

Ner LeElef

Jewish Holidays

Source Book

Rosh Hashana

Rosh Hashanah and the Mitzvah of Shofar

[Source 1]

Story of U'nesaneh Tokef

Rabbi Amnon of Mainz was the leading scholar of his generation. The Christian nobles of the city continually pressured him to convert, but he refused. They would not accept his refusal and kept pestering him and pressuring him. One day, exasperated, he put them off by saying, "give me three days to think about it", even though he had no intention of converting. Overwrought with remorse at having made the mere suggestion he might leave Judaism, he fasted and wept for three days. Summoned after three days, he refused to go to meet the ruler. When he explained he would always remain a loyal Jew, he was tortured and his limbs torn from his body. Dying, on the day of Rosh Hashana, he asked to be brought to synagogue where he composed and recited the U'nesaneh Tokef prayer, whose haunting melody and words are part of our service even today.

Textual Section: The Shofar

[Source 2]

Shofar Story

Ferdinand and Isabella, King and Queen of Spain, kicked the Jews out of Spain in 1492. It was the end of the Golden Era of Spanish Jewry. Hundreds of thousands died trying to escape. Many others relocated to Turkey and other locations.

Tens of Thousands of others became Conversos – pretending to be Christian in public but keeping Jewish traditions in private, usually in the cellars.

One of these was Don Fernando de Aguilar, conductor of the royal orchestra in Barcelona. He longed to hear the sounds of the Shofar on Rosh Hashana but to do so would be extremely dangerous, worthy of death. He devised a plan and announced a special concert on Rosh Hashana itself featuring various world melodies.

In the midst of Church officials and royalty attending the concert, the Shofar was blown to the secret joy of the conductor and fellow Conversos in the audience!¹

[Source 3]

Four times a year the world is judged...On	בארבעה פרקים העולם נידון...בראש
--------------------------------------------	---------------------------------

¹ This story shows how beloved the Mitzvah of Shofar has always been to the Jewish people. But what is it really about...

Rosh Hashana all of the inhabitants of the world pass before G-d... ² ” Rosh Hashana 15a	
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

[Source 4]

Even though the mitzvah of blowing a shofar on Rosh Hashanah is a decree of G-d, nevertheless there is a lesson hinted in it. It is saying to us “Wake up sleepers from your sleep and slumberers from your slumber! Examine what you have done, repent for your misdeeds, and remember your creator!” Rambam (Hilchot Teshuva 3:4)	אע"פ שתקיעת שופר בראש השנה כלומר עורו ישינים משנתכם ונרדמים
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 5]

Since people are physical beings they can only become inspired from an external source, as we see that when soldiers rush into battle they trumpet and shout in order to inspire themselves to fight better. Rosh Hashanah is the day designated for the judgment of all the inhabitants of the world, as the Rabbis taught “On Rosh Hashanah all the inhabitants of the world pass before G-d as benei maron”... therefore a person must get inspired to request mercy from the Master of mercy, and the sound of the shofar can greatly inspire those who hear it. Sefer HaChinuch Mitzvah 405	לפי שהאדם בעל חומר לא יתעורר וגם כן ביום ראש השנה שהוא היום
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 6]

[G-d says] Recite before Me verses about Kingship, Remembrance and the Shofar.	אמרו לפני בראש השנה מלכיות זכרונות מלכיות כדי שתמליכוני עליכם
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------

² The passage continues, “like benei maron.” There are several opinions as to how to translate this phrase. For our purposes it suffices to understand that it refers to the way in which G-d judges people.

Verses of kingship in order to make Me king over you;	זכרונות כדי שיעלה זכרוניכם לפני לטובה
Remembrance in order that I shall remember you in a good light.	ובמה
With what shall you accomplish this?	בשופר
With the shofar. Tractate Rosh Hashana (16a)	

[Source 7]

The correct interpretation is that [the final clause about Shofar] is referring to both of them.	ובמה בשופר.
How shall we make G-d king and how shall we be remembered in a good light?	עיקר הפי' דאכולהו קאי
Through the blowing of the shofar ³ .	במה ראוי להמליכו ולהזכיר זכרוניכם לפני
	בשופר

[Source 8]

For it is written “The nation blew on a shofar and made Saul king over them”, and the kingship of above is structured like the kingships of below.	שכן כתיב ויתקעו העם בשופרות וימליכו
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------

[Source 9]

It should have been enough to accept G-d	היה די בקבלת עול מלכות שמים בלב
------------------------------------------	---------------------------------

³ Regarding the question as to why the Talmud does not give a reason for reciting verses about the blowing of the shofar, the Ritva writes:

If you will ask that there has been no reason given for the verses about the shofar? The answer is that it is not necessary to give one; since we blow the shofar we also recite verses about the shofar blowing.	וכי תימא ועדיין לא נתן טעם לפסוקי שופרות י"ל דלא
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------

We can also ask how the blowing of the shofar causes us to be remembered in a good light. Many explain that the shofar, made of a rams' horn, in reminiscent of the binding of Isaac, who had a ram substituted for him as an offering to G-d. That event, in which our forefathers Abraham and Isaac showed absolute dedication to G-d, serves as a source of merit for their descendants to this day.

--	--

[Source 10]

<p>We say (in the Rosh Hashanah prayers) “this is the day of the beginning of Your actions; a remembrance of the first day”.</p> <p>Rosh Hashanah is like an echo of the creation of the world. My father of blessed memory taught that the idea of the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah is meant to echo that which is written regarding the first human “and G-d blew into the nostrils a life-giving soul”...</p> <p>The original creation of humankind was in order to elevate the entire world to serve G-d, and it was for this purpose that G-d blew the life-giving soul into the first person.</p> <p>Similarly on every Rosh Hashanah, which is the renewal of this breath of life through the blowing of the shofar, is for the purpose of fixing that which the first people corrupted.⁴</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Shem Meshmuel Rosh Hashanah section 1</p>	<p>והנה אנו אומרים זה היום תחילת מעשיך</p> <p>וע"כ יש לומר דכמו בריאת האדם</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 11]

<p>The first major step towards the perfection of the world was accompanied by a shofar blowing, as the verse states⁵ “The sound of the shofar was gaining in strength”.</p>	<p>החיזוק הא' שנעשה לטוב נעשה על ידי</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------

⁴ Adam and Chavah were not successful in their role to elevate all of creation to serve G-d, rather they stumbled and violated G-ds' instruction not to eat from the tree of life (according to many opinions, this actually occurred on the first of the month of Tishrei, i.e. Rosh Hashanah).

⁵ In the verses describing the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai.

The final fixing of the world in the future, when good will completely triumph over evil, as it is written⁶ “he will blow a great shofar blast”...

We are commanded to blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah to reinforce the perfection that began at the giving of the Torah and to prepare the future for what will be done then.

⁶ In the prophecy describing the coming of the Messiah.

Yom Kippur

Yom Kippur

[Source 1]

Kol Nidre Story

A Jewish soldier, captured by the Germans during WWII, related:

“In those terribly years when we beheld the destruction of European Jewry, the Kol Nidre prayer intoned in the prison camps became an expression of Jewish unity. A large number of Jewish soldiers crowded in to the spacious hall. They wore insignia of all ranks and military services. One could distinguish British, Canadian, Australian, Dutch, Polish, Czech, South African and Yugoslav soldiers by their uniforms. It was difficult to distinguish some of them as Jews. In that exalted hour, however, with the chanting of Kol Nidre, Jewish suffering was all too clearly reflected in their eyes.

