach was empty, but is my mind now full?

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Importance of self-reflection

Societies each have their unique versions of meditation. Sometimes these rituals aim for clarity or relaxation, and other times for intense self-reflection and self-evaluation. Whilst I don't deny the importance of the former, the latter has fallen under my microscope lens for today.

Within Western society, this sort of self-awareness has assumed a really strange place, on the periphery of everyone's vision, but in the centre of no one's (or at least very few). Everyone talks about how important it is to be mindful, or how healthy it is to keep a diary and do deep breathing exercises before bed. But how many people do all the things they talk about? Well I haven't done the research, but based on anecdotal evidence, I suspect it's few.

It's true, that this reflective process is not one that comes naturally. Rather, it requires constant, persistent work. So why

bother?

Well for starters, mindfulness is great for dealing with stress. And let's face it, you'd love to lose some of that pesky stress in your life, and its associated implications for your mental and physical health (like hypertension, increased risk of cardiovascular disease and even stroke). Your mind and your body will thank you for it.

Mindfulness can also change the way you experience life. The scholars Marlatt and Kristeller describe mindfulness as "bringing one's complete attention to the present experience on a moment-to-moment basis." This form of western meditation brings with it a self-awareness and reflexivity, one that shapes the way you think, and subsequently the way you act. Living this way effectively adds an extra step onto everything you do.



BY JASON GLASS

I think it is important to divide 'self-awareness' into two distinct categories.

The first, is the more commonly understood one. This is a purely internal awareness, an understanding of one's identity, of one's likes and dislikes, strengths and weaknesses, as well as one's own intrinsic core values.

Though this might sound simplistic, society doesn't cater particularly well to T1SA (type 1 of self-awareness). The school environment certainly rewards conformity and the corporate world of adulthood isn't generally known to concern itself with the wellbeing of its members. Additionally, it can be almost impossible to have an honest perception of yourself when all your observations come from a place of bias. The bias of course, being your own existing understanding of the world.

But if the stars align, and you're in the right place at the right time, and you get really, really lucky, those few years in between might be your opportunity for enlightenment. Some combination of a gap year, the freedom of tertiary education, and a variety of expressive outlets might enable you to explore, experiment and come to an appreciation of who you are. At least for now.

T2SA on the other hand, is a little different. This is more about having an awareness of the way you affect the wider, surrounding world. This is much more challenging. It means having the forethought necessary to comprehend outcomes before they happen. Actions are no longer just about their motive, but about their impact.

Such self-awareness requires a brutal level of honesty from those close to

you, and indeed an uncomfortable honesty with one's self. It demands a distance from one's ego that, frankly, I know not the extent of its feasibility.

But honestly, self-awareness is hard. For good reason. We evolved to look after Number One: ourselves. Our evolutionary cousin, Homo Mindfulus did not survive long enough to pass on its genes. In an existence dominated by the forces of natural selection, caring for anyone other than yourself or offspring is a mistake. Additionally, in our modern world that is overflowing with stimulation and distractions, spending time thinking is not always a luxury we treat ourselves to. It's okay that it's hard. Most worthwhile things are.

So, let's dial it back a bit. The types of awareness I discussed are extremes. Generally speaking, extremes aren't so helpful for our day-to-day life. However, as we approach our Day of Atonement, I think they are important to ponder, and consider how they can apply to day-to-day life. Whether Yom Kippur for you is a day of challenging honesty as you make amends, or just time away from the distractions of life, let's take the opportunity it affords to reflect meaningfully on ourselves and the world around us.

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Individual Blessings, Collective Achievement

“A person who takes a walk of 100 feet and a person who walks 2,000 miles have one major thing in common. They both need to take a first step before they take a second step.”
– Rabbi Zelig Pliskin

There is a concept in Judaism that each person has their own special life purpose, a unique mission that we subconsciously strive to complete throughout our lives. This idea permeates every aspect of Judaism; too often we say someone has ‘gone before their time’, or ‘they had so much potential’. Yet we appear to judge the quality of a person’s life based mostly on what they have achieved. Our recognition of our individual goals seems to have mingled with our ever-present materialism and ambition. How do we measure when someone has achieved their life’s purpose? Did

they cure cancer? Did they win an Olympic medal or become a billionaire? These are achievements we can see, tangible proof that we are worth something.

