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Please wear a mask and maintain social distancing at all times

**Parashat Nitzavim
Friday 3rd September, 26th Elul 5781**

**Mincha, Shir HaShirim, Kabalat Shabbat &
Arbith**

18:30

Lighting Kabalat Shabbat

19:24

**Parashat Nitzavim
Saturday 4th September, 27th Elul 5781**

Shabbath Shahrit

08:30

Kira'at Shema

09:33

Baal Koreh (page 1086)

Yacov Oved / Aharon Joshua

Haftara (page 1202)

Nissim Tricot

Mincha

19:30

Arbith Motze Shabbat

20:32

Weekdays

Shachrit

**Weekdays 06:30 (Sundays 07:30)
Via Zoom:
Zoom Meeting ID: 757 501 7824**

Mincha & Arbith

18:30

**Hot Kiddush & Seudah Shlishit has been sponsored by Family Hannuna
on the occasion of Daniel Hannuna's Barmitzah Parsha.**

**Mazal tov to Mr & Mrs Ben Shemie on the new arrival of their baby boy, Gabriel Henry Shemie.
We extend our Mazal Tov to their grandparents, Iris & Sami Shemie.**

Mazal tov to Dougy our security guard on his upcoming wedding anniversary.

Selichoth: Monday – Friday 5:30am, Sunday 6:30am followed by Shachrit

**The timings for the High Holy Days are attached in this email. We would like to give a special
thanks to Mr David Gigi for helping in putting these timings together.**

**Please approach our Gubbay Adel Darwish or Moshe Moses to arrange a
Kiddush or Seuda Shelishit as going forward it will only be by pre arrangement.**

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Parshat Nitzavim

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Insights into life, personal growth & Torah

27 Elul, 5781

The Fax of Life

ת"וב

September 4, 2021

GOOD MORNING! This upcoming Monday night, September 7th, begins the holiday of Rosh Hashanah. The literal translation of *Rosh Hashanah* is "head of the year" – otherwise known as the Jewish New Year. There are many aspects to this holiday, but perhaps the overarching theme is that Rosh Hashanah is a day of judgement, and in fact, another name for this holiday is *Yom Hadin* – Judgement Day.

It is rather curious that "Judgement Day" should be associated with a holiday. I once had to testify at a trial for a close friend of mine (who in my view was wrongfully charged). The trial dragged on for weeks and I attended many of those sessions. There wasn't a moment while in that federal courtroom when I didn't feel a sense of dread and foreboding. My heart was in my mouth every time I entered the courtroom.

This same feeling of fear and apprehension was what I felt when I experienced Rosh Hashanah at rabbinical schools in both the United States and in Israel. The prayer service during the day was close to eight hours long and had a distinct "heaviness" to it. It was emotionally draining and psychologically taxing.

This attitude towards Rosh Hashanah can be traced to a passage from the Talmud (*Rosh Hashanah* 16b); Rabbi Kruspedai said in the name of Rabbi Yochanan, "On Rosh Hashanah three books are opened before the Holy One, Blessed be He: One book of wholly wicked people, and one book of wholly righteous people, and one book of middling people, whose good and bad deeds are equally balanced.

"**Wholly** righteous people are immediately written and sealed for life; wholly wicked people are immediately written and sealed for death; and middling people are left with their judgment suspended from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur, their fate remaining undecided."

Based on this one might easily conclude that on Rosh Hashanah we are quite literally praying for our lives. That would explain the feeling of dread and foreboding that is commonly felt on this very important day. However, if we take a closer look at this concept then we will see that it is simply not so.

If we are really honest with ourselves, we can easily see that whether or not a person goes to synagogue and prays their heart out on Rosh Hashanah has little to do with him or her meriting another year of life. There are no actuarial tables definitively proving that those who plead for their lives on Rosh Hashanah have longer life spans.

In addition, we all know many wicked people who are not immediately "sealed for death." So what does this passage in the Talmud mean?

Perhaps the most critical question we must ask ourselves is: What are we really trying to accomplish on this important day?

The primary mission that each and every person is supposed to achieve on Rosh Hashanah is to coronate the Almighty as our king whose dominion spans all of creation; hence our pledge of fealty to Him. This is the day when we proclaim God to be our King and that our lives revolve around fulfilling His will, for us and all of creation.