All of us were especially astonished, however, when at the very last minute, when services were just about to begin, one of the highest ranking officers in the camp appeared in the hall. It had never once occurred to us that he was a Jew, nor did he give us any cause to suspect him. Hidden in the heart of this extremely assimilated Jew was a chord which vibrated in response to the sound of Kol Nidre.

[Source 2]

<p>(29) This shall be for you as an eternal law: In the seventh month on the tenth of the month you shall <i>afflict your souls</i>, you shall do no work, both the citizen and sojourner among you.</p> <p>(30) For on this day (G-d) will atone for you, to cleanse you from all of your transgressions; in front of G-d you shall be cleansed.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Leviticus 16</p>	<p>(כט) והיתה לכם לחקת עולם בחדש</p> <p>(ל) כי ביום הזה יכפר עליכם לטהר אתכם</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 3]

<p>There is another mitzvah on Yom Kippur, and that is to refrain from eating or drinking. This is what is written in the verse “You shall afflict your souls”, and we have an oral tradition the thing that afflicts the soul is fasting...We also have an oral tradition that one may not bathe, anoint themselves, wear (leather) shoes or have sexual relations on this day.</p>	<p>מצות עשה אחרת יש ביום הכיפורים והיא</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------

⁷ Maimonides, Laws of Resting on the Tenth 1:4-5.

It is a mitzvah to refrain from these just as it is a mitzvah to refrain from eating and drinking ⁷ .	
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

[Source 4]

(6) Even though repentance and crying out to G-d are always effective, in the ten days from Rosh Hashana until Yom Kippur it is exceptionally appropriate and is accepted immediately... ⁸	(ו) אע"פ שהתשובה והצעקה יפה לעולם
(7) Yom Kippur is the time of teshuva for all, for the individual and for the group, and is the peak of forgiveness for the Jewish people.	(ז) יום הכפורים הוא זמן תשובה לכל
Therefore all are obligated to repent and confess (their transgressions) on Yom Kippur.	לפיכך חייבים הכל לעשות תשובה

[Source 5]

What is repentance?	ומה היא התשובה
It is that wrongdoers should disconnect themselves from they have done wrong, to the degree that they no longer even think about it.	הוא שיעזוב החוטא חטאו ויסירו
They should firmly decide never to do that thing again...they should regret having done it in the past...so that the One Who knows the inner workings of people would attest to the fact that they will not return to that sin. ⁹	ויגמור בלבו שלא יעשהו עוד...וכן יתנחם

[Source 6]

The significance of Yom Kippur is that G-d has prepared for the Jewish people one day, on which repentance will be accepted	ענין יום הכפורים הוא, שהנה הכין האדון
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

⁸ "...as it is written "Seek out G-d when G-d is found"."

⁹ Maimonides Laws of Repentance 2:2

<p>more readily, and wrongdoings can be readily eradicated...and to return those who repent to their level of holiness and closeness to Him, from which they were distanced through their wrongdoings.</p> <p>On this day a great spiritual light shines forth that helps to bring all of this about. However in order to receive this light, one must observe the commandments of the day. This is especially so regarding the afflictions, for through the afflictions we disassociate ourselves from physicality to a great degree, and approach, albeit slightly, the level of angels¹⁰.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Derech Hashem 4:8:4</p>	
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

[Source 7]

<p>All of the mitzvot that G-d has commanded us to do on this great and holy day are intended to remove the physicality from the person until they become angelic. This is why we are commanded in the afflictions, to remove or lessen our physicality so that the person can be as holy as an angel...</p> <p>On Yom Kippur G-d commanded us in the five afflictions so that the soul will not be constricted by the body...and since the soul has five names; nefesh, ruach, neshama, yechidah and chayah, this is an indication that there are five aspects to the soul.... Parallel to this we have the five afflictions, to remove the physicality (on all five levels)¹¹.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">וכן כל המצוות שצוה השם יתעלה ביום וביום הכפורים צוה השם יתעלה למעט</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 8]

<p>This is the idea that “the essence of the day brings atonement”:</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">זוה ענין עיצומו של יום מכפר. עיצומו של</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------

¹⁰ The idea of our being angelic on Yom Kippur manifests itself in several customs of the day, including the public recital of the “Baruch Shem” prayer after the Shema out loud, which during the year is said quietly. (Tur Orach Chayim 619).

¹¹ Maharal goes on to explain how each of the five afflictions is specifically coordinated with each of the five aspects of the soul.

The essence of this great and holy day is that G-d elevates the Jewish person on it to a perspective higher than the low and petty world in which the wrongdoing was committed, therefore by default all of the sins are atoned for...through that the person connects to G-d on this day they are elevated to be with Him.

Sukkos

Succos

"You shall rejoice on your festival"¹²

"You Shall dwell in Sukkot seven days ... so that your descendants shall know that in Sukkot I caused the Children of Israel to dwell when I brought them out of Egypt"¹³

[Source 1]

<p>You shall dwell in booths for seven days; all citizens of Israel shall sit in booths. In order that all of your generations shall know that I settled the Jews in booths when I brought them out of Egypt; I am the Lord your G-d.</p>	<p>(מב) בַּסֹּכֶת תָּשְׁבוּ שִׁבְעַת יָמִים כָּל הָאֶזְרָח (מג) לְמַעַן יֵדְעוּ דַרְתֵיכֶם כִּי בַּסֹּכֹת וּיקרא כג</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 2]

<p>It was taught "That I settled the Jews in booths":</p> <p>Rabbi Eliezer said that this refers to the clouds of glory.</p> <p>Rabbi Akiva said He made for them actual booths.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Talmud Succah 11b</p>	<p>תניא כי בסכות הושבתי את בני ישראל ענני כבוד היו דברי רבי אליעזר רבי עקיבא אומר סוכות ממש עשו להם</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 3]

<p><i>"That I settled the Jews in booths": this refers to the clouds of glory. This is Rashi's interpretation and is correct in terms of the simple meaning: We are enjoined to remember the great acts that G-d did for us, the remarkable event of us residing in the clouds of glory like a succah...¹⁴</i></p> <p style="text-align: right;">Nachmanides</p>	<p>כי בסכות הושבתי את בני ישראל ענני רמבן ויקרא כג, מג</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------

¹² Deut 16:14

¹³ Lev 23:42,43

¹⁴ ... Since it already explained that the heavenly cloud surrounded them by day and the pillar of fire at night, it was able to say without clarification "in booths", that G-d made for them clouds of glory to protect them...