In every generation, it is said, there is a person who could be the Moshiach. There are 36 people on whose merit the world continues to exist. The Torah has dozens of examples of people like this, those whose achievements are so great that we remember them hundreds of years later; Moses, Sarah, David, just to name a few. Our leaders and prophets were certainly awe-inspiring, and it can be intimidating reading of their greatness. Never mind curing cancer, what is the point of my ordinary life compared to saving an entire nation?

Yet throughout our history we have had countless examples of the everyday



BY EMMA ORWIN

hero; people just like us. Next to Moses was Nachshon who stepped into the sea with the faith that G-d would protect him. Behind Abraham was his faithful servant Eliezer, who ensured only the most compassionate woman would give birth to the next generation of the Jewish people. Think of Yocheved who gave up her son to save his life, or Yael who helped win a war. And even beyond them, to all those millions of unnamed people who survived slavery in Egypt, who fought to establish the Jewish nation, who raised families and worked and studied to keep our people alive. Our leaders and prophets were fundamental to our survival as a people, but they were never the people themselves. It is B'nei Yisrael as a collective who have survived all these years, and whose everyday achievements have carried us to where we are today.

Whether it be raising a family, saving lives as a doctor, volunteering at a soup kitchen or educating the next generation of Jewish children, we all have our own individual journey to take. They may be simple, or very difficult, but each of our purposes are unique and necessary to move our nation forward. When you look at each person alone their achievements may be small, especially compared to a biblical prophet. But Judaism is a religion of community. When put together, our lives add to the huge, vibrant tapestry of that is the history of the Jewish People.

On Sukkot, one of the three pilgrimage festivals, we remember the journey our ancestors took three times a year to

gather in Jerusalem. In the Torah, we are told.

“Three times a year shall all your men appear before the Lord your God...Each shall bring his own gift, appropriate to the blessing which the Lord your God has given you” (Devarim 16:16).

This is a time to acknowledge our individual blessings, to understand, despite the hardships we face, how lucky we are to be part of such a rich history. Everything we do adds to the huge list of achievements we have compiled as a collective. On Sukkot, as on Pesach and Shavuot, we make our pilgrimage, gathering to recognise and celebrate not only our own personal successes, but the overwhelming success that is the survival and flourishing Jewish people.

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Never Again?

The phrase “Never Again” has been present in my life for as long as I can remember, an integral part of my education, both Jewish and secular, as well as my family’s life and history. When we say ‘never again’ we refer to the Holocaust, a tragically dark period of time for the Jewish nation and our collective humanity. We saw morality reach an all-time low, hatred and intolerance permeating every level of society. We saw families ripped apart and communities vanish into thin air, emaciated children left starving by the side of the road next to the limp bodies of their parents. And of course, there was what we didn’t see; the help and intervention of the worldwide community. Entrenched in our collective memory are the images of nations refusing Jewish immigrants, denying visas and turning back boats to send them back to where they came from. Australia, the country we so proudly

call home, stood in front of the United Nations to announce that they “had no racial problem and had no intention of importing one.” This is a tangible memory for us, and yet we sit idly by and vote for governments and leaders who promise to ‘Stop the Boats.’

Seventy years later I am privileged enough to be writing this. I come from a family of Holocaust survivors, immigrants to this country who came here with nothing but the scars of war and the memories of their murdered loved ones. Two generations later they have built successful businesses, educated themselves and their children, and become valuable contributing members of society. I don’t seek to offend anyone in making this comparison, nor am I trying to compare experiences. The Holocaust will forever remain a unique tragedy, unparalleled by any other atrocity in terms of the murderous efficiency and



**BY TAMAR
SHIFRONI**

infrastructure that was utilised by the Nazis. However, this does not negate the tragedy of what is happening today. More than 11 million Syrian people, have been killed or forced to flee their homes. They have faced persecution, mass murder, starvation, poverty, rejection have had families torn apart. If we look to our Jewish sacred texts for guidance, we will be confronted by two opposing opinions.

On the one hand, Judaism teaches us that we must protect ourselves, our own values and freedom against those who seek to harm us. We must be concerned with security, social and cultural cohesion and our economic security. The Code of Jewish Law teaches, "In a border city, even if the non-Jews approach you regarding straw and hay, one must violate the Shabbat to repel them." That's a fairly explicit instruction, right? Don't let the non-Jews in, even at the expense of breaking Shabbat. If we consider that saving a life stands at the centre of our tradition, we must therefore protect ourselves by not allowing people who wish negative things upon us in our midst. Judaism explicitly teaches us that preserving and continuing life is one of the most acts we can do, but who are we to decide which lives have more value than others?

