

# THE CLANTON PARK HERALD

A quarterly newsletter, intended to provide timely and pertinent information to *shul* members  
Vol 4, Issue 1, *Rosh Hashana 5767* website: [www.clantonpark.com](http://www.clantonpark.com) email:  
[bulletin@clantonpark.com](mailto:bulletin@clantonpark.com)

---

## ***From the Rav...***

### ***SHOWING OUR YOUTH LIFE'S UGLIER SIDE***

*Davening* in general and the *Yomim Noraim davening* in particular focuses on the rules and on the rituals governing *korbanos*, sacrificial offerings. We know that these *korbanos* were beneficial for those who brought them. We know that they expunged sins, that they fostered *teshuva*, that they helped people become better, that they helped sinners turn away from sin. What we don't know is why and how *korbanos* accomplished all this. How does slaughtering an animal help a sinner repent? How does seeing an animal die turn a sinner into a better person?

The Ramban is one of the many who grapple with the issue. The Ramban prefaces his approach by noting that understanding how a *korban* purges sin is contingent on understanding the dynamics of sin. Why, he asks, do people sin? Isn't the foolishness of sin, so very obvious? Isn't it obvious, he asks, that our short lives afford us just a few brief years in which to stockpile the *ma'asim tovim*, the good deeds, that are all that remain with us for the hereafter? Isn't it obvious that sins, both large and small are foolish acts that whittle away both those good deeds and the ticking moments of our lives? Isn't it obvious that we live in the shadow of impending death, that life is so very brief and that every moment must be used wisely and with the greatest of care?

Unless, of course, the brevity and the importance of life in general and of life decisions, in particular, is not that obvious. Unless people are, all too often, oblivious of the fact that they live in the shadow of death, oblivious of the fact that every moment of life must be used wisely and carefully, oblivious of the fact that the posthumous *Yom HaDin* is just around the corner. A sinner, the Ramban tells us, lives under the spell of oblivion. That is why he does the foolish things that he does and that is why he must cast off the spell of that oblivion. And what better way of shattering that oblivion than coming face to face with the mortality that his mind refuses to acknowledge? *Korbanos*, seeing the death of an animal creates death cognizance. The animal's death reminds the sinner of his own impending demise. It reminds him of the brevity

of it all. It reminds him not to make mistakes that will haunt him on into eternity.

The Ramban's idea resonates, in particular, during the *Yomim Noraim*, as we see life rush by, as we cross another year of the calendar of life. It reminds us of the brevity of it all. It reminds us not to make mistakes that will haunt us on into eternity.

But there is another arena in which the Ramban's idea resonates, a troubling arena of paramount importance. That arena is the arena of the high-risk behaviour that is so prevalent among many of our young people. Too many of them take too many risks too often. They are neglectful of road safety. They frequently experiment with cigarettes, alcohol and worse. It seems so paradoxical doesn't it? Young people who have their entire lives ahead of them are so cavalier about personal safety, while their aged grandparents who have lived most of their lives are so safety conscious. Why?

It is because young people are really oblivious to the consequences of their actions. They are not really aware of how very fragile their lives are. They are young and healthy and their friends are young and healthy. They have seen little of illness and so they do not think about illness. They have seen little of death and so they do not think about death. Their ignorance allows for a "don't worry, be happy attitude." And so they take risks when they drive, when they smoke, when they experiment.

It is imperative that adults lift the blinders off the eyes of these young people by exposing them to the consequences of foolhardy actions. Following the *korban* example by highlighting the reality of mortality and suffering would be one of the most effective methods of such exposure. Let them see the ill, the maimed and the ruined, the frightening debris of high-risk behaviour. A trip to a home for those paralyzed in road accidents, to someone dying of lung cancer might diminish the allure of foolhardy lifestyle choices

Yes, exposure to the dead, to the ruined and to the maimed is unpleasant, just as the death that a slaughter of a *korban* recalls is unpleasant. But that is precisely the point: life is full of unpleasant pitfalls. Highlighting the pitfalls makes it easier to be vigilant in avoiding them. And avoiding them

can spell the difference between life and death. Such vigilance is well worth learning even if the medium through which it is learned is none too cheerful.

This Rosh Hashana let us make a commitment to show our youth not just where to go, but also where not to go. They will only be better off because of it. A gutt, gebentcht, safe New Year!



## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

### Moshe Shields

We celebrate *Rosh Hashana* for two days, and we refer to it as "*Yoma Arichta*" (a long day). What is the meaning of this term? How can a day be long or short when the cycle of a day consists of only one day and one night?

The Bostoner Rebbe of New York, Rabbi Chaim Avrohom HaLevi Horowitz Shlit"a, explained this concept as follows: It takes 48 hours for a day to pass around the world, thus in a simple sense "*Yoma Arichta*" is a 48-hour day. Although it may be *Shabbos* in one place on the globe, it may be Sunday somewhere else. If *Rosh Hashana* begins at the date line, then (for example) the Jews of New Zealand welcome in *Yom Tov* while Jews around the world are still preparing for *Yom Tov*. Twenty-four hours later, the Jews in Hawaii begin their *Rosh Hashana* and New Zealand's Jews end their first day. If *Rosh Hashana* was only a "short day" of 24 hours, New Zealand's *Rosh Hashana* would be over at this point. "*Yoma Arichta*", a 48-hour observance of *Rosh Hashana*, gives Jews everywhere in the world the ability to be celebrate *Rosh Hashana* together as one. Thus, on *Rosh Hashana*, in a sense, we unite the Jewish world.

Sometimes, though, we need to start from within. My goal for my term as President of the Clanton Park Synagogue is to increase the feelings of *achdus* and warmth within the *shul*. Over the past few years we have taken many steps towards this goal:

- We have weekly *kiddushim* which provide a warm environment where members can socialize after *davening*.
- We have an active decorum committee that has laid the groundwork for a much quieter *davening*.
- We have an active sisterhood, which has monthly *Rosh Chodesh* Get-

Togethers to promote *achdus* among the women. They also have a very active *chesed* committee - a group of women who bake and cook meals for new mothers and for those who are unfortunately ill and can't prepare their own meals.

- We have an annual Purim party with an attendance of around 150 people.
- We have extensive youth and children's programming to offer the young families in the *shul*.

There are other steps that I would like to take, and which I will announce over the coming months. In general, though, I would like to encourage everyone to get involved in the *shul*. We all pay our dues annually, but it's only by getting involved that we actually develop a sense of ownership and, more importantly, passion. When we are passionate about something, we give of our time and talents.

Our role as leaders is two-fold. First, to do nothing that would interfere with your passion or dampen your enthusiasm. And second, to do everything possible to strengthen your passion and facilitate your giving expression to it in works and deeds. If there is an area in which you feel passionate and would like to help, please speak to me or the appropriate committee chair.

On behalf of the Executive, my wife and my family, I wish everyone a year of health, happiness and prosperity. K'Siva Va'Chasima Tova.

### Mazel Tovs

Sponsored by ...

**ZEMER ORCHESTRA (416) 633-5936**  
"Toronto's Freilich Orchestra!" and....

**WAYNE KURTZ VIDEO PRODUCTIONS**  
(416) 633-4941 "May we only meet b'simcha"

Alon and Lisa Kronenberg, on the birth of a daughter, Shira Bracha. Mazel tov, as well, to the grandparents, Chuck and Agi Nagel, and Dov and Sara Kronenberg, and to the great-grandparents, Mrs. Goldie Weinfeld and Mr. Shmuel Dov Mogyoros.

Dovid and Adina Hofstedter, on the birth of a son, Naftali Herzka. Mazel tov, as well, to the grandparents, George and Linda Hofstedter and Chaim and Leora Zwebner, and to the great-grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Sandy Hofstedter

Shlomo and Raizel Chana Hofstedter, on the birth of a son, Yoseph Isaac. Mazel tov, as well, to the grandparents, George and Linda Hofstedter and Steven and Yuyu Kohn, and to

the great-grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Sandy Hofstedter and Mr. and Mrs. Breiner. Josh and Bronya Levi, on the bar mitzvah of their son, Yoseph. Mazel tov, as well, to the grandparents, Mr. Edward Mason, Mrs. Nina Nadler and Mrs. Eva Levi.

Dr. Hartley and Nadine Bressler, on the bnos mitzvah of their daughters, Brina and Rachel. Mazel tov to the grandfather, Mordechai Bressler.

