

# Jewish Family

## A LITTLE NOSH FOR THE SOUL

**[ChabadChayil.org/HHolidays](http://ChabadChayil.org/HHolidays)**

# COMPLETE GUIDE TO HIGH HOLIDAYS





WISHING YOU

# Shana Tova

Dear Readers,

I'm sure you'll agree that we've all changed since last October. This shift, the waking of the sleeping lion of Judah or the October 8<sup>th</sup> Jew, is felt in community projects worldwide. This magazine is another way of enhancing our community's Jewish connection and pride. We don't know why G-d allows terror and hatred to exist, but we do know that we are not afraid, and antisemitism has only brought our people closer together. Historically, when they go dark, we go bright. In times of darkness, we increase our light. That's why, as Ben Sherman explains in his article "Dancing in October Rain," we will dance again.

I find it incredible how Moran, who was held hostage for 54 days in Hamas hell, urges our readers for less pity and more light. Moran wants you to dance again.

Our magazine is a treasure trove of inspiration, catering to a diverse range of interests. Whether it's Abe Foxman's Simchat Torah in 1945 or Peter Himmelman's discovery of the power of Shabbat, there's something for everyone. We hope you find these stories as enriching and inspiring as we do.

Also, please join us for the High Holidays so we can connect as a community and shine our powerful light of Jewish unity, which will ultimately bring complete redemption to the world.

May you and your family be inscribed for a healthy and happy, sweet New Year.

**Rabbi Moishe & Layah Kievman**  
*Directors, Chabad Chayil*

P.S. Please Visit our website for a full listing of our High Holiday schedule and events.

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Editor-in-Chief **Bluma Marcus**  
Editor **Rabbi Shmuel Marcus**  
Design **Carasmatic Design; Natalie Mizrahi**  
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Rebbe Artwork by **Yehuda Lang**  
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Project Manager **Jeb Brilliant**  
Digital Operations Director **Zalmy Lieberman**  
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# IT'S YOUR CALLING

This year, let's take the High Holidays  
*a little higher.*



*The Many Sounds of You* by Yitzchok Mouly

## DISCOVER YOUR PURPOSE

Rosh Hashanah celebrates the creation of Adam, the first man, not the creation of heaven and earth, which happened six days earlier. It marks the birth of humanity, the dawn of our purpose, and, most importantly, celebrates our re-dedication to it.

The Rebbe points out that Rosh Hashanah's "celebration of Adam" puts you, the human, at the center of the creation story. Only your total commitment to G-d can fulfill the world's purpose.

In the Shofar's call, we hear the coronation of G-d and the sound of His people uncovering their core identity as loyal and dedicated subjects, making G-d's sovereignty possible, for there can be no king without a people. In other words, at the center of an intensely spiritual High Holiday season is you.

## MEET THE POP ART RABBI

Yitzchok Mouly is a conceptual artist whose work explores the intersection of spirituality and the material world we live in. Having grown up in Melbourne, Australia, with a few formative years in Chasidic Brooklyn, Mouly brings together the disparate colorful worlds of his hippie upbringing and Chasidic culture, resulting in a unique palette of colors and ideas. >> View his full gallery at [www.moulyart.com](http://www.moulyart.com).



## THE HISTORY OF FORGIVENESS

At the birth of our nation, G-d miraculously redeemed us from Egypt and lovingly gathered us at Mount Sinai. However, the ugly episode of the "Golden Calf" seemed to rupture our relationship with G-d. Moses rushed back up the mountain to plead for mercy, and finally, after eighty days, G-d forgave the Jewish people for the sin of the Golden Calf. That day of forgiveness was the original Yom Kippur.

In biblical times, the pinnacle of Yom Kippur was when the High Priest removed his many decorative coats and ornamental apron and entered the Temple's "Holy of Holies" wearing simple white garments.

The Rebbe sees this up-close annual Divine encounter as our model for forgiveness because it's that Divine intimacy that allows our healing process to begin. Still today, this annual day of atonement celebrates our inherent Divine connection and gives us the ability to heal spiritual wounds, repair what was broken, and return to who we really are.

It's imperative to remember that, like the High Priest, you first need to strip away your "decorative" facades to reveal the deepest part of you. In this sense, Yom Kippur not only empowers you to heal, it also helps you make powerful resolutions for the upcoming year, knowing that beneath it all, you are an unstoppable, simply Divine soul. •

>>Based on the teachings of the Rebbe.



The rock band U2 was only weeks into their 2023 residency at The Sphere, Las Vegas's largest venue when the news of the October 7<sup>th</sup> massacre shocked the world. Bono, the lead singer, faced 20,000 fans and sang:

*"Early morning / October seven / as the sun is rising in the desert sky / Stars of David / they took your life / but they could not take your pride / could not take your pride. / In the name of love..."*

For centuries, people like Irish-born Bono have marveled and wondered how the persecuted Stars of David keep their pride. How do the hated people of Israel not become hateful? How do Jews simultaneously live with generational pain and intense joy? How do we dance on a post-October 7<sup>th</sup> Simchat Torah?

We will dance again. This year, on the first anniversary of the Simchat Torah attack, when Jews worldwide face the choice to either cry or dance, we will dance again.

Historically, especially during wartime, our dancing has not been a choice but an obligation.

Typically, we think of happiness as a baseline where we are inherently happy if nothing goes wrong and no one is hurting us. So, if the roast beef dinner is tasty or

### **MORALE IS A KEY FACTOR IN THE SUCCESS OF ANY MISSION.**

the new dress fits, it brings us joy. But in Chasidic thought, joy is not simply a knee-jerk reaction or the result of a string of favorable circumstances. Instead, joy is the starting point and constant foundation that motivates and energizes us to face life's challenges.

In military terms, soldiers with high morale outperform more qualified fighters who are upset or depressed. Morale is a key factor in success in any mission; as King

David wrote, we must "serve G-d with joy."

At first, telling people they must feel joy when they don't sounds harsh. But when you understand what Jewish Joy is, it starts to make more sense. True Jewish joy is the "high morale" born of an awareness of our unbreakable Divine soul, which is immune to negativity. This integrated joy doesn't bypass or deny the pain; it simply gives us the energy and tools to show up to the battlefield with the best version of ourselves.