Britain's Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis stated recently: "As Jews, many of us have family members who were refugees and our heritage must inform the way that we respond to the migrant crisis." Our experiences as refugees, as dispersed and wandering tribes in exile and persecution has shaped

our identity, and arguably has created the strong transnational bond that our nation possesses and so many of us feel. The Torah repeatedly instructs us to reflect on our experiences, "Love ye therefore the stranger; for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt" (Deuteronomy 10:19) and teaches us how to treat strangers "and if a stranger sojourn with thee in your land, ye shall not do him wrong" (Leviticus 19:33). We are easily caught up in the politics of the world, and we let the media and politicians distract us from one of our core Jewish values: "love thy neighbour as thyself" (Leviticus 19:18).

We live in the digital, globalised world, where we cannot feign ignorance in the face of these international humanitarian crises, such as the Syrian Civil War. It is our moral obligation, as Jews, to focus on the good in people, and remember that we all possess equal and infinite worth, as we are all made in the image of G-d. We cannot sit back and let someone else deal with the problem, just because this time the injustices are being perpetrated against someone who is not us. So, when we say 'Never Again', do we really mean never again? Or do we just mean 'Never Again to us.'

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**JEWISH
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Living in Two Homes

As Jews, we have been in the diaspora for thousands of years and are spread across the world. We have not had a home, until we were victorious and conquered Israel in 1948. But until then where have we settled? Australia is a home to many migrants and their descendants, though we still maintain a spiritual or material connection to our homeland.

The basis as to why we call Australia home are the elements of family, our upbringing and education that we have all received and experienced. Most of our families have migrated from different continents of the world and settled in Australia. Whether the cause was the Holocaust or a job opportunity, our families all made their way to Australia.

For some of us, we grew up in this community, we know the people who belong to it and how it works. We know this better than we know the back of our hand. We know who to go

to for what and what shul to attend for each holiday. Through this we have found safety within our new home, we have trust and love, understanding and differences, we found a new way of life that works, every day anew. Even though we have found a beautiful new land which we call our home – Australia – we will always have that deep spiritual connection to Israel, the Jewish Homeland.

Conquered in 1948 and thus declared the Jewish State, we received Israel. This land was given to us, Jews, way back during the time of the Bible making it the oldest ownership of land to exist. Even before the Bible, the Land was promised to our forefather via a covenant from G-d. In the torah Israel is always referenced to as our Homeland – whether we are in it or in exile, yearning for it. Without Israel, we would feel a spiritual emptiness.

It not only holds a historical



**BY HADAR ELISHA
& KEILA VAN DER
PLAAT**

and cultural connection with us but a spiritual one as well. Every year, Jews flock to Israel to travel the land and visit the Kotel, to pray, gaze or celebrate. We organise trips or go on Shnat, spending from a week to years in Israel just to connect with G-d or other fellow Jews. This may be because we grow up learning of this far-away homeland or we are originally from there. No matter how far or wide you travel – as a Jew – you have a natural connection to Israel that is centuries deep, that can never truly be severed.

Comparing Israel to Australia would be like comparing the sun to the moon. They both inhabit Jews within their borders and have shuls and Jewish institutions. However, their differences contrast more than their similarities. For instance, in Israel when the time comes for Shabbat or Chag, a siren is sounded throughout Jerusalem to notify all Jews that it is time to welcome Shabbat or the Chag. From then we can feel its serenity rolling through the street with no traffic on the roads and the sun leaving its warm colours in the sky. As you walk through the street at night you can hear all different families singing and laughing and you might even hear a plate crash or two.

In Australia when we welcome Shabbat or a Chag we feel serenity in a different type of way. As we are preparing for the Chag or Shabbat we feel the ambience in a different type of way, in our homes you can see the lit candles, the table set with the finest cutlery and each family member wearing his or her finest clothes and walking to shul greeting other Jews. But it still feels

different as it is not as acknowledged in the domain around you. We consider both countries our homeland, for a variety of different reasons, whether that be family, culture or tradition.