¹⁵ ומפני שכבר פירש שענן ה' עליהם יומם ועמוד האש בלילה, אמר סתם כי בסכות הושבתי, שעשיתי להם ענני כבודי סכות להגן עליהם

[Source 4]

<p>According to the opinion that says that G-d made for them actual booths, we are commanded to make succot like those in order that through the mitzvah of Succah it will become revealed and well-known the elevated state of existence the Jews had in the desert. They traveled in the desert with masses of men, women, and children in a place where it is not the nature of man to live...even in that place G-d prepared for them all of their needs and they were not lacking anything.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ad loc</p>	<p>דעת האומר סכות ממש עשו להם, מפני</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------

[Source 5]

<p>The clouds of glory that G-d encompassed the Jewish people with, in addition to their physical benefits of serving as a covering and protection for them, had an even more important function on a spiritual level.</p> <p>Just as the clouds physically elevated the Jewish people from the ground and separated them from the people around them, so too the clouds brought to them a state of enlightenment that came to them alone, apart from other nations, removed them from the ephemeral world and elevated them over its' inhabitants. This was done at that time for the Jewish people to help bring them to their natural high state of existence, and the effect of this remains for every Jew in every time.</p> <p>The spirit of holiness emerges from G-d and surrounds every righteous person to remove them from the surrounding people. This notion renews itself on the holiday of Succos through the sitting in the succah.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Derech G-d 4:8</p>	<p>כי הנה ענני הכבוד שהקיף הקב"ה את</p> <p>כמו שעל ידי העננים ההם היו נמצאים</p> <p>שאמנם אור קדושה נמשך מלפניו ית'</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 6]

<p>The roots of [the] mitzvah [of living in the succah] are based in what is written in the Torah, in order to remember the tremendous miracles that G-d did for our ancestors in the desert when they left Egypt. They were enveloped in clouds of glory so that they should not be harmed by the sun in the day and the chill of the night.</p> <p>Others say that there were actual booths that they lived in. Through the remembering of the wonders that G-d did for us and our ancestors we should become more vigilant in our performance of the mitzvos of G-d, and we will be able to receive G-d's goodness, and this is the desire of G-d, to do good for the world</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Sefer HaChinuch¹⁶</p>	<p>משרשי המצוה, מה שמפורש בכתוב [שם],</p> <p>ויש שפירשו שסוכות ממש עשו בני</p> <p>חינוך שכה</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 7]

<p>Even though we left Egypt in the month of Nissan, we were not commanded to build succot during that time because it is at the start of the summer season and it is normal for people to make a succah for shade then. Therefore it would not be apparent that we are building them for the purpose of fulfilling the mitzvah.</p> <p>Therefore we were commanded to make them in the seventh month which is the start of the rainy season and it is normal then for people to re-enter their homes, so we who leave our homes to go into the succah show everybody that we are fulfilling the mitzvah of G-d.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Tur¹⁷</p>	<p>ואע"פ שיצאנו ממצרים בחדש ניסן לא</p> <p>ולכן צוה אותנו שנעשה בחדש השביעי</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 8]

<p>G-d has commanded us at the beginning of</p>	<p>והנה צוה בתחילת ימות החמה בזכרון</p>
-------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------

¹⁶ #325

¹⁷ Tur Orach Chayim 625

the summer season to remember the exodus in its month and time, and commanded us to remember the miracle that happened to them the entire time they wandered in the desert at the start of the winter season. ¹⁸	
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

[Source 9]

The holiday of the reaping the first growths of your handiwork that you planted in your fields, and the holiday of the gathering at the end of the year when you collect your handiwork from the fields. Exodus 23: 16	וְחַג הַקָּצִיר בְּכוֹרֵי מַעֲשֵׂיךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּזְרַע בַּשָּׂדֶה שמות כג, טז
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 10]

<i>The holiday of the gathering</i> - this refers to Succos. When you collect your handiwork-during all the summer months the produce dries out in the fields. At the time of this holiday it is gathered into the house before the rains come. Rashi ¹⁹	וְחַג הָאֲסִיף - הוּא חַג הַסּוּכוֹת: בְּאֲסִיף אֵת רש"י
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 11]

During that time that the produce is collected everyone would like to go in from the fields to their houses to reside in them, and G-d was concerned that perhaps through establishing themselves in their houses the people will become haughty from having their needs fulfilled, which leads to becoming base and rebellious. Kli Yakar	לְפִי שֶׁבְזָמַן אֲסִיפֵת הַתְּבוּאָה מִן הַשָּׂדֶה כֹּל וּיקרא כג מג
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 12]

The Torah commands us to leave our permanent homes and to enter temporary ones, to a home built of the remnant of the field produce ²⁰ . This is to teach us that it is neither the grain nor the grapes that we rely upon that gives us our security. Even the	צִוּוּתָהּ עֲלֵינוּ הַתּוֹרָה לְצֵאת מְדִירַת קֶבֶעַ
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------

¹⁸ See above

¹⁹ Ad loc

²⁰ This refers to the sechach of the succah, which is to be made of branches and others forms of unprocessed vegetation.

<p>remnant, that we ascribe little importance to, that can provide our shelter and protection if G-d desires. This will reinforce our belief that G-d is the one who provides for us. The is the “exile to the Succah”, leaving our homes to live under G-ds’ shade, so that we should recognize that everything we merited to gather from the fields comes from G-d.</p>	
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

Appendix: Two Kinds of Mitzvot

[Source 13]

<p>G-ds’ Torah has in it mitzvot that help people battle against their inherent nature, and other mitzvot that help people refine their inherent nature.</p> <p>Take for example the mitzvah of Succah, after a person toils in the field plowing, planting, sectioning, reaping, and bundling; toils in the field to gather the produce, fills the storehouse with the produce and rejoices in the result of the labor, it would be so sweet to be able to rest at home. At that moment the Torah instructs us to leave our homes and to enter temporary dwellings. This goes against the natural human desire and elevates the tendencies and feelings of people to rise above the physical...</p> <p>However there are other mitzvot that are in tune with human nature, only that they contain points of higher wisdom in specific details according to G-ds’ wisdom...It is human nature to celebrate at the time of the gathering of the produce with the produce that has been gathered, as is common throughout the world. For this the Torah comes and specifies four species and</p>	<p>משך חכמה ויקרא כג מב (מב) בסוכות תשבו כו' - התורה האלקית</p> <p>וזה מצות סוכה, אחרי שהאדם הוא עמל</p> <p>אמנם יש מצות שהן כפי חוקי הטבע, רק</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

instructs us to rejoice with them for seven days... ²¹	
-------------------------------------------------------------------	--

Chanukah

²¹ The Meshech Chachmah goes on to explain that the Halachot regarding the need for a priori intent in building a succah are due to the need to overcome our nature in the performance of that mitzvah.

Chanukah

[Source 1]

What is Chanukah?

The rabbis taught:

On the 25th day of Kislev, the eight days of Chanukah begin, on which eulogizing and fasting are prohibited. When the Greeks entered the Sanctuary, they defiled all the oil there. When the House of the Chasmoneans prevailed and conquered them, oil was sought (for the daily lighting of the Lamp in the Temple) and only one vial was found with the seal of the high priest intact. It only contained enough oil for one day, but a miracle occurred, and it lasted eight days.

The next year these days were established as holidays, with praise and thanks (given to G-d).
Shabbos 21b

מאי חנוכה

דתנו רבנן

בכ"ה בכסליו יומי דחנוכה

[Source 2]

In the days of Mattisyahu son of Yochanan, High Priest, the Hasmonean and his sons, when the evil Greek Empire stood against Israel, trying to cause them to forget Your Torah and take them away from Your Will, You in Your great mercy stood up for them during their hardships. You fought for them, judged for them, and took revenge for them. You gave over the strong to the few, the many to the weak, the impure to the pure, the evil to the good, the malicious to those who toil in Your Torah, and made for Yourself a great and holy name in Your world. And for Your nation, Israel, you brought a great salvation and rescue until this day. Later, You brought Your children to Your habitation and they cleansed your Sanctuary, purified your Holy Place

בימי מתתיהו בן יוחנן כהן גדול,

and kindled lights in the courtyards of Your Holy Place. And they established these eight days of Chanukah to give thanks and praise to Your holy name.