Arnold and Sally Rais, on the engagement of their son, Yehuda, to Etah Mael, of Chicago. Mazel tov, as well, to the *kallah's* parents, Dr. Dovid and Audrey Mael, and to the grandparents, Mrs. Mira Kipper, Mr. and Mrs. Nysen and Esty Mael of Boston, Mr. and Mrs. Alter Chaim Myer and Mirel Jakobovitz of Montreal, and to the *kallah's* uncle and aunt, Jerry and Ruth Warner.

Wayne and Zeldie Kurtz, on the engagement of their daughter, Rebecca, to Yossi Salmon. Mazel tov to the *chasan's* parents, Dr. Peter and Roz Salmon. Mazel tov, as well, to the grandparents, Dr. and Mrs. Yehudi Shields, and Moshe and Margaret Perl.

Haron and Sarah Hillel, on the engagement of their son, Jonathon, to Gila Ashtor. Mazel tov to Gila's mother, Alla, and to her grandmother.

Yechiel and Lisa Colman, on the wedding of their son, Yoni, to Eli Abramoff. Mazel tov, as well, to the *kallah's* parents, Rabbi Yehoshua and Ayelah Abramoff, and to the grandparents, Carl and Reta Goldstein, and Ben Genauer.

Murray and Clara Shore, on the wedding of their son, Nachum, to Chana Libman, of Thornhill. Mazel tov, as well, to the *kallah's* parents, Drs. Bob and Esther Libman.

Tibor and Susie Klein, on the wedding of their daughter, Chanie, to Chesky Silberstein of New York. Mazel tov to the *kallah's* parents, David and Tzila Silberstein, and to the grandparents, Mr Moshe Grossberger and Mr. and Mrs. Herschel Klein and Savta Roth.

Gary and Helen Muzin, on the wedding of their son, Nicholas David, to Andrea Zucker, of Charleston, South Carolina. Mazel tov to the *kallah's* parents, Jerry and Anita Zucker.

George Isaac and Pearl Isaac, on the wedding of their son, Boruch, to Rivkah Davis of New York. Mazel tov to the *kallah's* parents, Rabbi and Mrs. Yosef Davis, and to the grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Norman Davis, Alice and Lenny Bubel-Bedell and Mrs. Sara Hochman.

Dr. Ernie and Susan Greenwald on the birth of a grandson, Tuvia, to their children Dovid and Devora Rochel Greenwald in Ramat Bait Shemesh. Mazel tov to the other grandparents, Rabbi and Mrs. Avishai David, and to the great-grandparents, Paul and Roberta Tobias and Mrs. Lily Greenwald.

Gershon and Faige Kaplan, on the birth of a grandson, Moshe Rafoel, to their children Chaim and Chani Kaplan. Mazel tov to the other grandparents, and to the great-grandparents, Sidney and Pearl Woolf.

Chaim and Maryka Weisz, on the birth of a grandson to their children, Daniel and Tammy Youngerwood in London, England. Mazel tov, as well, to the other grandparents, Howard and Naomi Youngerwood.

Eisig and Ethel Bergman, on the birth of a granddaughter, Chaya Chana, to their children, Volvi and Adeena Bergman. Mazel tov to the other grandparents, Fred and Eva Steinlauf of Montreal.

Arnold and Sally Rais, on the birth of a grandson, Eitan Mordechai Dov, to their children, Yechiel and Yael Rais. Mazel tov to the other grandparents, Sruly and Debbie Karoly, and to the great-grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Mayer Karoly, Mrs. Mira Kipper and Mrs. Bella Lehrer of Montreal.

Dr Leo and Faigie Davids, on the birth of a grandson, Hillel Eliezer, to their children, Naomi and Jeremy Brumer. Mazel tov to the other grandparents, Professor Paul and Abby Brumer.

Joseph and Esty Edell, on the birth of a granddaughter, Gabriella Faige, to their children, Eli and Ahuva Edell. Mazel tov to the other grandparents, Leo and Frances Grunwald. as well to the great-grandparents, Aaron and Miriam Frankel, and as well to all the uncles and aunts, Daniel and Miri, Uri, Noam, and Avi.

Tom and Annie Kohn, on the birth of a grandson to their children, Dennis and Chayie Kohn. Mazel tov to the other grandparents, Jerry and Chavi Newman, or New York.