We endure tension and struggle between which land to call our home. We could suffer backlash from either one, we do not choose, making our decision even harder. But it is unnecessary to feel this hardship and strain as we have nothing to lose and everything to gain by maintaining this dual loyalty between our two homelands – Australia and Israel. Dwelling in Australia and connecting with Israel is like living in two homes, one for the mind and one for the soul but both for the body.

Hadar and Keila are both chanichot of Hineni in year 10. The both attend Beth Rivka Ladies College and have recently completed the Hineni Hadracha (leadership) course.

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Reflecting on Reflection

If we are constantly trying to go back home does that mean we avoid progression and moving forward?

Judaism is a religion centred on reflection. Every year, we read the entirety of the Torah – taking note of the meaning and lessons that it imparts onto us. We annually come together and recite the story of Pesach, not only remembering but learning, feeling and teaching the history of our people for generations to come. Over the past month of Elul, we have been focusing on re-evaluating our year – specifically our actions, attitudes and values. This leads us into the ‘10-days of repentance’, a period solely devoted to intense reflection, whilst proving to be one of the most sacred periods in our Jewish calendar. Sitting in shule on Yom Kippur, we are currently at the pinnacle of this introspection. However, does this appreciation for our past and the wisdom it offers us impact on our ability to progress as individuals, and moreover, as a nation?

Elie Wiesel famously wrote that “without memory, there is no culture. Without memory, there would be no

civilisation, no society, no future”. The traditions we practice, lessons we teach and religious lifestyle we lead are all amalgamations of our historical archives and the modern world. Even if we are not intentionally meditating on our past, we are reflecting by way of our actions and attitudes, by paying homage to our ancestors and rich past. Acquiring a certain balance between past, present and future is something we all strive to achieve on our personal religious journey. What practices, values, sentiments, do we choose to carry with us and what do we choose to leave behind. When one considers a balanced lifestyle in this way, it is unbelievable that an entire stream of Judaism has stemmed from exactly that, a balance. It’s the emphasis that Modern Orthodoxy places on balancing the past and future, on reflecting back upon our historical practices whilst simultaneously creating new ones to adapt to an ever changing society.

When addressing the interplay between actions and intentions, the Babylonian Talmud states that “mitoch shelo lishma ba



**BY JEMMA KATZ
AND REIZEL PARIJ**

lishma”, which literally translates to “what’s not for its own sake will come for its own sake”. According to the Rabbis of the time, one fulfils a mitzvah purely by performing it, regardless of their thoughts leading up to it or their reasons for accomplishing such a deed. They argue that intention and personal spiritual motivation will follow naturally.

Let’s observe the example of giving tzedakah – we may not think too extensively about why we are performing this deed, but actually giving tzedakah will lead us to reflect on what we have just done, and for

what purpose we have done it. So perhaps the ability to reflect appears in more aspects of our lives than we tend to realise?

This Jewish frame of mind, which focuses on our practical actions and only addresses our thoughts and intentions later, is known as “Na’aseh Venishma” (“we do and we heed”). It is inherent in our Hineni values and evident in the way that we approach chinuch (education). We lead by example, guiding our kids through the Jewish customs and practices that they have not necessarily been brought up with. When they reach an age where they can fully comprehend it, we teach them the source and reasoning behind each and everything that we do, leading them to appreciate the intricacies of our religion.

This combination of action followed by reflection does not stop at our chanichim. In every facet of our life, as madrichim, friends, employees, children and siblings, we are constantly challenged to reflect on our actions and re-evaluate our approach, and it is this 2-step process that leads us to mature and grow. Rather than hinder our ability to progress as individuals, reflecting is the conduit by which we can most efficiently achieve this. It is not only imperative for the growth and unity of our people, but a crucial element of self-improvement that Judaism places a high emphasis on. According to the Vilna Gaon, “the prime purpose of man’s life is to constantly strive to break his bad traits”. This is an apt summary of the place that personal growth has in our religion – to which self-reflection is vital.

Self-reflection is a key motif in the works of Plato through his directive to “gnothi seauton” – “know thyself”. He points out the order to enhance our interactions with the world around us. Firstly, we must have a thorough understanding of ourselves – our flaws, negative tendencies and the nuances of our persona. By setting aside time specifically dedicated to self-reflection,

Judaism ensures that we are equipped to better understand ourselves. Further, by establishing a dichotomy between the high emphasis on introspection during the months of Elul and Tishrei and the forward-thinking attitude that we adopt for the remainder of the year, we ensure that we do not excessively dwell in the past.