Joy, one of the central themes in Judaism, is one of the rare constant or evergreen commandments, similar to belief in G-d. The obligation to be in a continual state of high morale has many challenges and benefits. The Jewish emphasis on joy has both practical and mystical explanations. Scientific studies demonstrate that people who experience joy have higher serotonin and dopamine levels, leading to increased creativity in problem-solving and better



decision-making. Conversely, depressed individuals make bad decisions.

From a mystical perspective, joy removes barriers and has a reciprocal effect between creation and the Creator. The Chabad Rebbes demanded their struggling followers be joyous, saying that joy can remove blockages that prevent you from accessing your true potential, and reciprocally, joy can ignite Divine joy, making you the recipient of Heavenly generosity.

The wise King Solomon's idea that "wine gladdens the heart" has a deeper meaning beyond the effect of the alcohol content. According to the Chasidic masters, Solomon indicates that joy is synonymous with revealing the hidden, such as extracting wine from grapes, because joy brings out the best in you. On the other hand, sadness closes our eyes to opportunities and deprives us of mystical benefits and our true potential.

The Rebbe, who had a keen insight into human suffering, once drew a parallel between joy and humility, explaining that just as one can acknowledge the truth of one's talents and remain humble, it is possible to recognize and experience grief and pain while maintaining a sense of true integrated joy.

Interestingly, on Simchat Torah, we celebrate primarily by dancing with scrolls wrapped closed. This dancing with a closed Torah indicates that we are honoring more than stories and information; we are celebrating what the Torah is: pure Divinity. And this year, as we dance with a heavy heart, we find joy and courage in knowing who we are. We are the children of Abraham and Sarah, the children of Israel, and the shining stars of David. •

>> Ben Sherman is a staff writer for Chabad Magazine. He lives in Southern California with his wife and children.

>> Photography by Menachem Geisinsky, founder of the Smiling Soldiers Project.



*FLASHBACK 1945:*

## MY FIRST SIMCHAT TORAH

*Based on Henryk's childhood recollection*

My life began when a man in his late twenties, Joseph Foxman, arrived in Vilna looking for me. Until then, I had been living with my nanny, a Catholic Pole who had taken me in when the Germans forced my parents into the ghetto in 1941. She believed my parents had died and raised me as her own, calling me Henryk and teaching me the Catholic faith.

In 1945, Joseph came and took my hand. As we walked through the narrow cobblestone alleyways of Vilna, he told me something that changed everything: He was my father, I was Jewish, my real name was Avraham, and today was a special day called Simchat Torah.

We entered the old Vilna synagogue, and I saw Jewish survivors from Auschwitz celebrating Simchat Torah. They sang and danced joyfully despite the immense suffering and loss surrounding them. I felt a mix of confusion and awe as I watched them.

Suddenly, a man with a heavy Russian accent noticed me and approached Joseph, asking if I was Jewish. When he was told yes, the man's eyes filled with tears. He hadn't seen a Jewish child in years. He lifted me onto his shoulders and began to dance, shouting victoriously, "This is our Torah scroll."

It was my first Simchat Torah, and I'll never forget that moment of pure, triumphant joy. Amidst the death and wreckage, the Torah and the Jewish future were alive. We danced round and round, and his heavily accented words, "Am Yisrael Chai," still echo in my ears today. •

>> Henryk, or Avraham, is known today as Abe Foxman, the director emeritus of the Anti-Defamation League.





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LET'S TALK FOOD





# THE WORLD'S BEST GUIDE TO A SWEET NEW YEAR



## Rosh Hashanah

**DEFINITION:** Rosh Hashanah (Head of the Year). How your brain impacts your body, Rosh Hashanah affects your year. Also known as Yom Hazikaron (Day of Remembrance), this term is used in prayer, candle lighting, and the Kiddush.

**OBSERVANCE:** Hear the Shofar. The ram's horn is sounded on both days (unless one day is Shabbat).

### CUSTOMARY FOODS:

On the first night, eat an apple dipped in honey for a sweet year. (See blessing in Machzor page 46.) Some display the head of a fish or ram to be the "head of the class." Some eat carrots because in Yiddish, carrots, *meren*, means to multiply. Pomegranates customarily symbolize our wish to be full of mitzvot, as pomegranates are filled with seeds. On the second night, eat a new fruit to recite the *Shehecheyanu*. (See Machzor page 46)



**TASHLICH:** On the second day, recite the "Tashlich" prayer near a body of water with fish. Water, a symbol of Divine kindness, and the fish's ever-open eyes make this the perfect spot to pray for Divine mercy. (See Machzor page 291.)

## Yom Kippur

**DEFINITION:** Yom Kippur, the holiest day, means "Day of Atonement."

**The 5 Don'ts:** 1) No food or drink. 2) No washing of the body. 3) No using creams or lotions. 3) No leather footwear. 5) No marital relations.

**Before Yom Kippur Prep:** In the morning, take a chicken or money and give it to charity at the Kaparot ceremony. (See Kehot's Machzor for Yom Kippur, page 2.) Lekach: Request and receive a slice of honey cake, letting this cake be the only thing you beg for this year. Eat a festive meal, immerse in a mikvah, and give extra charity. In the late afternoon, eat a pre-fast meal. Parents bless their children. If applicable, light a memorial candle. Girls and women light candles 18 minutes before sunset.

**WHAT TO WEAR:** Many wear white as a sign of purity. In addition, men wear a tallit during the Kol Nidrei and Yom Kippur Eve service.

*Continued after Holiday Calendar ►*



This Sukkah, located in Bryant Park, has architectural plans approved and signed off by the New York Department of Buildings every year. The Sukkah is a project of Chabad of Midtown Manhattan.



# Rejoice! IT'S TISHREI

## SHEMINI ATZERET

Shemini Atzeret is the only Jewish festival not tied to a historical event. The Midrash uses the following parable to describe Shmini Atzeret:

A king once invited his children and guests to a seven-day feast. At the end of the seven days, he said: "Children, please, let's continue to feast one more day with only you and me, for your separation is difficult for me."

"Shemini" means eighth, and "Atzeret" means to stop or stay, signifying G-d's invitation to extend Sukkot for an additional eighth day. This "extension," notes the Rebbe, is the only biblical holiday of its kind, and it empowers us year-round to continue extending holiness to the world and transforming ordinary days into Divinity.

## WANT MORE DETAILS?

Check out the complete High Holiday Guide on the previous & next page.

### SUNDAY

### MONDAY

### TUESDAY

#### Did you know?

The Shofar is made of a ram's horn to recall the Binding of Isaac which also occurred on Rosh Hashanah, in which a ram took Isaac's place as an offering to G-d. We evoke Abraham's merit as we pray for a year of life, health and prosperity.



