



 Areyvut

**YOM KIPPUR  
2020**



**FOOD FOR THOUGHT**

# IS THE JAR FULL?

## THE ROCKS, PEBBLES AND SAND IN A JAR STORY

An instructor filled an empty jar with rocks.

"Is it full?" Then he poured a pitcher of pebbles into the jar.

"Full now?" Next he poured sand.

"Full?"

Finally he poured water. "Now it's full."

"What do you learn from this?"

One student answered, "No matter how busy you are, you can always fit in one more thing?"

"No, the important thing is: you have to put the rocks in first. If you fill your jar first with the pebbles, sand or water, there will be no room for the rocks."

Put the rocks in first, those important things that keep you grounded and centered.

I'm the one who thought that you could always fit in one more call, one more meeting. Yet when I fill my jar with what seems urgent but not important, there isn't room for what I really need: time for my inner life — prayer, study, reflection; and time for my family.

I need to get clear about what my rocks are, and to promise myself to put them in first.



### DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The High Holy Day period provides us the opportunity to reflect and reimagine.
2. What are your rocks?
3. What are your pebbles, sand and water?
4. What do you want to make time for in the coming year?
5. Prioritize what is paramount in your life and carve time and space for it.

# EVERY DAY, TIME & MOMENT

That every day, at any time, at any moment,  
You can renew yourself and become a brand-new being.  
So we must be strong and always begin anew,  
For sometimes we must start afresh many times  
On but a single day.

– Rabbi Natan of Nemirov

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Consider that every morning is a new beginning and every year is an opportunity to start anew.  
How will you change?
2. What can you do to ensure that you are successful in making the changes you want?

# CHANGE

When we are no longer able to change a situation.  
We are challenged to change ourselves.  
-Viktor Frankl

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. The season invites us to pause and reimagine.
2. There are situations in our world which frustrate, upset and scare us but we cannot change them.  
The one thing but we can do is look at ourselves.
3. What can each one of us actively change to make ourselves better?
4. What can each one of us actively change to make our world a better place?

# THE SOUND OF THE SHOFAR

Many know the blowing of the Shofar is a highlight of the Rosh Hashanah service, as well as the final ritual of Yom Kippur. Yet during Elul, the month which precedes these holidays, we also blow the Shofar. The reason for doing so was best explained by the great 12th century Jewish scholar, Maimonides. He understood the Shofar to be a call to our people, saying,

“Awake you sleepers from your sleep  
and those who slumber from your slumber.  
Examine your deeds, return in repentance  
and remember your Creator.”

As the Prophet Amos asked, “Can a Shofar be sounded in the city and its people not tremble?”

The Shofar reminds us that Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are soon and that we must begin to prepare ourselves now.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you and will you prepare for Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur?
2. In this very unique year, how do your preparations change?

# TAKING RESPONSIBILITY THE FIRST STEP TO CHANGE

In 1937, Frank Lloyd Wright built a home for a prestigious businessman. One rainy evening, as the businessman was entertaining colleagues, the roof began to leak directly over the businessman's chair at the head of the table.

The man called Wright on the phone and said, "Frank, you built us a beautiful house, but the roof leaks. I'm entertaining a bunch of guests right now and the water is dripping directly on my head!"

Wright replied, "Well, then move your chair."

As it is with leaky roofs, so it is with our lives; if we don't take responsibility for our errors, we cannot fix them.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When things go wrong or have unintended consequences or results, do we look for others to do blame or do we roll up our sleeves and affect change?
2. How might you take responsibility for your actions?

# WHAT'S IMPORTANT IN LIFE?

As the Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur approach, we should take a spiritual and physical inventory. We should consider reflecting and reviewing, assessing and evaluating the accomplishments, challenges and shortcomings of the entire year.

It's the time to get in touch with the essence of what's important in life.

Many of us will be brought to new levels of appreciation for the personal relationships that have nourished us in this last year and the goals we were able to meet.

Others of us will be more aware of unfinished business and the relationships that needed to heal so we can truly be open to the newness of the coming year.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Take your personal inventory, both spiritual, physical and relational.
2. What will you keep?
3. What will you change?
4. What will you leave behind?

# ELUL RECALL NOTICE

Regardless of make or year, all units known as “human beings” are being recalled by the Manufacturer. This is due to a malfunction in the original prototype unit’s code named “Adam” and “Eve”, resulting in the reproduction of the same defect in all subsequent units. This defect is technically termed “Serious Internal Non-morality”, but more commonly known as “SIN.”

Some of the symptoms of the SIN defect:

[a] Loss of direction	[d] Foul vocal emissions	[g] Fearfulness
[b] Lack of peace and joy	[e] Selfishness	[h] Rebellion
[c] Depression	[f] Ingratitude	[i] Jealousy

The Manufacturer is providing factory authorized repair service free of charge to correct the SIN defect. The Repair Technician, God, has most generously offered to bear the entire burden of the staggering cost of these repairs. To repeat, there is no fee required.