[Source 3]

One Erev Shabbos, [Rabbi Chanina] noticed that his daughter was sad. He asked her why. She replied, "I got the vessel of oil mixed up with the vessel of vinegar, and lit the Shabbat light from the wrong one!" He said to her, "My daughter - why should that trouble you? He Who ordained that oil should burn can also ordain that vinegar should burn." It is taught that [the vinegar] burned all night and all day, until some of it was used for Havdalah (the ceremony at the end of Shabbos)

Taanis 25a

חד בי שמשי חזייה לברתיה

[Source 4]

From the great and obvious miracles we should come to appreciate the hidden miracles.

Exodus 13:16

ומן הנסים הגדולים המפורסמים

[Source 5]

The essence of the establishment of the [holiday of the] days of Chanukah was the defeat of the Greeks, except that it wasn't apparent to them that this victory was a miracle ... therefore the miracle of the lights of the Menorah was done for them so that they would know that everything was a miracle from G-d, Blessed be He.

Maharal²² of Prague

עיקר מה שקבעו ימי חנוכה...

מהר"ל נר מצוה כ"ב

[Source 6]

The Rabbis taught: There was once an incident with a man whose wife died and left him a nursing child, he was so poor that he could not pay a wet-nurse. A

ת"ר מעשה באחד שמתה אשתו

²² Ner Mitzvah p.22

miracle happened to him; his breasts opened like a woman's and he nursed his child.

Said R. Joseph: Come and see how great the man must have been that such a miracle was wrought for him.

Abaye said to him: On the contrary, Behold how lowly the man must have been that the nature of mankind changed in him and nothing occurred to enable him to earn enough money to pay a nurse.

Shabbos 53b

אמר רב יוסף בא וראה כמה גדול

א"ל אביי אדרבה כמה גרוע אדם

[Source 7]

Rabbi Yossi said: "I wish that my portion would be with those who recite Hallel every day".

Is that so?

Didn't the Rav teach that someone who recited Hallel every day is denigrating and blaspheming G-d?

[Explanation:]

When he (Rabbi Yossi) said it he was referring to [what we call] Pesukai DeZimra.

Shabbos 118b

אמר רבי יוסי יהא חלקי מגומרי הלל בכל

איני

והאמר מר הקורא הלל בכל יום הרי זה

כי קאמרינן בפסוקי דזמרא

[Source 8]

Be careful that you do not forget the LORD thy God...

12 in case that when you have eaten and are satisfied, and hast built goodly houses, and dwelt therein;

13 and when thy herds and thy flocks multiply, and thy silver and thy gold is multiplied, and all that thou hast is multiplied;

יא השמר לך, פן-תשכח את-ה'

יב פן-תאכל, ושבעת; ובתים

יג ובקרד וצאנך ירבין, וכסף וזהב

יד ורם, לבבך; ושכחת את-ה'

14 then thy heart be lifted up, and thou forget the LORD thy God, who brought thee forth out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage;

15 Who led you through the great and awesome desert ... Who brought forth water for you out of the rock;

16 Who fed you Manna in the wilderness ...

17 and you may say in your heart: 'My power and the might of my hand hath gotten me this wealth.'

Deut 8: 11-17 11

טו המוליכך במדבר הגדל והנורא,

טז המאכלך מן במדבר ...

יז ואמרת, בלבבך: כחי ועצם

דברים ח:

Purim

Purim

[Source 1]

<p>All of the holidays will be nullified (in Messianic times) but the days²³ of Purim will never be nullified, as it says (Esther 9:28) “These days of Purim will never leave the Jewish people and its memory will not be lost to its’ children”.²⁴</p>	<p>שכל המועדים יהיו בטלין, וימי הפורים לא</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------

[Source 2]

<p>Rabbi Yochanan said “The Prophets and the Writings will be nullified in the future, but the five books of the Torah will not be nullified”... Rabbi Shimon Ben Lakish said “Also Megillat Esther and the laws will not be nullified”.²⁵</p>	<p>בי יוחנן אמר הנביאים והכתובים עתידים</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------

[Source 3]

<p>Where is Esther hinted to in the Torah²⁶? “I will hide²⁷ my face on that day” (Deut 31:18).</p>	<p>אסתר מן התורה מנין ואנכי הסתיר</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------

[Source 4]

<p>Imagine two people are given the job of recognizing people at night. The first of them lit a flashlight in order to see the faces of the people that came. The second did not have a flashlight, and therefore had to train to learn to recognize</p>	<p>משל לשני בני אדם שנצטוו להכיר אנשים האחד הדליק נר והביט בפני האנשים</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

²³ Purim is referred to in the plural because in most places it is celebrated on the 14th of Adar, but in a few cities in Israel it is celebrated on the 15th.

²⁴ Midrash Mishlei section 9.

²⁵ Jerusalem Talmud Megillah 1:5.

²⁶ Although the Purim story occurred much later than the writing of the Torah, its’ message was foreshadowed there.

²⁷ The word for “hide” in Hebrew is the same as Esther.

<p>people's voices.</p> <p>When it comes to the question of which of them could recognize the people more clearly, the first one could, as seeing the face provides greater clarity than hearing the voice. On the other hand, the second person has an advantage over the first, in having developed the new skill of recognizing voices, while the first one has not.</p> <p>In the morning, when the sun rises, the first will put out the flashlight, for it is of no use during the day. This one will have gained nothing in the night to help in the day. The second one will always have the new skill of recognizing voices at his disposal, even during the day.</p>	<p>ונמצא, לענין הברירות והבהירות הראשון</p> <p>ונמצא, דאחר כך, לכשיעלה עמוד השחר,</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 5]

<p>Will we mention the exodus from Egypt in Messianic times? No, for it says "Behold days are coming, says G-d, and they will no longer say 'G-d lives, who elevated the Jews from the land of Egypt', rather 'G-d lives, who elevated and brought the Jews from the lands of the north and from all the places they have been scattered to'"²⁸.</p>	<p>וכי מזכירין יציאת מצרים לימות המשיח</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------

[Source 6]

<p>In every action that G-d performs in the world, there are two aspects, the revealed and the hidden...the hidden aspect is the deep design inherent in all of what G-d does, to bring humanity to a general state of perfection. ... there is no action, great or small, whose inner purpose is not leading to this perfection...</p>	<p>כי ודאי בכל מדה ומדה שהוא ית"ש מודד</p> <p>הנסתר היא העצה העמוקה הנמצאת</p> <p>כי יודיע דרכיו הקב"ה לעתיד לבא לעיני</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

²⁸ Brachos 12a.

<p>In the future G-d will let the Jewish people understand how even the afflictions they underwent were for the good, and prepared them for the state of being blessed...</p> <p>In our current time the actions of G-d are not understood by us at all, they can only be seen on their surface and their true essence is hidden. Their inner essence is all the same: they are all purely good and not at all bad, and this is certainly not clear or understandable now. In Messianic times this will be at least visible and graspable: how all of the plans of G-d were deep ways for our benefit in the end</p>	<p>והנה עתה אין מעשי ה' מובנים לנו כלל,</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------

[Source 7]

<p>Now we can understand the words of Chazal: "All of the holidays will be nullified (in the times of Mashiach) but the days of Purim will never be nullified".</p> <p>The common denominator between the Messianic revelations and the revelations of Purim is the understanding of how evil served as a means to bring about the revelation of G-ds' unity; that everything develops as G-d wills it to, despite the appearance of evil. This will be the revelation in the future, that everyone will understand retroactively how everything was leading to the Divine purpose. This is also the revelation of Purim: within the hidden actions, without and overstepping the boundaries of natural events, the Divine plan was revealed.</p> <p>"All of the holidays will be nullified": this means that the future revelations will be greater and more elevated than those that the Jewish people have experienced until now, therefore all of those miracles will be secondary to those of the future. However this approach of revealing the Divine plan, which is the common denominator between the revelations of the future and the Purim</p>	<p>מעתה נבין היטב את דברי חז"ל: כל</p> <p>כל המועדים יתבטלו – היינו הגילויים</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

story, these will be primary and recognized even then ²⁹ .	
-----------------------------------------------------------------------	--

Appendix: A Summary of the Scroll of Esther

King Ahausuerus³⁰ of Persia rules the entire civilized world, including 127 provinces from India to Ethiopia. He holds a huge feast³¹ for all his subjects in the capital city of Shushan. At the feast, Ahausuerus asks Queen Vashti to parade naked³² in front of his guests. She refuses³³. He gets angry and has her killed.

