



Thursday October 18, 2018

Dear Friends,

This evening, and all-day tomorrow (Friday) is the tenth of *cheshvan*. One month ago, on the tenth of *Tishrei*, we stood together in Shul on the holiest day of the year, Yom Kippur. Rabbi Akiva Eiger, (1761 – 1837) Rav of Posen, that generation's *Gadol*, declared the tenth of every month "*asiri kodesh*"- the holy tenth (day of the month), a day which he dedicated to contemplating, and reviewing where he stood since the Tenth of Tishrei, Yom Kippur.

In this vein, as we usher in *Asiri Kodesh Cheshvan*, on the following pages, I share some of the highlights, anecdotes, stories, and practical take-away's of the following five Drashos delivered during the Yamim Noraim season.

It is my hope that the highlights and associated links in the attached document below will serve as a vehicle to inspire us to continue climbing the ladder of growth; the ladder which Hashem knows (and we know) will include slips and falls along the way. The challenge of life is to stay on the ladder and continue to get back up, rung by rung, even after falling. As William Edward Hickson famously remarked "Tis a lesson you should heed: try, try, and try again. If at first you don't succeed, Try, try, try again." This is the path that leads to success in all areas of life.

Please look out in this week's Shabbos announcements for a new learning initiative to be introduced.

Best wishes and Good Shabbos!

*Rabbi Moshe Walter*

# Yamim Noraim Drashah Highlights 5779

## First Night of Rosh HaShanah: The Josh Bell experiment and the judgement of Rosh HaShanah

LINK

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/pearls-before-breakfast-can-one-of-these-great-musicians-cut-through-the-fog-of-a-dc-rush-hour-lets-findout/2014/09/23/8a6d46da-4331-11e4-47cf5889e061e5f\\_story.html?utm\\_term=.1f72b1f18e11](https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/magazine/pearls-before-breakfast-can-one-of-these-great-musicians-cut-through-the-fog-of-a-dc-rush-hour-lets-findout/2014/09/23/8a6d46da-4331-11e4-47cf5889e061e5f_story.html?utm_term=.1f72b1f18e11)

We walk through the fast-paced Metro of life without noticing the beautiful world around us. Do we appreciate the warm sun on our backs? Do we appreciate our family? Do we appreciate our good health? Do we appreciate our friends and community? Do we recognize that the challenges we face are for our benefit? Do we appreciate Shabbos? Do we appreciate that we can dialogue with Hashem in prayer? Do we realize how fortunate we are to be Jewish? Do we recognize Hashem and the strings of the cello of our lives which Hashem strums minute by minute? Stop!!!! Pause from time to time, and say, I see you Hashem- you are the master of the universe, the king of all kings, and you are directing my life every step of the way. You have given me so much and I take nothing for granted; and never will.

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**Hashanah Drashah Day 1: Who packs your parachute? Recognizing the good in our lives How can we ever forget the story of Captain Charles Plumb?**

LINK

[https://www.google.com/search?q=charles+plumb+packing+parachute&rlz=1C1CHBF\\_enUS811US811&oq=charles+plumb+packing+parachute&aqs=chrome..69i57.16504j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8](https://www.google.com/search?q=charles+plumb+packing+parachute&rlz=1C1CHBF_enUS811US811&oq=charles+plumb+packing+parachute&aqs=chrome..69i57.16504j0j7&sourceid=chrome&ie=UTF-8)

Take the time to recognize the people in our lives who pack our parachute; those who help us, care for us, and look after our welfare. Most importantly, never forget that it is Hashem who guides our every step, from early in the morning till late at night, day after day after day. If we understand that thanking others who help us is proper etiquette, should the same not apply to thanking Hashem for everything of which we are the beneficiaries? How about Modeh Ani- "I gratefully thank you, O living and eternal King, for you have returned the soul within me with compassion." How about Modim- "We gratefully thank you, for it is You, who are Hashem, our God and God of our Forefathers for all eternity." Thank You Hashem!!!

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## Rosh HaShanah Drashah Day 2: Taking responsibility for ourselves, our families, and our community

I once heard (from Rabbi Ephrayim Shapiro) that the Hebrew word for responsibility- אחריות teaches us the step by step approach to taking responsibility. א - Aleph stands for ani, I. Taking responsibility begins by taking responsibility for me, myself, and I. Create a plan of action, chart goals, and a method of checks and balances. We must feel a personal obligation and responsibility to ourselves as the Mishnah teaches “If I am not for myself, who will be for me?”

ח - In conjunction with the previous letter, aleph, the letter ches joins to form the word ach, brother. Following the first level of responsibility, comes taking responsibility for your brother, meaning, your family members; care for them, look after them, see what they need, and be first to respond. Don't rely on others to take care of your flesh and blood. ר - Continuing with the next letter, the combination of aleph, ches and reish spell the word acher, other. Only once we have taken responsibility for ourselves and our family can we begin to care for others. Even those who we feel are distant from us, should be embraced and cared for like family. י - The next word formed is acharai after me. Once one has accomplished the first three levels of responsibility, then one can say- follow me! This is the way we will accomplish and reach our goal. Don't just take responsibility for yourself, your family, and others, but lead by example and bring others into your circle by leading others to take responsibility. ו - Adding a vav, we arrive at the word acharav, which means after. At times responsibility is not just being a leader but being a follower. Listen to what others have to say and contemplate how you can help support others who are taking charge. We are not always meant to lead, but following the leader is also a means of responsibility. By joining organizations who are involved in serving the Klal, we are truly responsible. ת - The final word formed is achrayos, the first letter, aleph, and the last letter, tav, span the entire Hebrew alphabet. Responsibility means to care for every Jew and in all circumstances, from beginning to end. This is the full meaning of responsibility- a step by step, lifelong journey to caring for one and for all. Don't forget the amazing story of Herschel

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Weber and the story of how he started Hatzalah, the largest and most successful volunteer ambulance service in the world.