Rabbi Simhah Bunim of Przysucha once said “Everyone ought to have two pockets, each holding a slip of paper, so that he can reach for one or another slip as the occasion demands. On one should be written: ‘I am but dust and ashes’. And on the other: ‘The world was created for me’”. According to Rabbi Bunim, knowing when to consult the relevant quote is the key to maintaining the balance between humility and empowerment. This approach can be applied to the navigation of the harmony between reflecting on the past and looking forwards towards the future. It is up to us to understand in what situation we need to look to the past for wisdom, and when one must look to the future in order to plot one’s path in life. We must understand when our introspection is beneficial, and when it is excessive and has progressed into rumination. Once we arrive at this understanding, is when we have achieved balance.

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Family Politics

“Ariel, I am a part of centuries of Jewish culture which has endured the brink of destruction” my father angrily answered to my presumptuous assertion that the way the he structured his Jewish identity was unsustainable for future generations. I can guarantee that I was respectfully smug when my mother agreed with me.

Putting aside the inner politics of the Golvan family, this anecdote displays a question that all modern Jews yearn to answer. What will keep us Jewish?

One of the major answers to this question in our family discussion about maintaining a strong Jewish identity focusses on attending community events, most importantly, religious community events. We concluded, that attending these events with a positive outlook and a social commitment were key ingredients in the development of a Jewish identity. As it is impossible

to make a good quality beer without crystal clear clean spring water, it is impossible to have any of the above ingredients without the strength and commitment of a family unit.

Pause....

“Have you registered for the upcoming nationwide postal survey on gay marriage?” A familiar face on campus stopped me to ask whether I would like to update my voting registration. We ended up discussing the merits of the survey and whether it was necessary. But it raised further questions for me.

Whether you agree or disagree with marriage equality it seems clear that the world we live in today perceives the family unit in a very different way to what it was less than 100 years ago. As Bob Dylan famously said “The times they are a-changin’”. It’s clear that divorce rates are increasing. It’s more common to see same sex



BY ARIEL GOLVAN

parents and intermarriage is also on the increase. But I'm not raising alarm bells. The question rather is, how will we, the Jewish world, respond? Unlike other religions that place an emphasis on physical locations, objects, and actions, the two centre pieces of the Jewish world are most certainly the 'mishpacha' (family) and the 'kehillah' (community). How would your kehillah manage a bat-mitzvah girl with a single father who must sit on her own isolated upstairs (in most cases) at shule? How would your kehillah manage the non-Jewish father or converting mother of the child who is about to have their bnei-mitzvah? And, how would your kehillah manage same sex parents and their children who want to be part of the kehillah irrespective of marital status?

Charles Darwin suggested that if an organism is incapable of adapting to the immediate threats presented, it will eventually become extinct. This may have some bearing on this discussion. However, thousands of years of Jewish existence does prove that there must be more complexity to consider.

The Modern Orthodox world has a plethora of varying approaches to answer the question of how to respond to societal shifts. Some people conclude that the current status quo has established stability for the Jewish people and to change the way things are done would rock the foundation and destabilise

Judaism. Others disagree, claiming that halacha is not static and adapts to modern dilemmas, contending that this fundamentally separates Judaism from other religions. I don't really know what the answer is; and certainly, don't have the credibility to provide one; but a wise man once told me, "you know you're getting smarter when you have a growing number of questions and a fixed number of answers".

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Ahavat Yisrael – Loving your fellow Jew

Unless you have been living under a rock you would know that Australia has an upcoming vote on the future of marriage in Australia. Whilst the topic itself might not be controversial to some, perhaps the biggest issue in this entire debate is the treatment of people. Not the treatment of LGBT people but the actual way we have chosen to treat each other in this debate.

I have seen and heard it, fights between friends, divisions in the community, fellow Jews unable to speak to each other because of the vote. However, is this scenario really that new to our people? Whether it be the infighting in Australia over politics, the factional divisions of Jewish fighters in the Warsaw Ghetto or even the Jews of Judea killing each other during the Roman Era, this practice of Jewish

hatred is not uncommon in our history. I would go so far to say that the hatred amongst ourselves at times has superseded the hate from Amalek to Nazism, for it is one thing for man to hate man, but for brother to turn against brother is perhaps an ultimate, incomparable form of hatred.