A consequence of placing ourselves in a theocentric world is that we are immediately granted life. Why? Because being connected to the Almighty means a connection to the infinite and everlasting life. By contrast, if we unfortunately choose to live in an egocentric world, one where everything revolves around ourselves instead of God, we are choosing a finite reality, which means we are inexorably headed towards death and obliteration.

There is, in fact, a judgement that is made on Rosh Hashanah – the Almighty examines our deeds from the prior year and uses that as a basis for concluding whether we live in a theocentric world or in an egocentric world. Our goal on Rosh Hashanah is to reaffirm our allegiance to the Almighty and His goal for the world; a world unified under His sovereignty. This is what the judgement of Rosh Hashanah is all about.

The Talmud also makes a remarkable statement about how the Almighty, in His infinite kindness, actually grants people the benefit of the doubt – if they are so deserving. What makes a person deserving of this kindness?

With righteousness you shall judge your fellow man (Leviticus 19:15).

The famous biblical commentator known as Rashi (ad loc) explains that this verse is referring to the obligation that we are required to give a person the benefit of the doubt.

In other words, upon seeing that the nature of someone's actions are questionable, we are required to give him the benefit of the doubt. This can take different forms; you may presume that you do not know the entirety of the situation or that the person only had positive intentions for his actions.

One of the sources for this is found in the ancient book Jewish ethics known as *Pirkei Avos* – *Ethics of our Fathers*, which states that we must judge everyone to the side of merit (1:6). The Talmud (*Shabbos* 127b) takes this

one step further and states, “anyone that judges his friend to the side of merit will be judged (by heaven) to the side of merit.” Rashi in his commentary on *Pirkei Avos* likewise says that the Almighty judges favorably those who give others the benefit of the doubt.

This principle that God gives us the benefit of the doubt if we accord the same to others is difficult to understand. After all, when we give others the benefit of the doubt it is because we do not actually know what the person’s intentions were nor do we know the entirety of the situation.

On the other hand, the Almighty is omniscient and absolutely knows everything that everyone does and why they do it. How are we to understand that God gives someone the benefit of the doubt when in truth He knows exactly what a person’s intentions were and exactly what happened?

I am reminded of the time many years ago when a friend was telling me about an awful date he had gone on the previous evening. He started by complaining, “The minute I saw her I just KNEW she would be judgmental.” I stared at him, somewhat astonished by his breathtaking cognitive dissonance.

In truth, we all do this. When meeting someone new we open up a case file as to their worthiness of our friendship. We wait until this new acquaintance justifies a relationship with us. We hardly ever give someone the benefit of the doubt and extend ourselves until we are sure that they “deserve” our friendship.

But herein also lies a remarkable exception to Hashem’s system of justice, a system in which we must justify our existence. When a person judges others to the side of merit – when he gives other people the benefit of the doubt without making them justify their actions to him – the Almighty returns the favor.

God judging someone to the side of merit isn’t referring to a specific act; of course He knows what the person intended and what he did. But if we are willing to suspend our judgement of others then God does the same for us.

This is also the corollary to one of the most important principles in the Bible: “You must love your neighbor as you love yourself.” Just as you treated your neighbor the Almighty treats you. He doesn’t make you justify yourself to Him either, but rather judges you to the side of merit and considers you worthy of another year of life.

This explains why Rosh Hashanah is in fact a holiday. The opportunity for mortals to earn an eternal life, and cheat death, is in fact a great kindness from the Almighty. Yes, it is a somber day, a day when we must focus on the coronation of our King, but it is also an opportunity to transcend our physical reality and that is truly something worth celebrating.


May we, along with the entire world, merit a sweet New Year filled with good health, prosperity, and an uplifting relationship with the Almighty that will truly bestow upon us the ultimate infinite existence. *Shana Tova* to you and yours!

TORAH PORTION: Nitzavim, Deuteronomy 29:9 - 30:20


On the day of Moshe’s death he assembles the whole Jewish people and creates a Covenant confirming the Jewish people as the Almighty’s Chosen People for all future generations. Moshe makes clear the consequences of rejecting God and His Torah as well as the possibility of repentance. He reiterates that Torah is readily available to everyone. He warns us against idolatry (thinking anything other than God has power) and assures us that eventually the Jewish people will do *teshuva* (repent) and will be redeemed and brought back to the land of Israel — and those who hate the Jewish people and pursue us will get their just recompense.