Eisig and Ethel Bergman, on the bar mitzvah of their grandson, Yissocher Shaul. Mazel tov to the parents, Yossi and Rochel Rubinoff, and to the other grandparents, Michael Rubinoff and Helen Rubinoff.

Moshe and Margaret Perl, on the marriage of their grandson, Josh Salmon, to Yael Diamond of Toronto. Mazel tov to the parents, Dr. Peter and Roz Salmon and to the *kallah's* parents, Dr. Aubie and Sue Diamond.

If we have missed your recent *simcha*, it's because you neglected to report the details to the editor! The good news is: you can still report the details in time for our next issue. Full details, and correct spellings can be reported via email to ([bulletin@clantonpark.com](mailto:bulletin@clantonpark.com)) or phone (416-493-9560 x 2102); if they are not received via email or phone, they most likely will not be printed.

### Condolences

Frances Kopstick, on the passing of her husband, Percy Kopstick. Condolences, as well, to Gary, Motti and Shmuel Kopstick, and to Yael Rosen on the passing of their father.

## Shul News and Rules

### Mazel Tov and Yasher koach to the recently installed Executive ...

Immediate Past President	Gary Kopstick
President	Moshe Shields
1 <sup>st</sup> Vice-President	Paul Jacobs
2 <sup>nd</sup> Vice-President	Ken Goldstein
Secretary	Morris Sosnovitch
Treasurer	Aaron Frankel
House Maintenance	David Taub
Bikkur Cholim	Irwin Diamond
	Josh Levi
Chevra Kadisha	Hersch Kanner
Communications	Norman Weisbart
Financial	Sandy Hofstedter
Gabboim	Gershon Kaplan
	Dr. Yehudi Shields
Hall Rental	Alon Kronenberg
Membership	Mendy Goldman
Israel Bonds	Shimmy Roth
Library	Sid Wellman
Social	Howard Lyons
Youth	Manuel Kanner
Bulletin	Ken Stollon

**High Holiday Tickets.** It is not necessary for members to come to *shul* to stand in line for tickets. Please send in your cheques together with your seating requests and the Committee will endeavour to comply with your wishes. If you feel it necessary to come in person, please have all your cheques filled out in their entirety, before you come. The Committee will be available from 7:00 - 9:00 PM on the following days: Thursday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, Monday September 18<sup>th</sup>, Tuesday September 19<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday September 20<sup>th</sup>.

**Update of Pertinent Information for the Gabboim...** Enclosed with this package, you will find a form requesting pertinent information about

you and your family. It is crucial that you fill out this form and return it to the *gabboim* as soon as possible, so that they can update their system for *aliyahs* and *kibudim*. Your cooperation is appreciated.

### "Adopt a Gush Katif Family" Programme...

The *shul* has decided to "adopt" a displaced *Gush Katif* family and send this family a monthly cheque for a year's time. The family we are adopting, Mordechai and Osnat Mines, have thirteen children, ranging in age from 3 months old to 20 years old, including two children who have served or are currently serving in the army. Mordechai formerly worked as a bus driver and Osnat, in addition to looking after her children, baked homemade cakes for special occasions, on order. Both are now unemployed and the family is destitute. After their evacuation from *Gush Katif*, they lived for 8 months in the soldiers' recreation centre in Ashkelon, and have only recently been placed in a more permanent dwelling. If you would like to help, tax-deductible cheques should be made out to "Clanton Park Synagogue" with the notation "Gush Katif programme" in the memo section of the cheque. Cheques can be given to Sammy Nussbaum, Josh Levi or Alon Kronenberg.

**TCN Teshuva Series ...** A special programme of *shuirim* will be shown via satellite at the *shul* this month:

Sun Sept 17<sup>th</sup> 8:30 PM Rav Matisyahu Solomon and Rav Shmuel Dishon  
 Mon Sept 18<sup>th</sup> 8:15 PM Rav Hershel Schachter  
 Tues Sept 26<sup>th</sup> 8:45 PM Rav Yosef Viener  
 Wed Sept 27<sup>th</sup> 8:30 PM Rav Mordechai Becher  
 Thurs Sept 28<sup>th</sup> 8:00 PM Rav Yissochar Frand  
 For more information on the ongoing TCN programmes, see the *shul* website or contact: [drsis@rogers.com](mailto:drsis@rogers.com).