In this article I am not stating that disagreeing with your fellow Jew is hatred, on the contrary, healthy discussion is vital in the building of our people. However, when I see the vitriol and passions in-amongst the Jewish world, the ways we engage with each other I truly worry. Assimilation is not, what will cause the break down of Jews in the diaspora, it will be our lack of love for each other. From religious to secular, right to left, the ability to love without judge, to talk without 'lashon', to



**BY COLBY
WIGODER**

hug without strangle. At the end of the day what are words compared to the unity stimulated by Ahavat Yisrael?

So, I ask you, if the key to being a religious or secular, “perfect” Jew is following the mitzvot or basic ethics, why not start with the hardest? Why not start with the commandment of loving our fellow Jew, of Ahavat Yisrael. Think about it, Kashrut is a 24/7 commitment, Shabbat a constant on the clock, but none compare to treating every Jew, regardless of their personality with a constant warmth, let alone lukewarm acceptance. No time commitment, no economic burden, only the burden or setting aside one’s own ego and pride.

I know it’s not easy, it never is. However if we are the ‘Or LaGoyim’ (Light amongst the nations), then why not set the greatest example to the world. Let’s show that a tragedy like Charlottesville is not only rare in Judaism, it is non-existent. This Yom Kippur take an oath to look at all Jews in a greater love, to give everyone the benefit of the doubt. Let’s break the cycle of hate and begin a cycle of love, for that will be the foundation of our redemption. As Hillel said “That which is hateful unto you do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole of the Torah, The rest is commentary. Go forth and study.”

So, love your brother.
Talk to him
Embrace him as your own.

Colby Wigoder is a member of shicvat Oz and participated in Hineni’s Shnat program in 2014. He has served the movement greatly as Rosh Limudei Kodesh (Head of Jewish Life) in Sydney and on a federal level.

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Today's shofar – what is our call to action?

The High Holidays are filled with many moments of reflection, motivation and direction. This time is embedded into our lives as a chance to acknowledge where we are both physically and spiritually.

The shofar is the incredible wake-up call that reminds us of this, one that shakes us to our very core and says, “what are you doing? Who are you?” Most of all the shofar asks and demands, “Who are we?” Who are we as a people? The shofar calls loudly and reaches the furthest corners of our existence and urges us to reach out to our collective, to the Jewish people and to the world. The shofar has been our very own biblical alarm clock for hundreds of years, using its powerful Tekiah, Shevarim and Teruah to mobilise communities and to continually rejuvenate

our people.

In our modern lives the symbol of the shofar comes in many shapes and sizes, intersecting with technology, politics, science and activism. In the lead-up to Rosh Hashanah we have many “wake up calls” these might come in meaningful moments with loved ones, professional success, gestures of love, pain, loss and anxiety. These moments are hard, exciting, warm, aching and challenging. Much like the sounds of the shofar they come in many different capacities and sizes. These are wake-up calls that many of us feel, often a number of times each year. Much like the shofar, they bring our lives into focus, tap us on the shoulder when we least expect and urge us to adapt, to reflect on where we are coming from, where we are now and what our future holds.

In shul we hear and most



**BY CHARLOTTE
EIZENBERG**

of all listen to the shofar as a collective community, opening up our ears to the divine sound. The shofar and its power are internalised by individuals, we wrestle with what it means what it is saying but its unyielding and limitless power is expressed as a collective, a people.

On top of our individual wake up calls, we experience daily global and emotional 'wake up calls'; political riots, wars, celebrations and development. These episodes strike up that similar set of stirring questions:

where are we coming from?
where are we now?
and where does our future lie?

It seems no matter how far or different we are from each other, we all ask those three questions. Some of the answers may not be the same, but they could be. Much like the shofar this isn't merely a question but a call. What will our future hold? What do you will it to hold? Not just for yourself or your inner circle but what difference are you going to make on a larger scale. How will your deeds ripple into something bigger? This question is immense and heavy in its importance.

Maybe it's the Tekiah sound, a call embedded in your past, pulling you back to our origin, whether that's God, home or education. Maybe it's the Shevarim call, opening your eyes to opportunity that was once unclear, a cry for growth. Or lastly the Teruah call, a reflection of your pitfalls and triumphs, a reconnection with your strengths and deepest desires.

