

The Shul

at the Lubavitch Center

6701 Old Pimlico Road

Baltimore, MD 21209

www.chabadshul.org



September 23, 2023

Ha'azinu — Shabbat Shuva — Yom Kippur

8 Tishrei, 5784

The Hint

Rabbi Moshe ben Nachman (Nachmanides), known as the Ramban, had a student, Rabbi Avner, who strayed from the path and renounced his religion. Avner became very accepted among the non-Jews and, in fact, became a respected minister.

Wishing to show his contempt for his Jewish roots, one Yom Kippur, Avner sent his emissaries to fetch the Ramban by force. In the presence of his former teacher he slaughtered a pig, cooked it and ate it-all on Yom Kippur!

The Ramban was horrified. "Tell me," he said to his former disciple, "what caused you to renounce your religion?"

"It was a lesson I heard from your very lips!" Avner replied. "One time, when we were studying the portion of Ha'azinu (this week's Torah portion), you said that everything in the whole world and all of the Torah's commandments are alluded to in that portion. I couldn't believe that it was possible. How could the entire universe be contained in such a tiny portion? I came to the conclusion that everything else you taught us must also be false, and abandoned Judaism."

"But it's true!" the Ramban insisted. "There is nothing in the entire world that is not alluded to in Ha'azinu."

"If what you say is true," Avner challenged him, "show me where my name is written in it." The Ramban agreed, and went into a corner to pray. The Ramban then located a phrase alluding to Rabbi Avner's name.

"In Deuteronomy 32:26," he showed him, "take the third letter of every word and you will see your name." Avner read, "Amarti af'eihem ashbitah mei'enosh zichram - I said, I would scatter them into corners, I would make the remembrance of them cease from among men." In Hebrew, the third letters are reish, alef, beit, nun and reish-forming the name R' Avner.

When Avner saw this he became distraught. At once he did teshuva and repented of all his sins. "How can I make amends for all of my transgressions?" he asked his teacher.

"Just do what it says in the verse," Nachmanides replied. "'I would make the remembrance of them cease from among men.' Nothing must remain of your former glory."

R' Avner immediately left for places unknown. In fulfillment of the Torah's words, he was never heard from again.

There is something quite astounding about this story: Why was Avner's name alluded to in the Torah as R' Avner - Rabbi Avner, instead of his simple name? Wasn't he a wicked person who committed appalling sins?

Here, however, the Torah is teaching us the amazing power of repentance. When a Jew sincerely returns to G-d, the Torah honors him. Whatever he did in the past is discounted; it doesn't even matter if his spiritual condition is not presently what it should be. For all Jews will ultimately return to G-d-and are deserving of a title of honor!

(from <http://www.lchaimweekly.org/>)

Zaidy's Yom Kippur

I stand in shul, shifting my weight from one foot to the other, trying to ignore the groans of my unhappy stomach. I flip through the machzor to see how many pages remain until the end of the service. My mind begins to wander; I am transported back to another Yom Kippur, years ago.

In my daydream I am a child again, and my grandparents have come to spend the High Holidays with my family. My grandfather is in his early seventies, although with his long white beard and bushy black eyebrows, to me he looks at least a hundred years old. That Yom Kippur I tried hard to stay in shul instead of running outside to play with my friends. I sit in my seat listening intently and trying to follow along. Suddenly, my ears perk up to the sound of a familiar voice ringing out — it is an old voice, but powerful and steady. It is my zaidy (grandfather); he is saying the mourner's kaddish for his father, whose yahrtzeit (date of passing) is on Yom Kippur.

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My thoughts shift to another Yom Kippur in Communist Russia. Rabbi Aryeh Leib Kaplan has just arranged a minyan in a private house in Ch'ili, after being exiled there for the illegal activities of spreading Jewish teaching and observance in his hometown of Kiev. It is an old voice, but powerful and steady The ever-watchful KGB, infuriated at Aryeh Leib's persistence in his "crimes" even in his place of exile, send a goon squad to beat him up on his way home from the clandestine Yom Kippur prayer group. Aryeh Leib's friend is beaten to unconsciousness, and Aryeh Leib just manages to drag himself to the nearest Jewish family to tell them about his injured friend before he collapses and dies. He leaves a young widow and four orphans. One of them is Zaidy.

Yet another Yom Kippur flashes through my mind. There's a picture of Zaidy, but he's young and strong. He is surrounded by ruthless criminals in a dingy prison cell, locked up like his father for the heinous crime of practicing Judaism in Communist Russia. In prison, each inmate receives one piece of daily bread. Zaidy knows that he must save that bread for after the fast, or he will die of starvation. However, if the bread isn't stuffed into his mouth the moment it is handed to him, it will be grabbed by one of many greedy hands. Zaidy approaches "The Chief" of the cell — a hardened criminal whom all of the other inmates fear and respect. Zaidy presents his dilemma, and miraculously The Chief decides to help. The Chief puts the bread on a high ledge, and warns the inmates that he'll kill anyone who touches it. Many hungry eyes stare at the bread, but no one touches it.

Later, Zaidy needs to know when the fast is over, but there is only one small window high up on the wall of the cell, and there is no way to tell the time. Zaidy approaches The Chief again and explains his dilemma: he needs to know when it is completely dark in order to break his fast. The Chief gives orders, and a human pyramid is formed — one criminal on the shoulders of another, until they reach the window. The inmates repeat this pyramid every couple of minutes, reporting on what they see, until Zaidy confirms that the fast is over.

The voice of the cantor breaks through my reverie and brings me back to my open machzor. As I resume my prayer, I once more think of Zaidy and my great-grandfather. I feel them smiling down on me.

(by Devora Leah Riesenbergs from www.chabad.org)

<p>Mr. Shaul and Mrs. Naomi Allan are sponsoring a Kiddush after davening this Shabbat in honor of their son Yitzchak, whose Bar Mitzvah was the second day of Rosh Hashana.</p>	
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Yahrzeits This Week:			
Ethel Fischer	13 Tishrei - Wednesday night / Thursday	for mother	Menucha bas Yaakov Dovid
Michael Frank	14 Tishrei - Thursday night / Friday	for mother	Chaya Zelda bas Moshe HaCohen

DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE	
<p>Friday, 9/22 — 7 Tishrei Shacharit — 7:00 Candles — 6:45 p.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:45 p.m.</p> <p>Shabbat, 9/23 — 8 Tishrei Shacharit — 9:00 a.m. Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:54 a.m. Shabbat Shuva Drasha — 5:30 p.m. Minchah — 6:35 p.m. Ma'ariv — 7:45 p.m.</p> <p>Sunday — Erev Yom Kippur, 9/24 — 9 Tishrei Shacharit — 8:00 a.m. Minchah — 3:00 p.m. Candles and Fast Begins — 6:42 p.m. Kol Nidre — 6:30 p.m.</p>	<p>Monday — Yom Kippur, 9/25 — 10 Tishrei Shacharit — 9:00 a.m. Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:55 a.m. Yizkor — after 11:00 a.m. Minchah — 5:30 p.m. Shofer, Ma'ariv and Fast Ends — 7:39 p.m.</p> <p>Tuesday, 9/26 — 11 Tishrei Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:40 p.m.</p> <p>Wednesday, 9/27 — 12 Tishrei Shacharit — 7:00 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:40 p.m.</p> <p>Thursday, 9/28 — 13 Tishrei Shacharit — 6:50 a.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:40 p.m.</p> <p>Friday — Erev Succot, 9/29 — 14 Tishrei Shacharit — 7:00 p.m. Candles — 6:34 p.m. Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:35 p.m.</p>