Against her will, our heroine Esther is chosen in a royal beauty contest to be the new queen. She is taken to the Palace, but keeps her Jewish identity secret. Providentially, our hero Mordechai overhears³⁴ two guards planning to assassinate the king. He tells Esther, and the plot fails. Mordechai's act is recorded in the royal chronicles, yet the king doesn't know³⁵ anything about it.

The evil Haman becomes the king's Prime Minister and decrees that everyone must bow to him. Mordechai refuses³⁶ to bow, and Haman is enraged. Furthermore, when Haman finds out that Mordechai is a Jew, he seeks to destroy the entire Jewish people. Haman complains to the king: "The Jews keep their own laws and refuse to be like everyone else³⁷." Haman bribes the king, who is happy to take the money and let Haman do the dirty work.

²⁹ Sifsei Chaim ibid.

³⁰ His name is pronounced and sometimes spelled Achashverosh; Persia is now known as Iran.

³¹ Our prophet Jeremiah predicted that our exile from Israel would last 70 years. His prophecy came true, but Ahausuerus miscalculated and thought the seventy years had passed. The party was essentially a celebration of his final victory over the Jews. He flaunted his disdain for the conquered Jews by wearing the special clothes of the High Priest, and by displaying holy vessels stolen from the destroyed Temple in Jerusalem. He invited the Jews to the feast as well, in effect asking them to accept their own downfall. Unfortunately, many Jews attended.

³² The circumstances of Vashti's death are a classic example of how the world works "measure for measure," for she was wicked and had forced Jewish girls to do work on Shabbat, naked.

³³ Being no more moral than her husband, she had been willing to display herself, until she was struck with a terribly embarrassing skin disease.

³⁴ The guards were speaking a rare Persian dialect that they assumed no one could understand. Like all members of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish High Court, Mordechai was required to know 70 languages, and therefore understood them.

³⁵ The royal chronicler was an anti-semitic and wanted the act forgotten.

³⁶ Here are two explanations for Mordechai's refusal. First, Haman put an idol around his neck and Jews are forbidden to bow to idols. Second, there was no idol and technically Mordechai could have bowed, but he refused to in an attempt to reawaken the Jewish community to their heritage and religion.

³⁷ His claim is a startling echo of Anti-semitic venom spewed throughout the centuries, "the Jews insist on being different ...let us kill them."

Mordechai fasts and prays³⁸ on the news of our impending destruction, trying to inspire the entire Jewish People to turn to G-d. He informs Esther of the evil plan and urges her to plead to the king for mercy. Esther fears approaching the king without being called, for it is well known that one can be killed for doing so. Mordechai explains the seriousness of the situation and how it may be that G-d put Esther in this position just for this purpose. Esther agrees to risk her life and approach the king. She tells Mordechai: have the Jewish people fast³⁹ for three days to appeal to G-d's mercy.⁴⁰

Esther is received favorably by the king, who agrees to join her at a special banquet⁴¹, at which she asks if he will come to a second banquet. The night following the first banquet, the king is unable to sleep⁴², and spends the time reviewing the "royal chronicles," and for the first time becomes aware that Mordechai saved his life.

In the morning, Haman enters the Palace area to talk to the king⁴³. Before he can speak, the king asks Haman: "What should I do in order to give someone great honor?" Assuming the king means him, Haman suggests having the person put on royal clothing, ride the king's white horse, and be led through the city in great glory. Ahasuerus likes the idea, and tells Haman to do everything he said . . . for Mordechai! Mordechai is then paraded on horseback through the streets of Shushan, with Haman leading⁴⁴ the way.

At the next banquet, Esther tells the king of her identity and the genocide plan. Outraged⁴⁵, the king demands to know who would dare threaten her people. Esther points to Haman!⁴⁶ Haman is aghast. Realizing he has lost, he "falls all over" Esther, pleading

³⁸Everything that happens does so for a reason. If G-d is allowing such a threat to appear, prayer and introspection are essential to the process of self-correction. Throughout history, Jews have held special prayer assemblies and fast days whenever threatened.

³⁹ The Fast of Esther which occurs the day before Purim is probably named after this fast which she commanded, but actually commemorates the fast that Jews always hold before any battle - to remind ourselves that true deliverance comes from spiritual strength, not physical strength.

⁴⁰ G-d's name actually doesn't appear in the entire Book of Esther. Many of those living at the time of this nine-year long saga may not have been aware of how G-d was arranging everything step-by-step that everything should be in place when needed.

⁴¹She rightly concluded that plying him with food, wine, and lots of honor would help turn him to her side.

⁴² Angels kept him up in order that he should find out about Mordechai.

⁴³Haman came seeking the king's permission to hang Mordechai on the tall gallows he'd just had built.

⁴⁴The verse (6:12) mentions that Haman's head was covered, referring to the fact that his daughter had planned dumping her toilet bowl on Mordechai as he would lead her father on the horse. She dumped it out on her father, not realizing the switch that had taken place. Once she saw her father look up at her covered in excrement, she jumped off the balcony and killed herself

⁴⁵ What changed from his happy acquiescence to our destruction? Commentators suggest that Haman represents the active antisemites throughout history, who have openly sought to oppress and destroy us. The king represents the silent antisemites, who will let things happen and not lift a finger to save him. In this case, the fickle king's feelings for Esther let him switch sides quickly

⁴⁶Deeply connected to G-d and truth, she instinctively pointed to the wicked king Ahasuerus who had happily let everything happen, but angels pointed her finger to Haman in order that the king should help the Jews.

for mercy. The king thinks Haman is accosting the Queen and Haman is hung on the same gallows⁴⁷ he'd prepared for Mordechai.

Since the original decree to annihilate the Jews was sealed by the king, by Persian law it cannot be withdrawn. Instead, the king issues a new decree, giving the Jews the right to defend themselves. The Jews rejoice⁴⁸ at their salvation, and their enemies cower in terror.

Throughout the kingdom, the Jews defeat their enemies in one day. Purim is celebrated on the day they celebrate their victory, the 14th of Adar. In the capital city of Shushan, the fighting takes an extra day, and so there and other ancient walled cities⁴⁹ (including Jerusalem today) celebrate on the 15th of Adar⁵⁰.

Mordechai and Esther enact an annual holiday, with feasting, giving gifts to the poor, food to friends, and reading of the Megillah (sorry, this summary doesn't count!).

⁴⁷This is a wonderful example of the "venahafokh" (switching) theme of Purim, where what Haman planned for the Mordechai, happened to him, and what our enemies planned for the Jews as a whole, happened to them.