#### OCT 6 | TISHREI 4 Fast of Gedaliah

Fast day mourning the assassination of the Jewish royal Gedaliah ben Achikam in 423 BCE

#### OCT 13 | TISHREI 11

Start building the **Sukkah**.

Don't forget to order your set of **The Four Kinds**.



#### OCT 20 | TISHREI 18 Chol Hamoed

**Shake** the Lulav and Etrog  
All meals in the **Sukkah**  
Tonight's Guest: Aaron

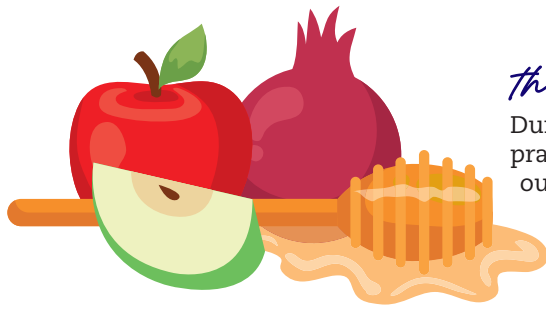
#### OCT 21 | TISHREI 19 Chol Hamoed

**Shake** the Lulav and Etrog  
All meals in the **Sukkah**  
Tonight's Guest: Joseph

#### OCT 22 | TISHREI 20 Chol Hamoed

**Shake** the Lulav and Etrog  
All meals in the **Sukkah**  
Tonight's Guest: David





## The Month Before:

During Elul, the month before the High Holidays, we begin practicing blowing the Shofar daily and reciting Psalm 27 in our daily prayers. The code of Jewish Law encourages people to visit the resting place of a great tzadik to pray to G-d before the High Holidays. Many people today use the online form at [www.OhelChabad.com](http://www.OhelChabad.com) to send their letters for blessings to the resting place of the Rebbe.

WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
<b>OCT 2   ELUL 29</b> <b>Erev Rosh Hashanah</b> Give extra charity Prepare <b>Eiruv Tavshilin</b> * <b>Light candles</b> 18 minutes before sunset <b>BLESS</b> your friends with the words "May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year."	<b>OCT 3   TISHREI 1</b> <b>Rosh Hashanah Day 1</b> Hear the <b>Shofar</b> <b>Do Tashlich</b> at a body of water <b>Light candles</b> after nightfall from pre-existing flame Happy Birthday Adam & Eve. On this day 5785 years ago G-d said: "Let Us make man in Our image."	<b>OCT 4   TISHREI 2</b> <b>Rosh Hashanah Day 2</b> Hear the <b>Shofar</b> <b>Light candles</b> 18 minutes before sunset from pre-existing flame On this day in 1677 BCE our matriarch Sarah passed away after hearing the good news that Abraham had not sacrificed her only son Isaac.	<b>OCT 5   TISHREI 3</b> <b>Shabbat of Teshuva</b> Torah portion Ha'azinu <b>Havdalah</b> after nightfall One of only two Shabbats that a rabbi is required to sermonize in Shul. The theme of this sermon is to inspire people to return to their true pure selves and pristine relationship with G-d.
<b>OCT 9   TISHREI 7</b> <b>*Eiruv Tavshilin</b> When a festival occurs on Friday, then on the day preceding the festival, one should make an Eiruv Tavshilin, to allow the cooking of food on a festival (Friday) for Shabbat. For complete instructions and blessing, see Kehot's Siddur, page 327.	<b>OCT 10   TISHREI 8</b>	<b>OCT 11   TISHREI 9</b> <b>Erev Yom Kippur</b> <b>KAPAROT</b> Give extra <b>charity</b> . <b>Light candles</b> 18 minutes before sunset. <b>FAST</b> begins Remove <b>leather shoes</b> <b>KOL NIDREI</b> prayer	<b>OCT 12   TISHREI 10</b> <b>Yom Kippur</b> No eating or drinking Sounding of <b>Shofar</b> at conclusion of Neilah <b>Havdalah</b> & break-fast after nightfall On this day G-d said: "I forgive the Jewish people."
<b>OCT 16   TISHREI 14</b> <b>Erev Sukkot</b> Prepare <b>Eiruv Tavshilin</b> * <b>Light candles</b> 18 minutes before sunset. Kidush and all meals in the <b>Sukkah</b> , and dip challah in honey! On Sukkot, supernal "guests" (Ushpizin) grace our Sukkah. Tonight's Guest: Abraham	<b>OCT 17   TISHREI 15</b> <b>Sukkot Day 1</b> <b>Shake</b> the Lulav and Etrog Kidush and all meals in the <b>Sukkah</b> and dip challah in honey! <b>Light candles</b> after nightfall from pre-existing flame Tonight's Guest: Isaac	<b>OCT 18   TISHREI 16</b> <b>Sukkot Day 2</b> <b>Shake</b> the Lulav and Etrog Kidush and all meals in the <b>Sukkah</b> and dip challah in honey! <b>Light candles</b> 18 minutes before sunset from pre-existing flame Tonight's Guest: Jacob	<b>OCT 19   TISHREI 17</b> <b>Sukkot Day 3</b> Kidush and all meals in the <b>Sukkah</b> and dip challah in honey! <b>Havdalah</b> after nightfall Tonight's Guest: Moses
<b>OCT 23   TISHREI 21</b> <b>Hoshana Rabba</b> Prepare <b>Eiruv Tavshilin</b> * <b>Shake</b> the Lulav and Etrog <b>Perform</b> Hoshanot All meals in the <b>Sukkah</b> <b>Light candles</b> 18 minutes before sunset	<b>OCT 24   TISHREI 22</b> <b>Shemini Atzeret</b> <b>Recite</b> Yizkor Memorial Prayer <b>Recite</b> Prayer for Rain <b>Light candles</b> after nightfall from pre-existing flame <b>Perform</b> Hakafof and dance with the Torah	<b>OCT 25   TISHREI 23</b> <b>Simchat Torah</b> <b>Perform</b> Hakafof and dance with the Torah Kidush and all meals in the <b>house</b> <b>Light candles</b> 18 minutes before sunset from pre-existing flame	<b>OCT 26   TISHREI 24</b> Torah portion Bereshit <b>Havdalah</b> after nightfall



# THE WORLD'S BEST GUIDE TO A SWEET NEW YEAR

## Sukkot

**DEFINITION:** Sukkot means "Huts." The Jews enjoyed "clouds of glory" during the Exodus, therefore, G-d commands us to dwell in huts during Sukkot (Tishrei 15-21). ALSO KNOWN AS: Z'man Simchateinu (The Time of Our Rejoicing). All holidays are joyous, yet Sukkot is the only holiday with this title.