It is a bit hard to hear him in the beginning of the below link, but the sound gets better as he begins to tell the tale.

LINK

<https://www.theyeshivaworld.com/news/ywn-videos/1562471/tehillim-original-founder-ofhatzolah-in-critical-condition.html>

# Yamim Noraim Drashah Highlights 5779

**Kol Nidrei Drashah: "V'emes": Truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth Remember Mike and his music store? What an amazing story!**

LINK

<http://www.aish.com/ci/s/Rate-My-Service-A-True-Story-about-a-Devastating-Critique.html>

The world of social media which we are all plugged into has placed truth on trial. Facts and fiction, which were once antonyms, seem to have become all but synonyms. We are constantly casting judgement about individuals, institutions, or communities, often based on a cursory understanding of a situation, often placing much too much weight on what we read in the papers and online. We are too quick to pull the trigger, assuming facts and absolute truth without attempting to see things differently or giving the benefit of the doubt. Emes, translated as truth, is one of the thirteen attributes of Hashem that we are charged to imitate. Hashem judges with truth by considering and contemplating all sides of the situation, the whole person, and the entire person. Let's attempt to do the same; and make sure that facts and fiction remain antonyms.

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## Neilah Drashah: Reach out and make the effort

Noted speaker Rabbi Y.Y. Jacobson recounts the following story about his brother Rabbi Simian Jacobson who gives a regular Wednesday evening lecture in Manhattan. One night he noticed a young man enter and sit down. Rabbi Jacobson could tell the person was disabled. After a few weeks, the young man approached Rabbi Jacobson to tell his tale. The young man was born with a severe neurological disability, and many motor skill deficiencies. Speaking with clarity was also impossible for him. The young man continued, "I was born with a rare disease. When the doctor informed my parents that there's no cure and no hope that I'll grow up 'normal', he suggested I be put in a home, and my parents immediately put me in a home – they never took me home. I am twenty-nine years old, and have never met my parents; nevertheless, I receive each and every month a generous check which more than covers any and all expenses and needs I may have." Rabbi Jacobson commented that the young man was fine, bright, sparkling, and sensitive. Rabbi Jacobson's heart went out to him, and offered, "Would you like to meet your father?" The boy said, "Of course! Who wouldn't want to know his father!" Rabbi Jacobson looked up the father, got his phone number, and called. He said: "Hi, you don't know me, and I apologize for this uncomfortable phone call, but I've gotten to know your son and I think it would be very special for you and your wife to get together with him." As soon as he mentioned the reason for his call, Boom! The phone was slammed down. Rabbi Jacobson thought to himself, "we must have gotten disconnected." Being persistent he called back. The man at the other end of the phone said, "Yes," and Rabbi Jacobson continued, "Haven't you heard that I hung up on you? Don't mix into my life!" Boom. Hangs up again. He waited a week and tried again. Again, the man said: "Don't mix into my life!" After a month, Rabbi Jacobson called the young man's mother. She started to cry and said, "We made a decision 30 years ago, and you cannot force us to revisit it. Thank you but please leave us alone." After a week Rabbi Jacobson called her again and said: "Listen, there are children who are orphans and would give anything to know something about their parents. They cherish each photo, memento, story, anything. There are children who were adopted and spend their lives searching for their birth

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parents. Here you have your son, he lives in the same city, he wants to meet with you, wants to know where he comes from. He doesn't want to move in, just meet. It's not fair? It doesn't make sense – it's cruel! Why wouldn't you meet with him?" She told him, you must speak to my husband. He called the father again who made the same case, but finally the father agreed to meet, with the condition that Rabbi Jacobson sit in on the meeting. They scheduled the meeting for a Sunday afternoon. Rabbi Jacobson picked up the young man to take him to his parent's penthouse apartment overlooking Central Park. They come in, and there are some nuts and snacks on the table. No one makes eye contact. They make small talk; football, the weather, and nothing is going anywhere. Finally, Rabbi Jacobson interrupts and says, 'Listen, we didn't come for small talk. I met your son a few months ago, he's an extremely special person who has waited a long time to meet you. Let's get to the point.'" The boy opened first. He had rehearsed this speech, and even so, it was very difficult for him to enunciate. He couldn't even say Mom and Dad, he said instead, Mumma and Puppa, the best he could do. This is what he said: "Mummah, Puppa, I know that I am not perfect, but nor are you. I have forgiven you for not being perfect. I hope one day you can forgive me for not being perfect." The mother burst out crying and ran over to hug her son. The father followed. At that point, Rabbi Jacobson felt like a shadchan after the chuppah, he excused himself and left, the family reunited. Friends, this is exactly what Hashem is telling us. I forgive you for not being perfect. Just reunite with me, just come back and visit me, reignite that connection. I know who you are, what you can or can't do, and I accept you as that. Just come and hug me! Don't forget me! As the clock continues to tick, and the months pass by, let's hold onto the memory of Neilah; the passion and clarity we had then as to what we wanted to accomplish this year, should serve as our headlights in the decisions we make and attitude we have in the year ahead.