### Message from the Decorum Committee ...

The Decorum Committee is back! We never really left, but our presence was silent. Okay a bad joke. The reality is that since it is *Elul* and the summer is over it is an appropriate time to focus our attention on improving our *tefillah* and elevating the *Kedushas Bais Haknesses*. To this end, the Decorum Committee will be implementing a number of initiatives in the weeks to come.

With the cooperation of the *Gabboim* and the President, we are going to have members of the Decorum Committee who are authorized to stop the *davening* when necessary to encourage silence. These members will be placed strategically throughout the *shul*.

We will again be looking to mobilize the silent majority to not tolerate talking. In the past, ushers did not work because it became personal. We are looking for the people who don't want talking to

take an active role in discouraging talking. We hope to create peer pressure to stop talking; create a culture of not talking. We are looking for people who want to join the Decorum Committee. By joining you are showing your commitment to not talk during *davening*. The more that join, the better.

There will be a concentration on trying to stop conversations that start after some people are finished their silent *Sh'moneh Esrei* but others (and particularly the Rabbi) are not. This is very disruptive to the concentration of those still *davening* and it is when many conversations begin.

We will continue with our effort to get silence before *kaddish*.

We are planning to again have a "Silent *Shabbos*" for *Shabbos Shuva* to reinforce our commitment.

It would be a mistake not to recognize that a *shul* serves not only as a spiritual place where we go to talk to *Hashem* but also as a social, communal hub. We come to *shul* to see our friends, to "catch up" and to feel that we are part of a community. How do we accommodate this function with the desire for silence during *davening*? This is why we believe that a weekly *kiddush* is of the utmost importance so that people do have an opportunity to meet and talk to friends. We are therefore working to try to strengthen and improve the weekly *kiddush*.

We again would like to thank the *Shul Executive* for its support of the Decorum Committee. If you would like to join, please speak to any member of the Committee listed below. Joining does not necessarily mean you have to do anything other than being quiet during *tefillah*. We look forward to the cooperation of the entire *shul* in this effort and wish everyone a *kesivah v'achsimah tovah*.

The Decorum Committee....  
Arthur Birenbaum, Leo Davids, Martin Hoffmitz, Josh Levi, Yudi Plonka, Allan Seidenfeld, Bobby Silberstein, Paul Tobias, Aaron Weinstock

**"Moments in Jewish History"....** This seven-session lecture series, offered by Rabbis Shlomo Jakobovits and Leo Davids, is now available on DVD! The cost is only \$55 for the full set of four DVDs, and is fully receiptable as a charitable donation. We have already raised close to a thousand dollars for the *shul* with this fundraiser! See what all the excitement is about; order your set of DVDs now! Please see or phone Ken Stollon (416-493-9560 x 2102), or email: [bulletin@clantonpark.com](mailto:bulletin@clantonpark.com).

**Israel Bonds Drive ...** This year, instead of leaving the "bonds cards" on your seats during the *Yamim Noraim*, we are including them as part of the *Rosh Hashana* mailing. Now more than ever, the State of Israel needs support from Diaspora Jews, so please consider an investment in Israel this year. If you have any questions, please see Shimmy Roth.

**The Sisterhood Annual Breakfast...** will take place at the *shul*, on a soon to be announced date. All women are encouraged to participate in this exciting event. There will also be raffles and lots of prizes. Stay tuned!

**No parking ...** in the *shul* parking lot during the *Yamim Noraim*. This is for security reasons.

**Simchas Torah Kiddush ...** As per *shul* tradition, the *shul* will be accepting donations of bottles of liquor for the *Simchas Torah kiddush*. Anyone interested in making a donation, please see Gershon Kaplan or Mendy Goldman.



## Youth News

Shana Tova Everyone!! I trust you all had a wonderful and exhilarating summer.

Wow, how can we top last year's youth activities?! We are certainly going to try.

As always we wish to have your input and involvement. (Thanks parents for all your help during the year.)

On the boys front, the Rabbi is planning *Oneg's* and *Chol Hamoed* learning and *Simchas Beis Hoshoeiva* programmes.

The *Chazan* is anxious to have boys join him for a *Yom Tov* choir. Parents and boys who are interested in participating, please approach me.

Girls: great *Shabbos* morning programmes, great leaders, and we are planning great outings.