The number to call in for repair in all areas is: 1-800-PRAYER WITH FEELING AND INSTENSITY. Once connected, please upload the burden of SIN through the TESHUVA or REPENTANCE procedure. Next, download ATONEMENT from the Repair Technician, God, into the heart component of the human unit. No matter how big or small the SIN defect is, God will replace it with:

[a] Love	[d] Kindness	[g] Gentleness
[b] Joy	[e] Goodness	[h] Patience
[c] Peace	[f] Faithfulness	[i] Self-control

Please see the operation manual, TORAH version 1.0, or HIGH HOLIDAY LITURGY for further details on the use of these fixes.

As an added upgrade, the Manufacturer has made available to all repaired units direct monitoring and assistance from the resident Maintenance Technician, God. Repaired units need only make God welcome and God will take up residence on the premises.

**WARNING:** Continuing to operate a human being unit without corrections voids the Manufacturer’s warranty, exposes the unit to dangers and problems too numerous to list.

Thank you for your immediate attention. Please assist by notifying others of this important recall notice.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

While the above might give us a momentary smile or chuckle, allow this anecdote to give you a momentary pause.

1. Are there recalls in your life that you can update?
2. Can you identify areas of self-improvement?
3. But, beware. This anecdote suggests you call a repair number to fix all the deficiencies. Be sure to know everyone must do their own inventory and improvement, and not leave it to others.

# THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

The purpose of life is not to be happy at all.

It is to be useful, to be honorable.

It is to be compassionate.

It is to matter, to have it make some difference that you lived.

-Leo Rosten

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Does your life have a purpose?
2. Can you think about times where you were useful?
3. Honorable?
4. Compassionate?
5. Will you make a difference in someone's life?
6. How will this coming year be different?

# WHAT WILL YOU START TODAY?

Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same numbers of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Louis Pasteur, Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson and Albert Einstein.

- H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How do you make your time count?
2. How do you measure your days?



# THE ONES WE LOVE ARE ESSENTIAL TO LIFE

Some learn earlier than others that only the ones we love are essential to life. We simply become who we are through the ones we have loved and love.

It is the warmth of loving and being loved which defines and becomes us forever.

–Eleanor Dashevsky was a beloved mother, grandmother and poet.

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Bubby is a super hero and her super hero powers are her hugs and kisses.

–The editor's 3-year old grandson



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who are you?
2. Are you the person you aspire to be?
3. What will you be remembered for?
4. What are your personal priorities?
5. What are your superpowers?

# DO NOT NEGLECT YOUR DUTY

He [Rabbi Tarfon] used to say: It is not your duty to finish the work,  
but neither are you at liberty to neglect it.

Pirkei Avot 2:16

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Never say, I will not start the task because I cannot finish it. What will you start today?
2. What can do to hold yourself accountable

# MATH & BLESSINGS

The hardest arithmetic to master is that which enables us to count our blessings.

-Eric Hoffer

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Count your blessings. Point to a new blessing every day.  
Use this season to launch this kavana (intention).

# REFLECTING ON DEATH

When someone we love passes away, remember the blessing.

If we could go back, we would choose to love all over again,  
even knowing it cannot last forever.

-David Wolpe is the Max Webb Senior Rabbi at Sinai Temple in Los Angeles, California

Death ends a life, not a relationship.

Lost love is still love.

It takes a different form, that's all. You can't see their smile or bring them food or tousle their hair or move them around a dance floor.

But when those senses weaken, another heightens.

Memory. Memory becomes your partner.

You nurture it. You hold it. You dance with it.

-Mitch Albom



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. On Yom Kippur, Judaism gifts us Yizkor (Yizkor is also said on the shalom regalim: Sukkot, Pesach and Shavuot), the prayer remembering people who are no longer with us. Discuss why a memorial service is included on these holidays.
2. Imagine our life without those loved ones. How did they impact us? How do they continue to impact us?
3. In their memory, what attributes and characteristics can we nourish in us and thereby keep their memory alive in all of us?

# DIP THE APPLE IN HONEY

Eating apples and honey on Rosh Hashannah  
is a ritual to bring a sweet new year.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What additional rituals could reflect your hopes for the new year? For example, celery for health or olives for peace.
2. Brainstorm your favorite foods to highlight your commitment to social justice.
3. What rituals will you add this year?

# MATH & BLESSINGS

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## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

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# ACTIVITIES

## Honor Your Elders

Before Rosh Hashana begins, or between Rosh Hashannah and Yom Kippur, encourage children to think about who they love, care about and bring meaning to their life. Ask them to write or draw cards for grandparents, neighbors or senior citizens and discuss the mitzvah of Kibbud Zekanim (honor and respect for the elderly).