⁴⁸They do not only rejoice over their physical salvation, but also about their renewed dedication to Judaism.

⁴⁹Those that were walled from the time of Joshua.

⁵⁰This "second" Purim is referred to as Shushan Purim.

Passover

Pesach

[Source 1]

<p>Then Moshe and Aaron came and said to Pharaoh: “So said G-d the G-d of the Jews- ‘send out my nation so that they may joyously serve me in the desert’”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Exodus 5:1</p>	<p>וְאַחַר בָּאוּ מֹשֶׁה וְאַהֲרֹן וַיֹּאמְרוּ אֶל פַּרְעֹה</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 2]

<p>I am G-d your G-d who has brought you out from the land of Egypt in order to be as a G-d for you; I am G-d your G-d.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Numbers 15:41</p>	<p>אֲנִי יְדֹד אֱלֹהֵיכֶם אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִי אֶתְכֶם</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------

[Source 3]

<p>The reason why they were saved and left Egypt was in order to receive the Torah at Sinai and fulfill it...</p>	<p>וְהָיָה הָעֵיקָר וְהַסִּיבָה שֶׁנִּגְאָלוּ וַיִּצְאוּ</p> <p>וּמִפְּנֵי כֵן, כִּי הָיָה כָל עֵיקָרָן שֶׁל יִשְׂרָאֵל</p> <p>וְ</p> <p>חִינוּךְ שׁוֹ</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

⁵¹A very similar explanation is given by the Maharal:

וכמו שאמר השם למשה [שמות ג', י"ב] וזה לך האות כי אנכי שלחתיך בהוציאך את העם ממצרים תעבדון את האלהים על ההר הזה, ופירוש הפסוק כלומר, הוציאך אותם ממצרים יהיה לך אות שתעבדון את האלהים על ההר הזה, כלומר שתקבלו התורה שהיא העיקר הגדול שבשביל זה הם נגאלים והיא תכלית הטובה שלהם. וענין גדול הוא להם, יותר מן החירות מעבדות, ולכן יעשה השם למשה אות צאתם מעבדות לקבלת התורה, כי התפל עושין אות לעולם אל העיקר

[Source 4]

<p>The entire Exodus from Egypt was for the purpose of serving G-d at Mount Sinai;</p> <p>Therefore, between the third cup [of wine] which corresponds to salvation, and the fourth cup [of wine] which corresponds to the Giving of the Torah, there should be no interruptions;</p> <p>For an interruption would indicate that these are two separate concepts, and this is not so, for they are intertwined, and if not for the one there would not be the other</p>	<p>... כל היציאה היתה בכח תעבדון את</p> <p>שם משמואל בשלח תרע"ב</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 5]

<p>And a stranger you should not wrong nor oppress, for you were strangers in the Land of Egypt</p> <p>Exodus 22:20</p>	<p>וְגֵר לֹא תוֹנֶה וְלֹא תִלְחָצֶנּוּ כִּי גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם</p> <p>שמות כב כ</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 6]

<p>The stranger living among you should be like a citizen of yours; and you should love him like yourselves, for you were strangers in the Land of Egypt</p> <p>Leviticus 19:34</p>	<p>כְּאֶזְרָח מִכֶּם יִהְיֶה לָכֶם הַגֵּר הַגֵּר אֶתְכֶם</p> <p>ויקרא יט לד</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 7]

<p>And you should love the stranger for you were strangers in the Land of Egypt</p> <p>Deuteronomy 10:19</p>	<p>(יט) וְאַהֲבַתֶּם אֶת הַגֵּר כִּי גֵרִים הָיִיתֶם</p> <p>דברים י יט</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------

[Source 8]

<p>Because whomever was never a stranger cannot feel the pain of the stranger, but one who was himself a stranger understands the pain of the stranger, and 'whatever is hateful to you do not do to your fellow'</p> <p>Kli Yakar Breishit 47:21</p>	<p>כי כל מי שלא היה גר מימיו אינו מרגיש</p> <p>כלי יקר בראשית מז, כא</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------

<p>We should learn from this precious mitzvah to have mercy on a person who is in a city that is not his birthplace, or the place of his family... and with these character traits we should merit to have mercy from G-d, and the blessings of Heaven should rest on our heads.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Chinuch 431</p>	<p style="text-align: right;">ויש לנו ללמוד מן המצוה היקרה</p> <p style="text-align: right;">חינוך תלא</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Appendix: Yosef Mendelovich

The year is 1978 and the man's name is Yosef Mendelovich. The setting: a dank cell, deep within the bowels of the Christopol prison the Soviet Union. The date is April 12. On the Jewish calendar it is the 14th of Nisan, one day before the start of Passover. Yosef is a prisoner. He is a gaunt human shell, and he is about to light a candle. Made of hoarded bits of string, pitiful droplets of oil, and stray slivers of wax, this is a candle fashioned by Yosef's own hands. The candle is lit -- the search for chametz begins.

Sometime earlier Yosef had complained of back problems. The infirmary in hell provided him with mustard to serve as a therapeutic plaster. Unused then, this mustard would later reappear as maror -- bitter herbs -- at Yosef's seder table. A long-saved onion bulb in water has produced a humble bit of greenery. This would be his karpas. And the wine? Raisins were left to soak in an old jelly jar, water occasionally added, and fermentation was prayed for. This was wine. The Haggadah which Yosef transcribed into a small notebook before being imprisoned had now been set to memory. The original was secretly passed on to another "dangerous" enemy of the State: Anatoly Sharansky.

Is Yosef free? He cannot do whatever he wants. He has been denied even the liberty to know when the sun shines and the stars twinkle. For Yosef the world of free men doesn't even begin to exist.

Yet, Yosef, perhaps, is more free even than his captors. Clearly self-aware, he knows is prepared to pay any price to have it. Today he walks the streets of Israel, studies Torah, and buys box after box of matzah to serve at his Seder. He is a free man now, just as he was even behind those lifeless prison walls.

Self-awareness means that we are able to stand outside of ourselves; to look within and assess our goals, values, priorities, direction and truthfulness. Unaware of these things, we remain mired in a dense fog of confusion and doubt. Can we ever be fully self-aware? Probably not. But aware enough to set ourselves free? Yes, and this is one of life's most pivotal challenges.

Achievement and maintenance of freedom is available only through the ongoing struggle for self-awareness. This process of clarification, coupled with the conviction to follow wherever it may lead, is the only way to achieve a spiritually sensitive, value-driven life of liberty. Ironically, this freedom can land you in a prison where you are the captor,

while your guards are the prisoners. Just ask Yosef Mendelovich -- one of the freest people who ever walked the earth.

-- from the Passover Survival Kit by Rabbi Shimon Apisdorf

Appendix: THE PASSOVER - "FREEDOM GAME"
BY RABBI STEPHEN BAARS, Aish HaTorah Washington, DC

Of the following list, who is the most enslaved person and
who is the most free?