We love to hear your ideas and get YOU involved. As they say, Uncle Sam wants YOU.

May we all enjoy a healthy and rewarding new year!

Manuel Kanner

## **Divrei Torah...**

### **Lo Hamidrash Ikkar, ella Hama'asse**

**Dr. Leo Davids**

In the *haftarah* for Yom Kippur, the prophet Yeshiyahu reflects on what makes a fast day really spiritual and meaningful. His prescription for such a fast is: "to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the poor outcast into a home; when you see the naked, cover him up..." (Isaiah 58:7). Notice that the *Navi* does not emphasize prayer and other inward activities here. It's pretty obvious that the message to us is not to overlook our duties to needy and neglected Jews while we are busy with our own spiritual work or Torah studies.

This little essay would like to praise doing community service and volunteering.

The truth is that our normal days are very full, from the pre-*shacharis daf yomi* through the carpool driving, meals, paid work, and so on. However, in our time budgets for *mitzvos*, how many hours are set aside for helping others, outside our own families and friends? Do we strive to make a difference in some real person's life by acting to benefit people outside our own immediate circle? What often happens in the area of *chesed* is that the entire topic becomes either a school subject or is left to our Reform brethren, who can much more easily find some time for benevolence because they are investing very few hours in synagogue prayer or Jewish study. Neither "recipe" is very good, since both are one-sided "Judaisms" that really neglect major areas required for a full and legitimate Jewish life.

As Chazal teach us in the third chapter of *Pirkei Avos*, only someone whose deeds are more numerous than his knowledge can expect to preserve his knowledge. Knowing what a Torah Jew is supposed to do, but then not doing it, is a dangerous path.

How can we open the door to some serious ongoing philanthropic service? There are many ways to get started, and let me point out some specific place to call and get connected. One could telephone the **Jewish Family and Child Service** to see if they could use another "Big Sister" or "Big Brother," or other works that needs doing; their telephone number is **638-7800, extension 266**. One could phone the **Jewish Immigrant Aid Services** at **630-6481** to find out how Jewish newcomers to Toronto could be helped.

Alternatively, check with the principal's office of your favourite day school; there may be some pupils who need help with their homework or something else.

Let's not forget one of the biggest Jewish volunteering settings in Canada – **Baycrest Geriatric Centre**, phone number **785-2500 extension 2572**. If you speak Yiddish or Hungarian, that might be most valuable there.

Even with our own immediate area, one could speak with Irwin Diamond (or of course Rabbi Weber) about *shul* members who are not coming around because they are not well; a visit or a phone call is usually very welcome.

In addition to providing direct service to those in need, some of us may find it more pleasant or appropriate to become committee members or administrative helpers, supporting professional staff in their efforts while not actually dealing face-to-face with those who are receiving help of some kind.

Take your pick, discover what "fits" comfortably, then get started; but each of us should feel obliged to make a contribution in one of the many ways that are available, involving the donation of our own time rather than just writing cheques. As Hillel taught: "If not now, when?"

If you still need to hear more about this before the concept sinks in, talk to Rabbi Weber or to me personally, and he/I will try to get you connected with something that will be suited to you and productive for you and for others.

Let's not "leave the driving" of our community and its many vital agencies to our brethren of other religious affiliations. If we're not "at the table," we'll not be part of the banquet; no one wins a lottery without buying a ticket.

K'siva Vachasima Tova to all of us.

### **Rosh Hashana as Yom HaDin**

**Dr. Leibe Warner**

One of the central features of *Rosh Hashana* is that it is *Yom HaDin*, the Day of Judgment. The mishna states that on *Rosh Hashana: Kol ba'ei olam ovrin lefanav kivnei maron*, all who come to the world (meaning all people) pass before Hashem like *bnei maron* (*Rosh Hashana* 26). This statement is quoted in the *Unesaneh Tokef* prayer which is said in the *musaf* of *Rosh Hashana* and *Yom Kippur*.



What are “*bnei maron*”? The *gemara* gives three explanations (*Rosh Hashana 16*). One explanation is *k’vnei amarna*, like lambs which are let out through a small door so only one can pass through at a time. *Resh Lakish* says “*k’maalos beis maron*,” like the people walking on the elevated paths of the Maron area. This was a path, *Rashi* explains, which was so narrow that two people could not walk on it side by side. They could only walk on this path one after the other. *Rav Yehudah* said in the name of *Shmuel*: “*K’chayelos shel beis David*,” like the soldiers of *David*, who used to go out to war in a single file.