Nitzavim concludes with perhaps the clearest and most powerful statement in the Torah about the purpose of life and the existence of freewill: “I have set before you this day life and good, death and evil [...] the blessing and the curse. Therefore, choose life that you may live, you and your descendants.” (Now that’s a real Quote of the Week!)

SHABBAT LIGHTING: *Jerusalem 6:25* Miami 7:19 Cape Town 6:11 Guatemala 5:54 Hong Kong 6:21 Honolulu 6:27

 Jo’Burg 5:38 LA 6:57 London 7:26 Melbourne 5:42 Mexico 7:31 Moscow 7:00 New York 7:06 Singapore 6:49 Toronto 7:31

9/6 - ROSH HASHANAH: *Jerusalem 6:21* Miami 7:16 Cape Town 6:13 Guatemala 5:51 Hong Kong 6:18 Honolulu 6:24

 Jo’Burg 5:39 LA 6:53 London 7:20 Melbourne 5:44 Mexico 7:28 Moscow 6:52 New York 7:01 Singapore 6:48 Toronto 7:25

“QUOTE OF THE WEEK”: The great risk of living is that we might not survive it. — J. Aleksandr Wootton

Dedicated with Deep Appreciation to
Susan and Stanley Rosenblatt



Shabbat Shalom,

Yitzchak Zweig

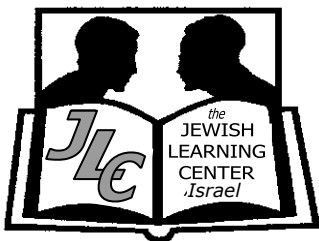
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JLC Weekly Israel

בס"ד

we wish all our readers a
ketiva v'cholita tova

לע"נ מאיר זרח בן יהודה ז"ל

No.817

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27th Elul 5779/4th September 2021

Going Up To The Heavens

"For this commandment that I command you today is not hidden from you and is not distant. It's not in the heavens, [for you] to say, 'Who can ascend to the heavens for us and take it for us and let us hear it, so that we can perform it?' Nor is it across the sea, [for you] to say, 'Who can cross to the other side of the sea for us and take it for us, and let us hear it, so that we can perform it?' Rather, the matter is very near to you, in your mouth and in your heart, to perform it." (Devarim 30:11-14)

After a lengthy admonition on the consequences of not following the Torah, Moshe assures the people that although learning and keeping Torah might seem difficult it is actually easily attainable.

Rashi explains that the verses quoted above are referring to the whole Torah, rather than to any specific mitzva.

On the words, "It's not in the heavens... Nor is it across the sea," the Gemara (Eruvin 55a) observes that if it was indeed in the heavens or across the sea, then we would somehow have to go there to learn it. The following story about the righteous Rav Zalman of Volozhin, demonstrates the lesson we should take from this Gemara:

On one occasion, Rav Zalman was learning in a small village. Across the river was the great town of Vilna. In

Parashat
Nitzavim

18:21	Beit Shemesh	19:37
19:28	London	20:29
19:35	Manchester	20:45

לע"נ אהרון בן שרה ז"ל

The Guiding Light
Rabbi
Yehonasan Gefen
PRACTICAL TORAH
PERSPECTIVES FOR LIFE

the middle of the night, Rav Zalman felt a great desire to study a particular sefer (book) that was in the main beit midrash (study hall) in Vilna. He didn't hesitate for a moment; he went out in the middle of the night and crossed the river, in freezing weather, to find the book he desired.

Onlookers were shocked at how he could go to such extremes in such cold weather to get a book. He explained with these verses, that the Torah is not in the heavens and not across the sea. He then quoted the aforementioned Gemara, that if the Torah was in the heavens or across the sea, one would have to go there to study it. The relatively short journey across the river to Vilna was much nearer than going up to the heavens or across the sea. He thus felt he had to make the effort required to attain the sefer that he needed for his Torah learning.

We learn from Rav Zalman's actions that whilst Hashem does not make impossible demands on us with regard to learning Torah, He does expect us to make considerable effort to learn to the best of our abilities.