**OBSERVANCE:** Eat all your meals in the Sukkah and regard it as your home.

**SHAKE:** Take the Four Kinds: a) an Etrog (citron), b) a Lulav (palm frond), c) three Hadassim (myrtle twigs), and d) two Aravot (willow twigs) on each day of the festival (besides Shabbat). For instructions on how to take the Four Kinds or "Shake the Lulav" visit our website.

**DEFINITION:** Chol Hamoed (literally, "the weekday of the holiday") refers to the "intermediate period" of the festivals (Tishrei 17-20). We eat in the Sukkah, shake the Lulav, drink wine, and rejoice, but work is permitted.

## Hoshana Rabbah

**DEFINITION:** Hoshana Rabbah, "Great Salvation" (Tishrei 21), is the seventh day of Sukkot, which closes the period of Divine judgment. Hakafof: Encircle the Bimah (synagogue reading table) seven times while holding the Four Kinds. Hoshanot: Take a bundle of five willow branches and beat them against the ground after the Hakafof ceremony.

## Shemini Atzeret

**DEFINITION:** Shemini Atzeret, literally The Eighth (Day) of Restriction (Tishrei 22-23), is a biblical festival that comes after Sukkot; it is a day of unbridled joy, surpassing even the joy of Sukkot.

**OBSERVANCE:** In the evening service, dance seven Hakafof with the Torah, similar to Simchat Torah. Yizkor: In the morning, the memorial service is recited. It's not Sukkot, but many have the custom of eating and drinking in the Sukkah without reciting the blessing.

**CUSTOM:** Sometime before sundown, it is customary to go into the Sukkah, have a bite to eat, and "bid farewell" to its holy shade.

**ISRAEL VS. DIASPORA:** Simchat Torah is the day after Shemini Atzeret in the Diaspora. In Israel, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah are on the same day.

## Simchat Torah

**DEFINITION:** Simchat Torah means the "The Joy of the Torah." It is the most joyous occasion as we celebrate our Divine inheritance and intrinsic connection to the Torah.

**OBSERVANCE:** Hakafof are held on the eve and the morning of Simchat Torah. We march and dance with the Torah scrolls seven times around the reading table in the synagogue.

### SIMCHAT TORAH WAS OUR IDEA.

The Passover Exodus had brought us to Mount Sinai for Shavuot. Still, Moses smashed those first Tablets when he saw the Golden Calf, and only eighty days later, on Yom Kippur, were we forgiven and presented with a new, second set of Tablets. Then, only after Sukkot, was our first opportunity to express our joy and love for the Torah. So we, the Jews, invented Simchat Torah.

While G-d gives us the major biblical festivals, Simchat Torah is our initiative; it's the day we gift G-d a holiday and ask the Torah to dance.

Physically, when you dance with the Torah, you become its dependable legs, and in return, the Torah scroll promises to be your dependable support throughout the year. So, the Rebbe would encourage you to celebrate and dance, to go round and round in circles, so you can lock in the blessings from all sides.

*(Based on the teachings of the Rebbe)*




SHANA TOVA

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# WAKING UP IN GAZA

*By Shira Gold, photographs by Errol Higgins*

**M**oran Stella Yanai was selling her custom jewelry at the Nova Festival on October 7th when terrorists began hunting for Jews to murder and capture. They targeted Jews like you and me, and the only thing that set Moran apart from us was her proximity to Gaza.

I recently drove to Yorba Linda, California, to meet Moran, one of the few hostages who, after fifty-four days in Hamas captivity, somehow finds the strength to travel the world, bringing awareness to the hostages and telling

their story of faith and resilience in the face of unspoken darkness.

Many people remember seeing the TV coverage of a forty-year-old hostage on crutches reaching out to embrace a woman in a Red Cross jacket. The entire world watched her release on November 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023, and now, as I arrive, I see Moran sitting on a bench outside Chabad of Yorba Linda without crutches, soaking up the sunshine while slowly relishing a cigarette.

I say “Shalom” and hug her. Moran is an artist and poet who knows how

to design her spoken words beautifully. She likes to recount how many times she saw the hand of G-d protect her while in Gaza and how gratitude helped her survive and continue to survive. Starting with that sudden gut feeling not to listen to the police officer who, in the original chaos, told her and her friends to head to the street behind the festival; sadly, those who did listen didn't survive.

Although the Yanai family is Jewish, Moran's childhood wasn't religious. Still, her mother, a proud Jewess from



Holocaust Survivor, Dr. Jacob Eisenbach, blesses Moran in Yorba Linda California.

Egypt, did teach her kids about faith in G-d and, for fun, a little Arabic. On October 7th, Moran used her faith, wit, and Arabic to convince the first two groups of gunmen to leave her alone since “she’s an Arab” and was thereby able to save several festival goers from capture. But, eventually, after hours of running and hiding and injuring her ankle, a third group of bloodthirsty terrorists brutally forced her into a stolen car and, within minutes, told her, “Welcome to Gaza.”

That morning, Moran had given little thought to her wardrobe choices for attending a jewelry booth at a desert rave. However, now her green pants and combat boots had convinced her captors that they had scored a soldier. While a doctor looked at Moran’s broken leg, she quietly pleaded for his help, only to realize that the doctor was not there to help her. She was on her own.

In the moments when no one can help us, we pray. Moran knew only three prayers: the *Shema*, the blessing for lighting Shabbat candles, and the morning blessing of gratitude for being alive called *Modeh Ani*.

You would expect any hostage to experience shock, anxiety, panic, and fear. Yet, for fifty-four days, Moran focused on the fact that she was alive and would repeat this prayer throughout her long days in captivity: *Modeh Ani*. “I offer thanks to You, Living and Eternal King, for You have restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great.” She was dragged and kidnapped but alive. Moran says this prayer to stay alive.

While in Gaza, the kidnappers told Moran that her family, country, and G-d had given up on her. They pointed a gun at

her head and threatened to kill her. At one point, the weeks of mental torture, physical malnourishment, lack of essential hygiene, and food poisoning eventually left her body lifeless, and Moran remembers the guard coming to check if she had died.