## An Attitude of Gratitude

There is a Jewish value of Hakarat HaTov or gratitude. This concept teaches us to see the good in the world and to be grateful for what we have. We learn about how to be more thankful by seeing the good around us. Let's learn how to turn disappointment into gratitude by trying to see the good and be thankful for what we have, rather than wish for what we don't have.

### Discuss and Do:

1. Encourage participants to look around and create a list of gratitude (Hakarot Hatov) despite the different life we live.
2. Five sense of Hakarat Hatov: Gratitude
  - i) Draw a stem
  - ii) Draw a flower with petals
  - iii) As you draw each petal, reflect on something you are grateful for. Feel free to label each petal. Discuss with a grownup.
  - iv) Repeat for each of the Asseret Yemei Teshuva (the first 10 days of Tishrei beginning with Rosh Hoshana and ending in Yom Kippur)
3. The human trait of Hakarat HaTov, literally "noticing the good," but often translated as gratitude, is a perfect character trait to find within us and to continue to cultivate more of, especially during Asseret Yemei Teshuva. How can you do that, starting today?
4. In developing our gratitude, it is helpful to be "grateful for the partial." So often we have a fine day until X, or Y, or Z happens and then suddenly we forget all the perfectly fine things that happened.  
Hakarat HaTov, noticing the good, reminds us to accept the good as genuinely good, and not let the negative in our life so easily overshadow the positive. As it turns out, our brains are wired to notice unpleasant threatening stimulus, but we can also notice the good.
5. Being "grateful for the partial" means noticing that this person, thing, or activity is somehow part of your life. Where do you feel this gratitude? Maybe a warmth in your chest? Perhaps a smile comes across your face. As it turns out, gratitude has a feeling.

# THE WORLD IS NOT WHAT IT SEEMS

Rabbi ben Zoma said, "Who is wise? The one who learns from everyone!

Who is mighty? The one who rules over themselves!

Who is rich? The one who is happy with what they've got!

Who is honored? The one who shows honor to others!"

-Pirke Avot 4:1

Ben Zoma's advice reinforces the idea that this world is NOT as it seems. Sometimes the world seems like a confusing messy place. Sometimes the world seems like it makes no sense. Sometimes it seems as if the world is filled with pain, or sadness, or ugliness.

But, as ben Zoma hints, this is only a matter of perception. If we choose to approach life and the world differently, it can be what we want it to be. The world can be what we make it to be. If we wish to learn and grow wiser, we can.



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

If we want to be mighty, we already are; we need only exercise the power that is already at hand. Wealth? That comes in recognizing the difference between needs and wants. And honor? We get what we give. So much of life comes down to the choices that we make, and the way in which we choose to measure success and failure. How are you mighty? Brave? Rich?

# IT WOULD HAVE BEEN ENOUGH

In the Pesach Haggadah we are reminded of the word Dayenu, “it would have been enough.” This song is based on a Psalm that reminds the Jewish People: If God had only taken us out of slavery it would have been enough. If God only gave us the Torah, that would have been enough.

But there was more. We were given the Land of Israel, the Shabbat, the Holy Temple, holidays to celebrate, food to eat, drink to quench our thirst. Any one thing would have been enough of a gift, but in fact we have so much!



## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Do not limit the Dayenu conversation to Pesach. Have it now and every day.
2. Have a Dayenu conversation with your child (ex. It would have been enough if we had fruit for dessert, but we have ice cream; it would have been enough if we had \_\_\_\_\_, but we have \_\_\_\_\_) .

# WEAR YOUR GLASSES WHEN YOU EAT STRAWBERRIES

There is a story of a Spanish sea captain who would put on his reading glasses every time he ate strawberries.

"Why do you do that," his crew finally asked.

The captain replied, "I love strawberries. The difficult things in life always seem bigger than they really are, so I wanted the good things to appear bigger too."

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What does this mean?
2. Do we have "strawberries" in our lives?
3. How do we make the little things in our lives count?
4. So how can we practice Hakarat HaTov each day? Name a few ways we can work towards having gratitude for even the smallest thing each day. For the ordinary things we too often take for granted?

# TAKE TIME DAILY

One time each day, take some time to consider something nice, good, or kind.

It could be a loved one, an amazing food, or a great song on the radio. It might be chocolate.

Make the ordinary extraordinary.

## DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Make or discuss a "Gratitude List."

1. Write down 10 people, activities or things that make your life better.
2. Each time you sit to write your list, be sure not to repeat previous items.
3. If it is possible, reach out to another person to share your gratitude – especially if they are involved or responsible for what you are grateful for.
4. Do you know what it means to be grateful?
5. What are things for which you are grateful?
6. When was a time you remember where something didn't work out as you expected but you had a good time anyway?