From another Gemara (Yoma 35b) we further learn that any obstacles blocking our ability to learn Torah are not insurmountable. The Gemara says that when a man comes to the next world he will be asked about his Torah learning. The Gemara anticipates a number of excuses that one may use to

justify his failure to learn. He may claim that he was too poor, and his poverty made him have to spend all his time

(continued on other side)

Strategic Teshuva

CREATIVE WAYS TO MAKE YOURSELF DO 'THE RIGHT THING'

by Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb

We all have some bad midot (character traits) and some bad habits. When we consider doing teshuva (repentance) for them, we are apt to think as follows: "I'm really out of control. Why do I do those terrible things? I should be stronger! How can I increase my self-control so that I can overcome those temptations, desires?"

That sort of thinking can be useful. But it's not the only helpful approach. Another attack is this: "When do I fail like this? What is there in the environment? What else has happened that day? Under which specific conditions do I fail? And what can I do to change those conditions?" The technique of changing the circumstances in which we generally fail is what I call 'Strategic Teshuva.'

Midot and habits generally have 'triggers.' For example, certain people provoke us into an angry, aggressive response. Other people may not pose a problem. Or it might be

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TO CELEBRATE THE BIRTHDAY
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ANAELLE SOROH

ROSH HASHANA 5782

	CANDLE - LIGHTING		YOM TOV ENDS
	1 ST NIGHT	2 ND NIGHT	
Beit Shemesh	18:18	19:33	19:32
London	19:21	20:22	20:19
Manchester	19:28	20:38	20:35

specific activities, such as driving in heavy traffic ('road-rage'), dealing with fighting children, waiting in line at the bus terminal, filling out government forms, and so on.

The same is true for other temptations. Laziness comes naturally when surrounded by computer games, bad literature, inviting beaches and – most important – other lazy

לע"נ יהודה בן אברהם ז"ל
The late Dr. Julius Libman, Manchester
Dedicated in honor of his yahrtzeit,
27th Elul, by the Libman family

people. (A boy from Los Angeles told me it took him six years to get his bachelor's degree because certain courses interfered with his beach schedule!) Illicit pleasures attract most strongly when they are readily available and when others in the neighborhood indulge.

Our first responsibility is for our actions. When the 'triggers' occur, it's extremely difficult to stop the habits and midot from acting. One solution is to try to avoid these triggers – change the environment; move your residence, if you can. If you can't, then spend as much time as you can in another environment which will provide respite from the temptation. (The most effective positive environment is doing mitzvot with other people: learn in a beit midrash, visit the hospital with others, plan a chessed (kindness) project with others, teach Torah in a school, and so on.)

Certain activities cause tensions which trigger anger. If you can't avoid them, alternate them with relaxing activities.

A second solution is to add something to the environment which will make it easier to do the right thing. If you have trouble

(continued on other side)

getting up early for the minyan, make a study partner for ten minutes before the service starts. Then, when the alarm rings and you reach over to push the snooze button, you'll think: "But what if my study partner comes and I'm not there? How embarrassing!" - and you'll get up!

In many cases you can make a contract with yourself: "If I succeed in overcoming a temptation (enough times) then I'll allow myself something I very much enjoy." This is what psychologists call a 'behavior contract.' Thus I have a personal incentive to do the right thing. For example: "If I get through the meeting without getting angry, I'll allow myself to buy that picture/go to that restaurant/treat myself to new clothes," and so on. The key is to control the environment by avoiding some things and creatively adding others, so that it will be easier to do the right thing.

Now, some people think this can't be right - it's just running away from the problems, not solving them! What they're asking is this: "I am not able to overcome those temptations - how do we solve that? Avoid them? Add incentives?" There are two answers. First, who says the only problem is to overcome the desire? On the contrary: our first responsibility is for our actions. Suppose someone cannot control a desire to steal from Macy's. If he shops only in Bloomingdale's (environment change), or he rewards himself for not stealing from Macy's ('behavior contract'), true, he still hasn't overcome the desire - but at least he is not stealing!

continued

Second, we can often only overcome the desire if we have some respite from the wrong actions. As long as the bad habits and midot are active, it's very difficult to gain control. If so, avoiding the triggers and adding pay-offs may be the only way to gain control. Yes, the ultimate goal is to become immune to the temptations, but this may require two stages: first, avoiding the triggers and adding pay-offs; and second, developing the psychological strength to resist. Trying to do without the first stage may make the second stage impossible.