The harsh reality in captivity had depleted her morale, and she would need another sighting of the hand of G-d to help turn her away from death’s door and guide her back to health. That’s when the guard started scanning the radio for another Arabic news station, and suddenly, Sarit Hadad’s voice, “*Shema Yisrael Elokai*,” filled Moran’s heart with hope. The guard quickly switched the channel, but it was too late. Moran would survive.

In Yorba Linda, Moran shares her message and explains that the hostages are stronger than we imagine; they are lions and lionesses of Judah. They don’t want your pity; they want your light.

In her darkest moments, Moran imagined her family celebrating Shabbat; it gave her the strength to survive. Now, she urges women everywhere to light Shabbat candles to bring light and hope to the hostages still held behind.

I asked her if she was getting back into her custom jewelry business, and she explained that she was only working on helping the

hostages. Still an artist, Moran is teaching the beauty of *Modeh Ani* gratitude and painting a clear picture of what we can do for the hostages: They don’t want your pity; they want your light. •

>>Shira Gold is a staff writer for Chabad Magazine. She lives in Southern California with her husband and children.

## MORAN FOCUSED ON THE FACT THAT SHE WAS ALIVE AND WOULD REPEAT THIS PRAYER THROUGHOUT HER LONG DAYS IN CAPTIVITY: **MODEH ANI.**

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# THE TWO MIRACLES

by Peter Himmelman

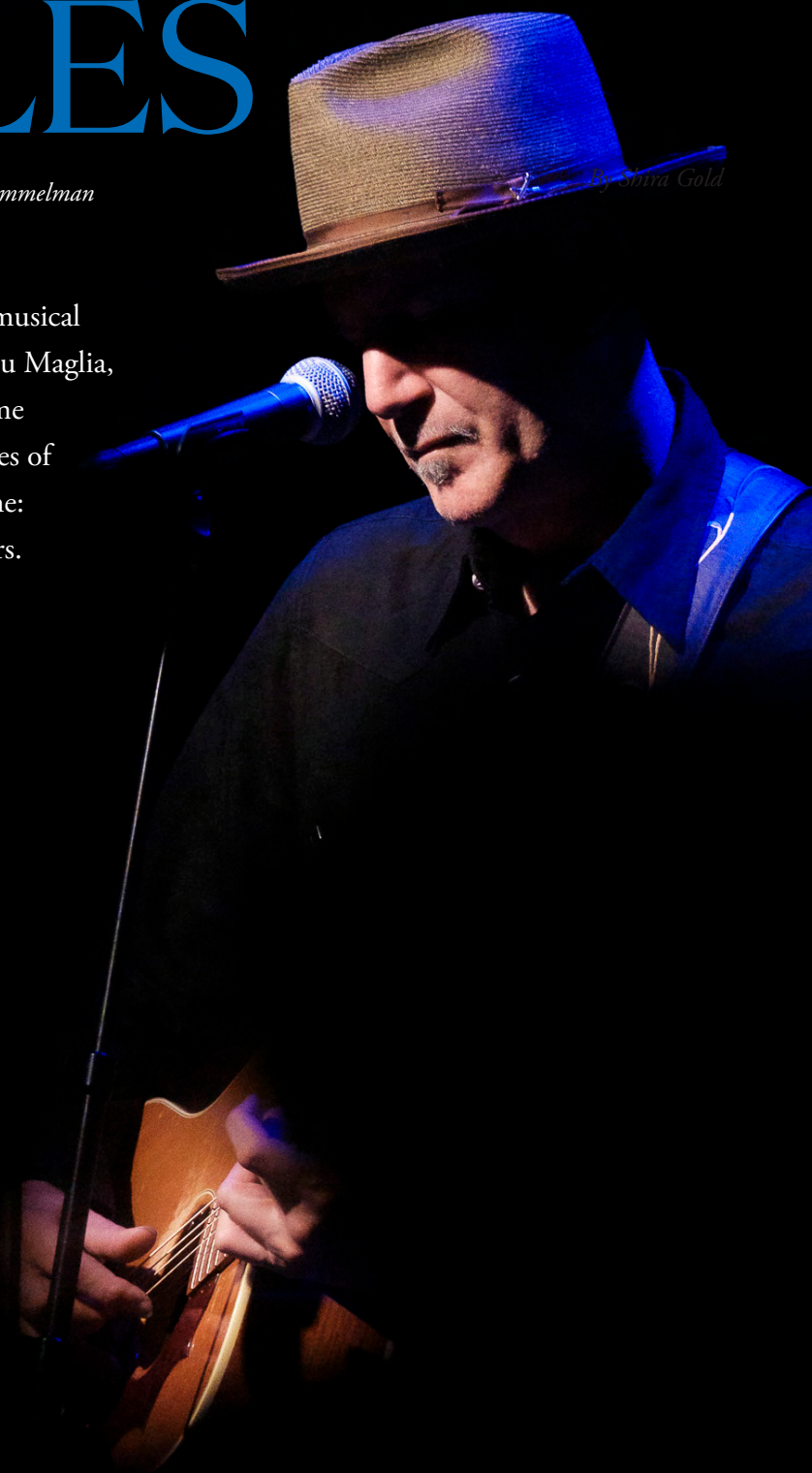
By Shira Gold

In 1986, the most effective way to promote a new musical act was to have it open for an established artist. Lou Maglia, the newly installed president of Island Records at the time and the guy who signed me to the label in the early stages of my career, had been considering a few possibilities for me: Sting, for example, as well as Joe Cocker and some others.

But one day, I walked into Lou's office and closed the door behind me. I was about to forgo those opportunities in a fifteen-minute meeting. I didn't balk or sugarcoat what I had to say. There was no need to. I was at a place in life where not following my gut would have been like punching my mom in the nose. In that sense, it wasn't a choice.

"Lou," I said, "I'm starting to keep this Jewish thing called Shabbos, and I won't be available to perform on Friday nights any longer." Lou looked at me for a moment, then just belly-laughed. Not to be cruel or condescending—he wasn't that kind of guy. Lou simply had no language or context for what he'd just heard.

Likely, he couldn't grasp even a bit of what I was saying. He only laughed because he'd assumed I was joking. And it was funny. Why would an artist who'd worked so hard to get to this point in his career tell the president of a major record label that he wouldn't work on a Friday night—the most important show-business night of the week?



By Shira Gold

Photography by Stephen Serio

I wish I could tell you that my spiritual awakening, if you want to call it that, was about being caught up in a moment of tremendous joy, but it wasn't. It was a somber, serious thing.