There is no mention in the Torah that *Rosh Hashana* is the Day of Judgment. The *Gemara* (*Rosh Hashana 8*) finds a hint from the Torah. The *Gemara* attempts to explain the phrase in the *Mishna*: “*b’echad b’Tishrei Rosh Hashana l’shanim*,” the first of *Tishrei* is the New Year for Years. “*Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak omer l’din*,” *Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak* says for judgment. For it is written in *parashas Eikev*: “*miraishis hashana v’ad acharis shana*,” which means the eyes of *Hashem* are on it (i.e., *Eretz Yisrael*, and the rest of the world) from the beginning of the year until the end of the year. This means that from the beginning of the year *Hashem* judges what will occur at the end of the year. The *Gemara* asks: “*Mimai d’Tishrei hee?*” From where do we know that the *passuk* is referring to *Tishrei*? It is written in *Tehillim*: “*Tiku vachodesh shofar bakeseh l’yom chagainu*,” Blow a *shofar* at the moon’s renewal, when the moon is covered on our festive day. On which festival is the moon “covered”? This is *Rosh Hashana*, which occurs at the beginning of the month when the moon is hidden from view. The next *passuk* states “*Ki chok l’Yisrael hu, mishpat l’elokai Yaakov*,” Because it is a statute for *Israel*, a day of judgment for the G-d of *Yaakov*. We can see from these *p’sukim* how *Rosh Hashana* is a Day of Judgment.

Another hint that *Hashem* judges us once a year can be found in *Shiras Haazinu*. This hint is not mentioned in the *gemara*. If one begins counting words from “*Haazinu hashamayim v’adabera*” and counts 365 words (corresponding to the number of days in a solar year) the next phrase is “*Ki yadin Hashem amo*,” *Hashem* will judge his people. This hints that *Hashem* judges his people once a year.

A question can be raised. Why does the Torah not explicitly say that *Rosh Hashana* is the Day of Judgment? The *Kli Yakar* gives a very interesting reason. The Torah did not specify that *Rosh Hashana* is the Day of Judgment because *Hashem* wants us to feel we are being judged every day. In this way, we are more careful about keeping the *mitzvos* on a daily basis. Similarly, the exact date that the Torah was given

to *Bnei Yisrael* is not stated in the Torah. This is so one should try to feel that he is receiving the Torah fresh every day. Therefore, the enthusiasm for Torah learning is maintained since it always seems fresh.

## ***L’Dovid Hashem Ori v’Yishee: An Explication***

**Ken Stollon**

We recite “*L’Dovid Hashem Ori v’Yishee*” twice daily from *Rosh Chodesh Elul* until *Shmini Atzeres*. Why was this psalm chosen for this purpose by *Chazal* over the 149 other psalms? There is a well-known *midrashic* commentary on the first and fifth verses of the psalm: “The Lord is my light” – on *Rosh Hashana* (when the *malchus* of *Hashem* is revealed with clarity and brilliance) – “and my salvation” – on *Yom Kippur* (when *Hashem* offers man purification and salvation) – “for he will hide me in His tent” – on *Sukkos*.

The *Vilna Gaon* has a lovely *drash* on the seventh verse as well. “*Shema Hashem Koli*,” -- “Hear, *Hashem*, my voice” -- refers to *Rosh Hashana* when we blow the “*kol shofar*”. The verse continues – “*ekra*” – “when I call”; this alludes to *Yom Kippur* which the *Navi* describes as “*K’rauhu b’hyoso karov*” – “call to Him when He is near” (*Yeshiyahu 55:6*) – *Yom Kippur* being the day of the year when *Hashem* is, as it were, most near to us. And what do we plead for on *Yom Kippur*? “*V’chaneini v’aneini*” -- “show me favour and answer me” – which are the concluding words of the seventh verse of our psalm.