Think of addictions; you can't simply tell an addict: "Stop using that stuff!" He can't stop, and all the therapy in the world won't help while he is still on the drug. But if he enters a sanitarium where the drug's not available, then therapy can help him become immune to the temptation to use drugs.

'Strategic teshuva' may thus be the necessary first step to complete teshuva. But it's more than that: If that's the only thing you can manage at the moment, then 'strategic teshuva' is enough to gain kappara (atonement). Hashem doesn't ask more of us than we can do. If, for now, you avoid the triggers and add incentives in order to stop falling into the old bad habits, and only later start to work on becoming immune, then in the meantime you'll have kappara for all the past mistakes - even before you achieve immunity. Now, isn't that worth it?

Shana Tova uMetuka!

IMPACT!

Short Stories with an Immediate Message
Rabbi Dovid Kaplan

Rabbi Cohen **Speech**

was a rebbe in a modern American yeshiva. He used to give his boys mussar (ethics/morals) talks on a regular basis, but somehow it seemed that his messages were just not getting through.

One year, just after *bein hazemanim* (summer vacation), Danny Stein walked up to him.

"Hi, Rebbe. Remember that lesson you gave us about how a person is consumed by worms after he dies?"

"Uh, yeah, that was part of the lesson."

"I want to tell you, you can't imagine how scared we were, and how long we spent talking about that idea. That lesson got me through *bein hazemanim* without getting into too much trouble."

❖ **COMMENT:** Rabbi Cohen's words had a much bigger impact than he'd imagined. Danny Stein's words had a big impact on Rabbi Cohen, for he became re-energized and revitalized in his position in the yeshiva, knowing he could actually make a difference. Words are very powerful.

trying to earn a livelihood. Alternatively, he may argue that he was too rich, and too distracted

Going Up To The Heavens

continued

by his businesses to learn. Moreover, the wealthy may claim that since their money helps to support Torah, they themselves are exempt from learning Torah. Thirdly, one may contend that he was too beautiful to be able to avoid the *yetzer hara* (evil/negative inclination) of immorality. The Gemara then provides examples of people who faced the most difficult tests in all these areas and still managed to overcome them to succeed in learning and observing the Torah:

Hillel was extremely poor; he couldn't even afford to pay the entrance fee to the *beit midrash*, yet he went to extreme ends to try to learn. Rabbi Elazar was extremely rich and faced tremendous pressures to focus on his business dealings, but he preferred to focus on his learning. Yosef was exceptionally beautiful and faced great tests in immorality, yet he withstood the temptation. This Gemara teaches us that no-one can claim that it was completely impossible for him to learn or observe Torah because of his circumstances. Of course, there are challenges that must be overcome, but with the requisite effort, everyone can learn and observe the Torah.

What's the key factor which determines whether one can overcome the many obstacles preventing him from learning Torah? It seems this can be answered with Rav Yisrael Salanter's response to a question he was asked by a businessman who told him that he was so busy, he only had a very short amount of time available each day to learn; he asked what he should learn in that short time. Rav Yisrael answered that he should learn mussar (Torah study aimed at self-growth and developing one's relationship

with Hashem). Once he does that, he would soon realize that he could find considerably more

time to learn! Rav Yisrael was communicating to him the reason why he couldn't find more time to learn: learning did not have a high enough priority in his life. By learning mussar he would develop a greater appreciation of the importance of learning Torah to his life and, as a result, he would make more time.

We learn from here that if one appreciates the true value of Torah learning, then he will place it far higher up in his list of priorities. And as a result, he will find it far easier to succeed in overcoming all the barriers and distractions that prevent him from learning.

Of course, many people already know and understand that Torah learning is very important to one's life, but it can still remain very difficult for them to internalize this and apply it to their own lives. Rav Noach Weinberg gives a very insightful suggestion in this area: when a person is very tired, it's difficult for him to motivate himself to do anything that involves much effort or thought, including learning Torah. Similarly, if he were very busy, he would find it very difficult to find any time to learn. However, if one were to offer such a person a large sum of money to learn Torah for an extra half hour, then he would suddenly find the time and the energy! This teaches us that when we consider something to be valuable enough, we will conjure up the time and energy to do it - despite the difficulty.