- 1) "Three years ago I was taken by the KGB and put in a labor camp in Siberia, I am told when to get up, when to go to bed and everything between."
- 2) "I was ship-wrecked on a desert island. I can do anything I want, but there's nothing to do here."
- 3) "I'm a heavy heroine addict. I live my days just to get the next high. Luckily I inherited a large fortune that allows me to support my habit."
- 4) "I worked hard all my life to become rich. At the height, I was worth around \$25 million. Then came the crash. The bank took everything - my business, my house, even my car. I now work 9-to-5 in a sweatshop, struggling to make ends meet. When I had money, I used to take exotic vacations and dine in the finest restaurants. Life was fun. Now I'm lucky if I can afford takeout."
- 5) "In the country I live in, cigarettes are banned. I used to smoke two packs a day. Now I can't get them and I'm very depressed."
- 6) "I used to be a top college athlete and was headed for a pro career. Then last year I dove into a pool that was too shallow and broke my neck. I'm now completely paralyzed from my chin down. All I think about all day long is what I used to be able to do."
- 7) "Last year I tried to commit suicide but a policeman caught me just before I jumped. I was institutionalized. There's no possibility here for me to do what I really want to do - kill myself."

Shavuos

Shavuot

Source 1:

Rabbi Yehoshua the son of Levi said: When Moses ascended to heaven, the ministering angels said to G-d: "Master of the world, what is this 'born of woman' doing amongst us?"	אמר רבי יהושע בן לוי בשעה שעלה משה הקדוש ברוך הוא רבונו של עולם מה
G-d answered: "He has come to receive the Torah".	אמר להן לקבל תורה בא
They said to G-d "This precious hidden treasure which You have hidden for 974 generations before the world was created, You want to give it to flesh and blood? What is a human to be remembered; or the son of a man to be considered? G-d ... give Your glory to the heavens!"	אמרו לפניו חמודה גנוזה שגנוזה לך תשע
G-d said to Moses: "Give them an answer".	אמר לו הקדוש ברוך הוא למשה החזיר
Moses said: "I am afraid that they will burn me with the fire of their mouths".	אמר לפניו רבונו של עולם מתיירא אני
G-d said to him: "Grab on to my throne of honor and give them an answer" ...	אמר לו אחוז בכסא כבודי וחזור להן
Moses said: "Master of the world, this Torah that You are giving to me, what is written there?"	אמר לפניו רבונו של עולם תורה שאתה
"I am G-d your Lord who took you out of Egypt".	אנכי ה' אלהיך אשר הוצאתיך מארץ
Moses said to the angels: "Did you go down to Egypt? Were you slaves to Pharaoh? What do you need the Torah for?"	אמר להן למצרים ירדתם לפרעה
What does it say further? 'Do not have for yourselves other gods'. Do you live among the nations of the world that worship idols?	שוב מה כתיב בה לא יהיה לך אלהים
What does it say further? 'Remember the	שוב מה כתיב בה זכור את יום השבת

⁵² שנאמר מאחז פני כסא פרשז עליו עננו ואמר רבי נחום מלמד שפירש שדי מזיו שכירתו ועננו עליו

<p>day of Shabbat to make it holy'. Do you do work that you should need rest?</p>	<p>שוב מה כתיב בה לא תשא משא ומתן יש</p>
<p>What does it say further? 'Do not swear falsely' Do you have business dealings?</p>	<p>שוב מה כתיב בה כבד את אביך ואת אמך</p>
<p>What does it say further? 'Honor your father and mother' Do you have a father or mother?</p>	<p>שוב מה כתיב בה לא תרצח לא תנאף לא</p>
<p>What does it say further? 'Do not kill. Do not commit adultery. Do not steal.' Is there jealousy amongst you? Is there the evil inclination amongst you?"</p>	<p>מיד הודו לו להקדוש ברוך הוא שנאמר ה' אדונינו מה אדיר שמך וגו' ואילו תנה</p>
<p>The angels immediately admitted that G-d was right, as it says (a second time):</p>	
<p>"What is a human to be remembered; or the son of a man to be considered? G-d our Master, Your name is great in the whole world" but the phrase "give your glory to the heavens" is not written a second time. Shabbos 88b-89a</p>	

Source 2:

<p>... we have a truthful tradition that all of the text of the Torah is made up from names of G-d; that the words can be broken up in different ways to form Divine names⁵³.</p>	<p>... יש בידינו קבלה של אמת כי כל התורה</p>
<p>For example, the first verse in the Torah can be broken up as "barosh yisbarah elohim", and this is true of all of the Torah...This is what requires us to disqualify a Torah scroll that is missing even the letter "vav" from a word whose meaning is not changed by its' absence, or if a letter "vav" is added unnecessarily, even though it seemingly does not make a difference. This is what caused great</p>	<p>משל כי פסוק בראשית יתחלק לתיבות</p>

⁵³ See also Teshuvot HaRadvaz Chelek gimmel siman 643

⁵⁴ hakdamah to peirush on Chumash, towards the end

<p>teachers to count every word and letter and to write books on this topic...</p> <p>It seems that the Torah written in black fire upon white fire was written in this manner; with the letters consecutive without any interruption or forming of words. The Torah can be read as names of G-d or in our manner of reading it with commandments. It was given to Moses in the form of commandments but he was also taught the method of reading it as names of God.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ramban⁵⁴</p>	
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

Source 3:

<p>It is known that the Torah is written before G-d with letters not formed into words. We have been taught that in each spiritual world the letters are formed into different words in a way that is understood by the spiritual beings of that level, to each type of angel in their own way.</p> <p>For the people of this world the letters form the story of the exodus from Egypt, the spies and the like.</p> <p>The angels have no connection to or appreciation of our physical world but people have a connection to all to the spiritual worlds - many people have merited teaching even of the G-dly throne.</p> <p>Therefore the Torah is fitting for people, for they appreciate it on its low level also, as opposed to the angels who only grasp it on its' higher levels.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Chasam Sofer⁵⁵</p>	<p>ידוע כי התורה היתה כתובה לפניו ית"ש</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------

Source 4:

<p>This very Torah that we have, from the first letter to the last, is what the angels</p>	<p>זו התורה מבראשית ועד לעיני כל ישראל</p>
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------

⁵⁵ Chiddushei Chasam Sofer on the Gemara in Shabbos

<p>were learning in heaven before Moses brought it down. It cannot be that they were leaning it in the form that we have, for the Torah discusses things which are not applicable to them at all, such as death and ritual impurity, therefore it must have been in a more ephemeral casing according to their spiritual level.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Shach⁵⁶</p>	
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--

Source 5:

<p>When Moses merited receiving the Torah, first he made a blessing over it and then learned it.</p> <p>Rabbi Eliezer said: “What blessing did Moses make on the Torah? Blessed is G-d, our G-d, ruler of the world; who has selected this Torah and sanctified and desired those who fulfill it.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Devarim Rabba, 11:6</p>	<p>משה בשעה שזכה לקבל התורה תחלה אמר ר"א איזו היא הברכה שבירך משה</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------

Source 6:

<p>Rabbi Eliezer said: “All agree that on Shavuot one needs to enjoy this world [ie with food and drink].</p> <p>For what reason is this so? For on this day the Torah was given”.</p> <p>Rabbah said “All agree that on Shabbat one needs to enjoy this world. For what reason is this so? It is written ‘You shall call Shabbat a day of pleasure’”.</p> <p>Rabbi Yosef said: “All agree that on Purim one needs to enjoy this world. For what reason is this so? It is written ‘days of feasting and joy’”.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Pesachim 68b</p>	<p>אמר רבי אלעזר הכל מודים בעצרת אמר רבה הכל מודים בשבת דבעינן נמי אמר רב יוסף הכל מודים בפורים דבעינן</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

⁵⁶ al Hatorah Bereishis 1:1

Tisha BeAv

Tisha B'Av

Source 1:

<p>Five calamities occurred on the ninth of Av:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• It was decreed upon the Jewish people in the desert that they would not enter Israel [because of the spies]• The first and second Temples were destroyed• A large city called Betar, which had tens of thousands of Jews, and they had a great king and the Jews and [even] the sages believed that that he was the Messiah, [the city] fell to the non-Jews and they all were killed and there was great distress like the destruction of the Temple• And on this day destined for disasters, the evil Turnus Rufus plowed the Sanctuary and its environs... <p>Maimonides Tannit 5:3</p>	<p>ותשעה באב וחמשה דברים אירעו בו</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• נגזר על ישראל במדבר שלא יכנסו• וחרב הבית בראשונה ובשנייה• ונלכדה עיר גדולה וביתר שמה• ובו ביום המוכן לפורענות חרש <p>רמב"ם תענית ה,ג</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Source 2:

<p>Anyone who mourns over Jerusalem will merit to see its joy;</p> <p>And one who does not mourn over Jerusalem will not merit to see its joy</p> <p>Ta'anis 30b</p>	<p>כל המתאבל על ירושלים זוכה ורואה ושאינו מתאבל על ירושלים אינו רואה תענית ל:</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Source 3:

<p>... on something which is lost, it is great foolishness to cry.... But on something that is not despaired on, and there is hope – then crying is appropriate ...</p> <p>crying itself is a cause for consolation of Zion, as it says in the Medrash ...</p> <p>In the merit of this [crying] the Temple will be rebuilt.</p>	<p>... שעל דבר הנאבד שטות גדול</p> <p>רק על דבר הבלתי מיואש ויש תוחלת</p> <p>הבכיה סבה לנחמות ציון...</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Meschech Chochman Eicha 2:20	שבשכר זה יבנה המקדש ב"ב אכי"ר. משך חכמה איכה ב,כ
------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------

Source 4:

<p>How were the Keruvim positioned?</p> <p>Rabbi Yochanan and Rabbi Elazar [disagreed]</p> <p>One said their faces were to each other</p> <p>And the other said their faces faced the Temple [ie apart]</p> <p>And according to sage who said the keruvim faced each other, the verse says, 'and their faces were towards the Temple'!</p> <p>It is not difficult.</p> <p>[They faced each other] when Israel was fulfilling the Divine Will</p> <p>[They faced apart] when Israel was not fulfilling the Divine Will</p> <p>Baba Batra 99a</p>	<p>כיצד הן עומדין רבי יוחנן ור' אלעזר</p> <p>חד אמר פניהם איש אל אחיו</p> <p>וחד אמר פניהם לבית ולמ"ד פניהם איש אל אחיו הא כתיב</p> <p>לא קשיא</p> <p>כאן בזמן שישראל עושין רצונו של מקום</p> <p>כאן בזמן שאין ישראל עושין רצונו של בא בתרא צט.</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Source 5:

<p>Reish Lakhish said:</p> <p>When the gentiles entered the Sanctuary they saw the Keruvim embracing each other</p> <p>Yoma 54b</p>	<p>אמר ריש לקיש</p> <p>בשעה שנכנסו נכרים להיכל ראו כרובים יומא נד:</p>
-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------

Source 6:

<p>... as we said, immediately at the time of the destruction when the Jews saw that their enemies had entered the Sanctuary – which they hadn't believed possible – immediately they all did <i>teshuva</i> (repented) – and immediately the Jewish People were considered in the category of 'fulfilling the Divine Will, and the keruvim embraced one another.</p>	<p>.... ואמרנו שתיכף בשעת החורבן כשראו</p> <p>ובירושלמי (ברכות פ"ב ה' ד) ובמדרש</p> <p>ם</p> <p>פרי צדיק אדר</p>
<p>Pri Tzaddik Adar</p>	

Source 7:

<p>And they will make for me a sanctuary and I will dwell among them</p> <p>Exodus 25:8</p>	<p>וְעָשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכְכֶם:</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------

Source 8:

<p>When they burned [the Temple] G-d said:</p> <p>Now I have no place on earth; The entire world is not Mine, rather I will remove My Presence from it</p> <p>Yalkut Shimoni 247:996</p>	<p>...כיון ששרפוהו אמר הקב"ה שוב אין לי</p> <p>ילקוט שמעוני רמז תתקצו</p>
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------

Source 9:

<p>Anyone who mourns over Jerusalem will merit to see its joy;</p> <p>And one who does not mourn over Jerusalem will not merit to see its joy</p> <p>Ta'anis 30b</p>	<p>כל המתאבל על ירושלים זוכה ורואה</p> <p>ושאינו מתאבל על ירושלים אינו רואה</p> <p>תענית ל:</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

⁵⁷ At a simple level, this means the potential for Moschiach and/or the concept of Moschiach

Source 10:

<p>“Anyone who mourns over Jerusalem will merit to see its joy.” The principle is that all the powers of a person are pulled after thought</p> <p>The entire essence of a person follows what they think about</p> <p>And so, when a person thinks in holiness and mourns over Jerusalem, his thoughts and essence are in holiness;</p> <p>The word ‘zocheh’ (merit) is [related] to the word ‘hizdaccus’ [purity], for then a person is purified and right away sees some joy, that is a small part of the joy of Jerusalem, how it will be in the future Kedushas Levi Eichah</p>	<p>כל המתאבל על ירושלים זוכה ורואה</p> <p>בזה שהאדם חושב נמשך כל עצמות</p> <p>ונמצא כאשר האדם חושב בקדושה</p> <p>קדושת לוי איכה</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Appendix: Ohr Somayach's List⁵⁸ of Tisha Be' Av Calamities
by Rabbi Mordechai Becher

Hebrew Year	Common Year	Event
2448	(1312)	Spies return from 40 days in Israel with evil reports of the Land of Israel. Jewish people cry in despair, give up hope of entering the Land of Israel.
3340	(421)	Destruction of First Temple by the Babylonians. About 100,000 Jews killed during invasion. Exile of remaining tribes in southern kingdom to Babylon and Persia.
3830	70	Destruction of Second Temple by Romans, under Titus. Over 2,500,000 Jews die as a result of war, famine and disease. Over 1,000,000 Jews exiled to all parts of the Roman Empire. Over 100,000 Jews sold as slaves by Romans. Jews killed and tortured in gladiatorial "games" and pagan celebrations.
3892	132	Bar Kochba revolt and Betar crushed, over 100,000 killed.
3893	133	Turnus Rufus ploughs site of Temple. Romans build pagan city of Aelia Capitolina on site of Jerusalem.
4855	1095	First Crusade declared by Pope Urban II. 10,000 Jews killed in first month of Crusade. Crusades bring death and destruction to thousands of Jews, totally obliterate many communities in Rhineland and France.
5050	1290	Expulsion of Jews from England, accompanied by pogroms and confiscation of books and property.
5252	1492	Inquisition in Spain and Portugal culminates in the expulsion of the Jews from the Iberian Peninsula. Families separated, many die by drowning, massive loss of property.
5674	1914	Britain and Russia declare war on Germany. First World War begins. First World War issues unresolved, ultimately causing Second World War and Holocaust. 75% of all Jews in war zones. Jews in armies of all sides - 120,000 Jewish casualties in armies. Over 400 pogroms immediately following war in Hungary, Ukraine, Poland and Russia.
5702	1942	Deportations from Warsaw Ghetto to the Treblinka begin.
5749	1989	Iraq walks out of talks with Kuwait.
5754	1994	The deadly bombing the building of the AMIA (the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires, Argentina) which killed 86 people and wounded some 300 others.

⁵⁸ <http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/1088>