But as *Rav Shimshon Raphael Hirsch* explains, it is the fourth verse of the psalm that most strongly evokes the feelings of the *Yamim Noraim*. “*Achas shoalti mei’eis Hashem...*” – “One thing I have asked of *Hashem* that I shall seek: that I dwell in the House of *Hashem* all the days of my life, to behold the delight of *Hashem* and meditate in His sanctuary”. Explains *Rav Hirsch*: “*David* is telling us here that this is the goal: to attain G-d’s nearness in every moment and every aspect of life, ever to keep before my eyes the splendid way in which all earthly affairs are shaped under His guidance, and to seek to increase my understanding of the truths of life by drawing from the wellsprings of wisdom set down in the Sanctuary of G-d’s Law. This spiritual and moral goal will remain unchanged, regardless of what the future may bring. It is an inner joy of life which the enmity of men can neither destroy nor disturb.”

I challenge you to re-read the quote in the previous paragraph, and attempt to thoroughly

digest its meaning. It is well-known that most of the sins that we commit are a product of “compartmentalization”. Take, for example, the much-discussed topic of talking in *shul*. The reason we feel we can talk about stock prices and politics with our “neighbour” only moments after we have asked Hashem for mercy is because we separate the two activities: a few minutes ago I was attempting to communicate with G-d, now I am attempting to communicate with the person sitting next to me. Two separate

“*Achas shoalti*” – if we could focus on just one thing: the nearness of G-d to us at all times, we would surely become better Jews, better people, and make a better world.  
wncast spirit through the use of music and song. The music was part of the message. The simple “*L'Dovid*” superscription indicates that David is providing us with his clear and unadulterated message without musical accompaniment. “*L'Dovid Hashem Ori v'Yishee*” indeed communicates some profound truths which we would all do well to meditate upon during the coming High Holy Days.

## **Light among the Thorns**

**Professor Paul Socken**

George Santayana wrote that “The world is not respectable; it is mortal, tormented, confused, deluded forever; but it is shot through with beauty, with love, with glints of courage and laughter, and in these, the spirit blooms timidly and struggles to the light among the thorns”. After the recent debacle in Israel and Lebanon, I read those tragic yet stirring words. Jews do not need to be reminded that the world is tormented and deluded or that it is filled with thorns, but at times like these we do need to be reminded that there is courage and light, even laughter, in the Jewish spirit always timidly struggling to find the beauty and the good in life.

If military intelligence failed Israel, the soldiers valiantly carried on with great dedication and determination. If the political establishment failed the people, individual citizens saw the situation for what it was and prepared themselves as best they could. If the world again condemned the victim, then Israelis knew they must bear that injustice honourably.

No people pray more for peace and have less peace. No people suffer more and yet remain committed to principles enunciated millennia ago, long before their tormentors’ “superior” faiths even existed. One commentator said that Christianity’s and Islam’s treatment of the Jew is a form of parent abuse. They could not possibly

and unrelated activities. But what if our goal truly was “to attain G-d’s nearness in every moment and every aspect of life”? Such a philosophy, such an outlook on life, does not allow for compartmentalization. It doesn’t allow us to “take a break from G-d” to talk *shtus* with our neighbour. And all the more so, in the world outside of the *shul*, such a philosophy does not allow us to “take a break from G-d” to, G-d forbid, cheat our business partner, or cheat on our taxes, or cheat on our spouse.

Rav Hirsch explains that most of the psalms begin with the superscription “*L'Dovid mizmor*” or “*Mizmor l'David*”. Very few psalms begin simply with “*L'David*”. The other superscriptions were used for the purpose of raising David’s do have existed if we had not preceded them and they will never forget or forgive that.

To bear the blame for other people’s grievances and inadequacies seems to be the Jews’ burden in Israel today as surely as it was in the most ancient times. We have a right to expect better of the world but no real belief that the nations will behave any better. Santayana writes of glints of courage, the spirit blooming timidly and the struggle to the light and so it is. Each step forward is fraught with difficulty and pain but there is no alternative. As the Holocaust survivor said when asked why she is cheerful and hopeful, “I have tried the alternative”. Nothing good ever came of hostility and bitterness as our detractors and our foes learn only too late to do them and us any good. It seems to be our fate to absorb their bitterness and somehow turn it into a struggle for light amongst the thorns. So be it. As Winston Churchill said during the darkest hours of World War II, “It is not enough to say we are trying our best. We must succeed in doing what is necessary”. The Jews have always done what is necessary and, G-d willing, will again now.