The Sages teach us that one moment of learning Torah is infinitely rewarded, more than any other mitzva. Needless to say, it is of infinitely more value than all the money in the world. Accordingly, when one is busy or tired, if he would think of the immense reward that he could accrue by taking a few minutes to learn Torah, then he'd surely be able to overcome the challenges and do so.

As the High Holy Days approach, it is essential to assess our life priorities, and ask ourselves if we are really devoting as much time to learning Torah as possible. The Sages' assertion that, if necessary, one would have to cross the sea, and even go up to the heavens, to learn Torah, teaches us that we certainly must try to overcome all the smaller challenges that we face.

Wishing you all a happy and meaningful New Year!

D'var Torah:

Rosh Hashana

Office of The
CHIEF RABBI

What Creation can teach us about New Year's Resolutions



Video transcript: As we approach Rosh Hashana, let us remember how Hashem created the world.

In Parshat Nitzavim the Torah tells us (Devarim 30:14), "Ki karov eleicha hadavar me'od beficha uvilvavecha la'asoto." - "The word of Hashem is very close to you. It is in your mouth and your heart, to carry it out."

In the Gemara, Masechet Eruvin 54a, Rabbi Yitchak asked, "Eimatai karov eleicha," - "When is the word of Hashem very close to you?"

The answer that he gives is, "B'zman shebeficha uvilvavcha lasoto," - "At a time when it is in your mouth and in your heart," that is to say, you are thinking about the carrying out of the precepts.

Saying and thinking therefore are crucially important as conditions, to pave the way for the carrying out of the mitzvot of Hashem. I would like to suggest that here, Hashem is asking us to emulate the way in which He created the world.

You see, in Pirkei Avot, the Ethics of the Fathers, we are taught, "B'asarah maamarot nivra haolam," - "With ten sayings the word was created." On ten separate occasions Hashem made a declaration: "Let there be light," "Let us make man," and so on. So before doing anything, Hashem made a statement.

In addition, He engaged in thought. The pinnacle of the whole process of creation was

Shabbat. In Lecha Dodi, which we sing on Friday night, we say: "Sof maaseh bemachashva techila," - "Hashem had the conclusion of creation (Shabbat) in mind, right from the very beginning. So we see that Hashem engaged both in speech and in thought before he created this world. Similarly, before we do anything that is special or momentous, we should talk about what we're going to do. We should make verbal resolutions and in addition we should engage in careful forethought. Bearing in mind what we want the conclusion to be, "Sof maaseh bemachashva techila" is a wonderful way to build a constructive strategy.

For example, when going into a meeting, I must plan in advance what I would like the conclusion of the meeting to be, and as a result, I will be able to engage in conversation leading to that hoped for conclusion.

We should create visions for the future, build strategies and plan all our actions accordingly. And that certainly is how we need to approach the new year as we now move towards Rosh Hashanah. Like HaKadosh Baruch Hu at the time of Creation, let's make our resolutions for the new year. In addition, let's think about where we would like to be in a year's time and what we want to have achieved and therefore plan all our actions accordingly. Beficha uvilvavcha laasoto: let's never forget that in addition to what we say and what we think, 'laasoto' - it's ultimately the action that will count most of all.

With our resolutions and with our positive and constructive planning may we indeed lead the way towards a new year of accomplishment, good health, happiness and peace.

Shana tova to you all.

[To watch the video, click here.](#)

THE KEHILLA WISHES חיים ארוכים "LONG LIFE"
TO THE FOLLOWING WHO HAVE Yahrzeit

Yartzite

This month we are reminding the list of names below of the anniversary of the passing away of their loved ones.

You will need to say Kaddish which starts the Friday before the date below.

Date	Name of Member
09 Tishri	Mr Naim Shmie
10 Tishri	Mr Charles Morris
16 Tishri	Mr M. Raymond
11 Tishri	Mr Nissan Nissan
11 Tishri	Mr Freddy Nissan
11 Tishri	Mr Salman Nissan
11 Tishri	Mrs Farah Sheldon
19 Tishri	Mr Solomon Judah
20 Tishri	Mr Simon Jacob
26 Tishri	Mr Ezkiel L. Ezekiel
27 Tishri	Mr Frederick Spitz
27 Tishri	Mr Simon Jacob
29 Tishri	Mr Sadka Blanche