In some ways it was linked with thoughts of mortality. Strange as it may sound, there is a deep sense of fulfillment in the realization that death is pervasive and imminent, even as we pretend it's not there. That is, it's only possible to feel acutely the gratification of one's aliveness when life and death are set side by side, when they contrast each other.

In the winter of 1984, a little more than a year before my meeting with Lou, I was sitting in a cramped apartment in South Minneapolis auditioning for some songs I'd written for a local rhythm-and-blues singer named Doug Maynard. As I went through a dozen or so songs, Doug nursed a beer, listening and nodding quietly—he was a hell of a singer, but not much of a talker. Suddenly he perked up. At last, something I played caught his attention. “Man, I think I could do this one justice,” he said.

It was a simple funk-tinged thing called “My First Mistake:” *You taste like pepper frosting on a granite cake / Baby, fallin’ in love with you was my first mistake...*

I was twenty-four. It was a huge day for me, knowing that a local musical hero dug one of my songs and was going to perform it in his set. Things were moving. Less than a year later, Doug was found dead in his living room at the age of forty. But before this happened, he was gracious enough to have introduced me to his manager, who introduced me to a New York City music lawyer, who introduced me to a record producer named Kenny Vance.

Kenny was cool. Still is. He'd worked with a lot of people, famous people, and he wasn't particularly shy about mentioning who they were. One evening, after everyone had cleared out of the studio where we'd been recording some demos, Kenny and I

sat for an hour or so, ate some macrobiotic food from a place he knew down the street, and shared a little bit about ourselves.

“I used to date Diane Keaton,” he told me. “I know Woody Allen—been in a couple of his films. I know Donald Fagen of Steely Dan. I was the music director for Saturday Night Live. I know Lenny Waronker, the former head of Warner Brothers Records. But tonight,” he said, “I'm gonna take you to my main connection, a religious Jew in Brooklyn.”

**This idea stunned me.  
Not because it was  
new or complicated.  
The things that truly  
move us rarely are.**

Later that night, Kenny and I traveled to an apartment in Crown Heights, where his friend Rabbi Simon Jacobson greeted us. I liked Simon right off the bat. His eyes reflected some essential paradox, some awareness that being alive is both a source of great humor and great sadness.

Simon's job at the time was to memorize the Rebbe's talks during Shabbat—a time when the use of electronic recording devices is forbidden—and, with the help of his small staff, write them down from memory on Saturday night for publication later in the week. When the Rebbe spoke, it was often for four or more hours straight—without breaks, without notes, and in a cyclical manner of increasing complexity.

It grew late, and just past 1:00 a.m., a tired Kenny said his goodbyes and drove back to Manhattan. I stayed on as Simon continued speaking. I kept looking up at the simple oil paintings of the Rebbe hanging on the walls. I was prodded more by fatigue than bravado when I finally asked, “What's the deal with those pictures of the Rebbe? They seem sort of cultish to me.” Simon was not at all defensive. “I enjoy

the pictures,” he said. “To me, the Rebbe is like a very inspiring grandfather, and I get a lot out of reflecting on the things he says and the way he lives his life.”

This made some sense to me. Then Simon paused, looking across the table at me. When he saw I was focused on him, he continued. “There are people for whom there is no sense of self,” he said. “People called *tzadikim*, and they have no need for personal gain. *Tzadikim* live only to serve others, and they can do anything they wish.”

“Really?” I asked with a hint of comic disdain. “Can they fly?”

“Understand,” Simon said without irony, “that I've never seen anyone fly. But for a *tzadik*, the act of flying is no greater miracle than the act of walking.”

This idea stunned me. Not because it was new or complicated. The things that truly move us rarely are. No, I was stunned because when you stop to think about it, there's absolutely no difference between the two miracles, walking and flying. It's just that we non-*tzadikim* get tired of the one because we do it all the time.

For some strange reason, at that moment, sitting at that table in Brooklyn, I started thinking about the little-known rhythm-and-blues singer Doug Maynard. I was remembering the sound of his voice and considering the infinite number, the impossible number, of tiny choices and coincidences—the gossamer filaments, if you will—that wove together to guide me to that apartment on that particular night.

The thought was so vivid that it was as if I could hear Doug singing again. Singing most soulfully, most truthfully, about the joy, the fear, and the pain of this world. ●

>> Peter Himmelman is a Grammy and Emmy-award nominated rock and roll performer, songwriter, film composer, visual artist and award-winning author. His newest book *Suspended By No String: A Songwriter's Reflections On Faith, Aliveness, and Wonder* is available through his website [www.peterhimmelman.com](http://www.peterhimmelman.com).



# Finding Answers

*How the Rebbe's Forty Years of Counseling Can Help Readers Today*

*New Book Letters for Life By Levi Shmotkin*

In today's tumultuous post-October 7th world, worry and anxiety have become my unwelcome companions. The knowledge that my quest for calm amidst life's chaos is universal and ageless comforts me to a degree. I was reminded of this consoling truth when I read *Letters for Life: Guidance for Emotional Wellness from the Rebbe*.

Over his decades of leadership (1950-1994), the Rebbe received millions of "old-fashioned" letters from individuals across the globe. The people writing to the Rebbe were real men and women struggling with everyday human problems. Worried parents, grief-stricken widows, hippies with questions, and lonely and confused adolescents searching for direction. The Rebbe patiently responded and guided them all toward a more fulfilling life.

To date, over forty volumes containing some 20,000 letters have been published. Luckily, Levy Y. Shmotkin, a Chasidic writer and scholar, released a curated selection of the Rebbe's *Letters for Life* at the perfect time for many of us. Shmotkin distills the Rebbe's holy wisdom on emotional wellness into actionable advice directly addressing today's reader.

Shmotkin, the book's insightful editor and narrator, meticulously selected key messages from thousands of letters and categorized them into mental health and well-being themes.

This treasure trove of the Rebbe's Torah-based advice provides intellectual clarity and practical guidance for anyone navigating

the complexities of modern life.

Interestingly, Shmotkin, while in his late teens, initially started delving into these letters to find answers to his struggles. Applying them to his journey into adulthood, he found them invaluable tools for a calmer and happier existence. That's when he also began to notice recurring themes and patterns of advice that he felt would have universal appeal.