Whichever call you are receiving this year, listen to it, identify it, act with passion and remember that although our call may sound different, how we act on that call is powerful enough to change our personal and collective experience.

Chag Sameach

Charlotte Eizenberg is a member of shivat Barak and participated in Hineni's Shnat program in 2016. She is currently a madricha for year 11 and is the Rosh Chinuch of Melbourne Hineni and incumbent Sgan Hineni Melbourne 2018

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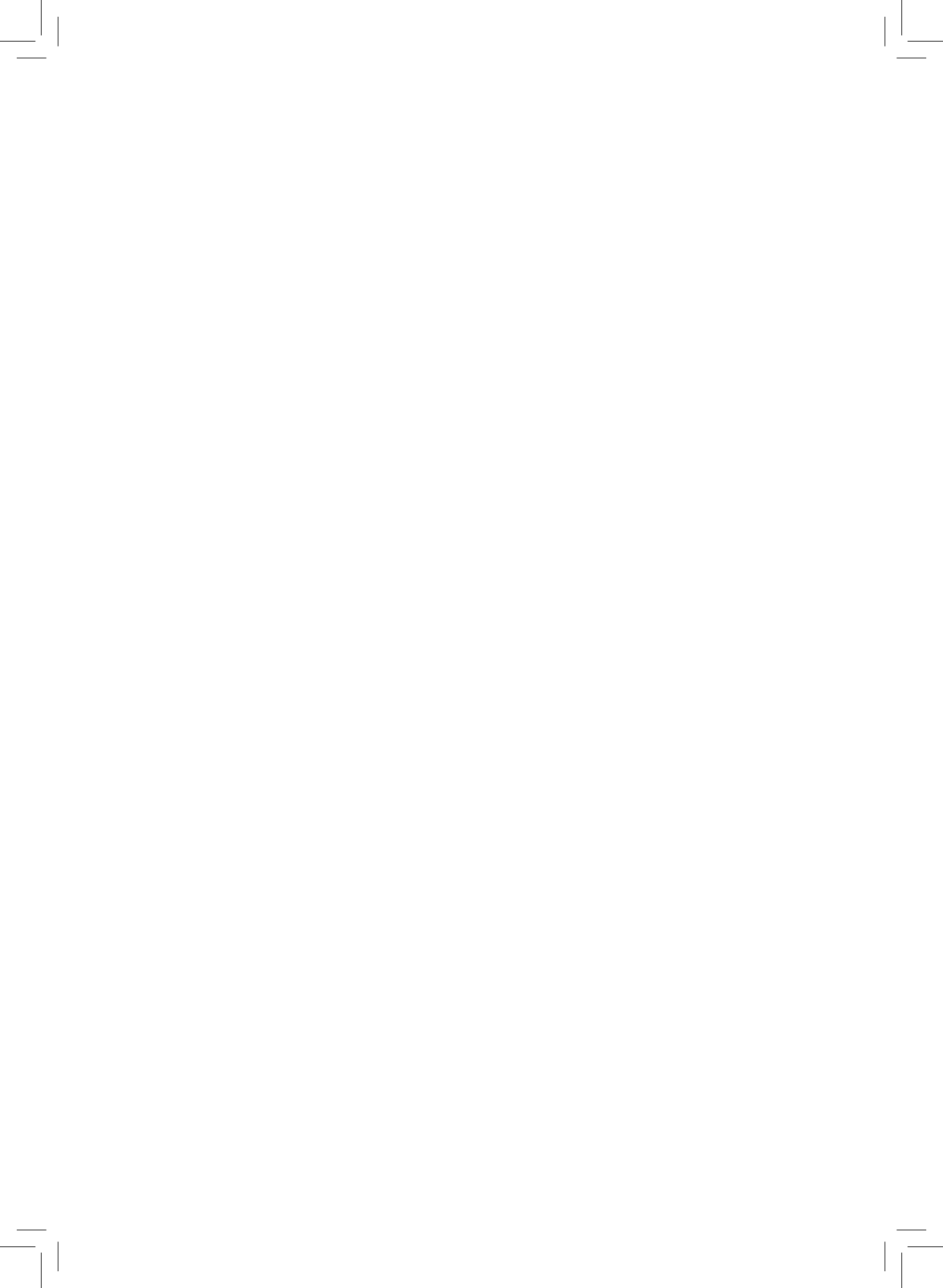
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