As Shmotkin clarifies, the book doesn't seek to replace medical professionals or your therapist. Instead, it provides laypeople and professionals with the Rebbe's insights into age-old problems, similar to a Divine roadmap drawn from the Rebbe's wisdom to guide you through life's challenges.

For example, one central theme in the Rebbe's correspondence is empowerment through purpose. Many letters counsel their recipients that every individual matters and that no matter how bad someone might feel about themselves, they have an indispensable role in the world. In today's society, the rampant lack of purpose has devastating consequences for all ages. In contrast, a healthy sense of purpose can be transformative, giving individuals the motivation and confidence to overcome their internal struggles.

Marc Wilson, a syndicated columnist and community activist in North Carolina, faced a dark period after his second marriage and career collapsed. A friend advised him to see the Rebbe. Despite

**In "Letters for Life," the reader perceives a shift away from "self-help" and senses the Rebbe urging his readers to focus less on "self" and more on being a "help" to others.**



*Light In The Dark* by Yehuda Lang. Available framed and unframed at [www.yehudalang.com](http://www.yehudalang.com).

the brevity of their meeting, the Rebbe's counsel was particular. He suggested Wilson teach Talmud, even if only to one or two people in his living room. "Sometimes a devoted lay person can do incalculably more good than a rabbi," he explained. After an even darker period of stagnation, Wilson eventually acted on this advice, beginning his journey of healing and restoration to soundness and self-respect.

That doesn't mean you should teach Talmud if you get fired; the Rebbe's insight into situations included a keen understanding of the people in them, like Wilson. But themes emerge. Shmotkin skillfully weaves various stories and letters to create a tapestry that gives the reader a sense of direction and tranquility, even in the face of adversity.

There are many books with great advice for life, but *Letters for Life* is unique because it draws on documented real-time interactions between ordinary individuals and the holy Rebbe. The rare combination of practical advice and mystical insights gives it a distinct feel, as do its incredible stories, like the Rabbi from Baltimore who called the Rebbe's office during a crisis of faith. Speaking anonymously, he sought direction and clarity. The Rebbe advised him through his secretary: "Tell him that there is a Jew who lives in Maryland that he can speak to—his

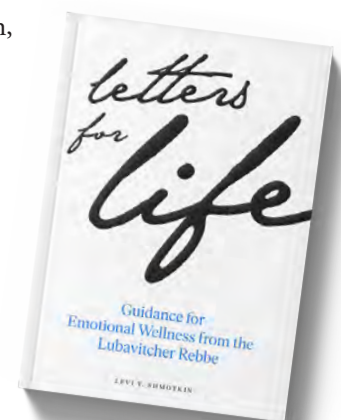
name is Weinreb." The Rabbi, stunned, replied that his name was indeed Rabbi Weinreb. Without missing a beat, the Rebbe said, "If that's the case, he should know that sometimes one needs to speak to himself."

In *Letters for Life*, the reader perceives a shift away from "self-help" and senses the Rebbe urging his readers to focus less on "self" and more on being a "help" to others. The book's counterintuitive wisdom completely flips the term. It teaches that the ultimate "help" for the "self" is to bond with something larger and infinitely greater than the self. This Heavenly outlook is a gift that we must share with the world. Its wisdom is therapeutic for the soul, inspiring faith, purpose, and resilience. •

>> Rabbi Levi Shmotkin is a Chasidic scholar based in Brooklyn, New York. *Letters for Life* is his first book. *Letters for Life* is available at [www.kehhot.com](http://www.kehhot.com)



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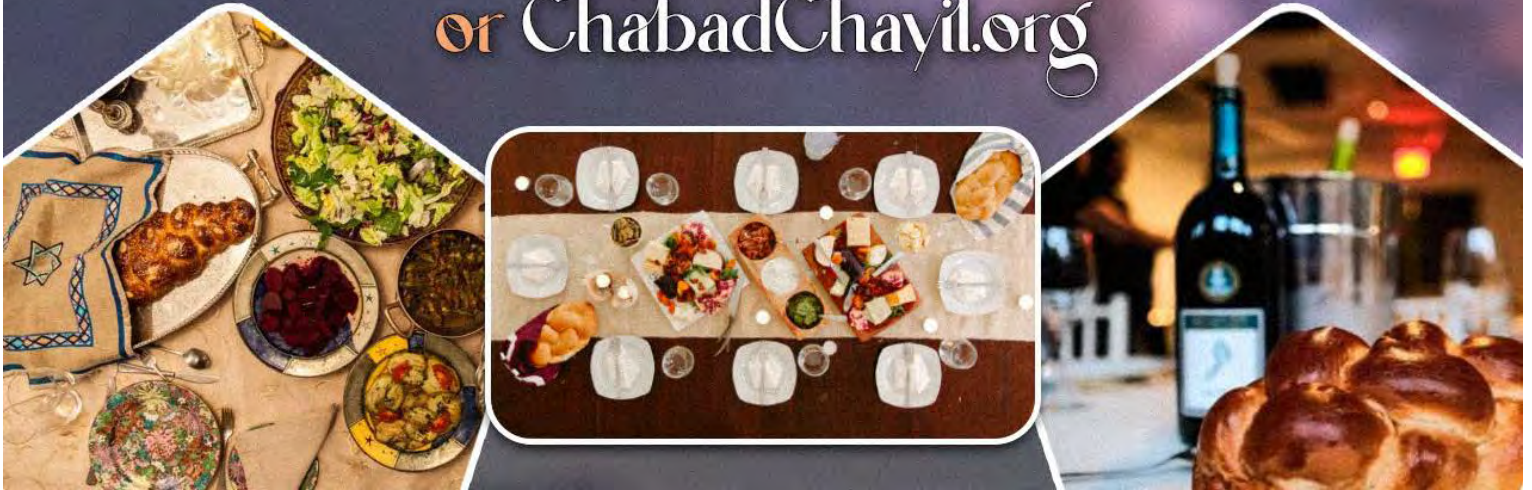




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GOING KOSHER: MY STORY

# FROM FASHION TO FAITH

by Rochel Zuckerman



As a celebrity stylist on the fast track to success, I enjoyed the South Beach nightlife, partying with the rich and famous. In my twenties, I truly believed this was my calling in life.

One evening, at an exclusive VIP dinner, a man asked me what a “good Jewish girl” like myself was doing there. Surprised, I asked how he knew I was Jewish. Having grown up in an observant home, he saw through my outward appearance and understood who I was, so he invited me for a Shabbat meal.

As I mentally prepared for that Shabbat experience, I reflected on my life and wondered why, as a VIP, I didn’t truly feel like one and why, despite being surrounded by people at parties, I felt lonely.

That invitation was the start of my kosher journey.

Soon afterward, I approached my observant neighbor and asked about coming over for Friday night dinner. The following Friday, although it was the busiest night of the week, I closed my store early. I walked away from the celebrities and latest trends towards a small, unfashionable apartment, where I met a modestly dressed woman.

As I stepped into the home, I was impressed by her undeniable radiance, and I knew this was the lifestyle I desired. I had been missing out on something so truly beautiful and

authentic. I had tasted the kosher way of life and eagerly looked forward to experiencing it again.

Over the years, I gradually embraced kosher observance, seeking food items with kosher symbols and celebrating weekly Shabbat meals. At first, it was more challenging for me, but I took baby steps.

Over time, I decided to close my store on Shabbat; I found that my fears of losing business were wrong. We started seeing more significant sales during the week. When customers read, “We will re-open at 8:30 tonight,” they would wait!

After my wedding, my husband helped me learn more about Kosher, and we worked as a team. Once married, I naturally shifted from fashion to a family. I focused on raising my children, interior design, and event coordination. Today, I am a proud wife and mother of seven beautiful children.

Looking back, thanks to a kosher Shabbat dinner party, I reconnected with my Jewish roots and discovered the fulfillment I sought. Although my path diverged from what I had initially imagined, one thing remains certain: with the love and guidance from Above, I have found my true purpose. Being a proud Jewish mother will never go out of fashion. ●

>> Rochel Zuckerman lives with her husband and children in sunny Florida.



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If I had dated my wife in ancient times, I would not have rented a car and taken her to *Le Marais* in Manhattan. The Talmud paints a different picture of the dating scene back then:

"On the 15<sup>th</sup> of Av and Yom Kippur (both days of equality), the singles would go to the vineyards, and the girls would announce, 'Lift your eyes and choose; don't look for beauty; beauty is vain; a G-d fearing woman is praiseworthy.'" (Talmud Taanit.)

The Talmud clarifies that poor, unattractive girls quoted the verse about the vanity of beauty while beautiful girls said little besides, "Boy, lift your eyes and look at this beauty." Girls from prominent families emphasized the importance of lineage, and rich girls would talk about the advantages of wealth.

The Rebbe explains that, like today, boys and girls come from various homes and socio-economic backgrounds, but fundamentally, it boils down to two types of people. The first type takes credit for their genes, good looks, family heritage, and parents' wealth—similar to a college student flaunting their parent's credit card while buying you a drink. This type of girl waves her parents' credit card, showing you that her name is on it.

The second type, the poor, unattractive girl, can't boast family or wealth. Instead, she demonstrates that she's self-made, knowledgeable, capable, and, most importantly, understands what it means to struggle. This poor G-d-fearing, "daughter of Jerusalem", is not ugly, and she knows you'll see her beauty once she can afford a decent haircut, a new dress, and some essential jewelry. But the key is, she doesn't take credit for any of it; she insists the boys lift their eyes and see where it all comes from. She's the type of girl who waves her credit card and honestly says, "I have my parents' card; drinks on me!"

According to the Rebbe, this is the Jewish attitude we should adopt, and that's the type of girl you should aspire to be.

Consider King David, for example. Despite being small and naturally unable to defeat Goliath, little David didn't rely on his strength alone; he didn't pay his way through life with his debit card. David rode up to every fight, waving G-d's credit card in the face of every Goliath. He also knew how to use a sharp sword, which was handy.

If you read Psalms, you'd think King David was the poorest king in Jewish history. The "Song of a Poor Man" refers to himself because King David had this attitude and saw himself as a poor man with G-d's unlimited buying power.

The Rebbe insists that humility is not weakness; it's honesty about whose card you're working with, and the humility of lifting your eyes and seeing where everything

comes from is empowering and motivating.

In Chasidic teachings, the moon serves as the perfect model for this humble attitude. It's no wonder Jews set their calendars to the moon, which gracefully lets everyone know it's just a reflection of the sun's light. Like humble King David, the moon shows us how to be a graceful receiver, shining a beautiful light that's not its own.

You could be rich, beautiful, and from a great family, but your true power comes when you lift your eyes and see where it all comes from. And with G-d's credit card, you can get a lot done. That's why I told my wife on that first date, "Drinks on me!" •

**THE GIRLS WOULD ANNOUNCE:  
LIFT YOUR EYES AND CHOOSE;  
DON'T LOOK FOR BEAUTY;  
BEAUTY IS VAIN; A G-D FEARING  
WOMAN IS PRAISEWORTHY.**

# THE Humble Girls OF JERUSALEM

By Rabbi Shmuel Marcus, adapted from *Likkutei Sichot* Vol.24 p.57



>> Rabbi Shmuel Marcus is the editor of Chabad Magazine. He and his wife Bluma are the co-directors of Chabad in Los Alamitos California.





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Light Candles at: 6:47 pm

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3**  
Light Candles after: 7:38 pm  
(from a pre-existing flame)

### SHABBAT

Blessing 1

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 4**  
Light Candles at: 6:45 pm  
(from a pre-existing flame)

### YOM KIPPUR

Blessings 1&2

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 11**  
Light Candles at: 6:38 pm

### SUKKOT

Blessings 1&2

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16**  
Light Candles at: 6:33 pm

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17**  
Light Candles after: 7:25 pm  
(from a pre-existing flame)

### SHABBAT

Blessing 1

**FRIDAY, OCTOBER 18**  
Light Candles at: 6:31 pm  
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Blessings 1&2

**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 23**  
Light Candles at: 6:27 pm

**THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24**  
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sov ve-tzi-vo-nu le-had-lik ner shel...**

Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has sanctified us with His commandments,  
and has commanded us to kindle the light of...

SHABBAT:

**Sha-bos ko-desh**

ROSH HASHANAH:

**Yom Ha-zi-karon**

YOM KIPPUR:

**Shabbat v'Shel  
Yom haKippurim**

FESTIVALS:

**Yom Tov**

**2. Bo-ruch a-toh Ado-noi E-lo-hei-nu me-lech ho-olom she-he-che-ya-nu vi-kee-yi-ma-  
nu vi-hi-gee-an-u liz-man ha-zeh.**

Blessed are you, L-rd our G-d, King of the universe, who has kept us alive and sustained us and let  
us reach this time.