



## Erev Rosh Hashanah 5785, Oct. 4, 2024 Kavanah

By Arlene Remz

In the Hadar Yomim Noraim reader, Rabbi Shai Held wrote a beautiful introduction entitled “A Cord of Hope.”

Held refers to the Yom Noraim as “a time of hope, predicated upon the possibility of transformation and renewal”

Yet, as Held writes, “there are times when such transformative hope seems almost totally inaccessible”

I am sure that I am not alone in feeling a more intense level of anguish and hopelessness over the past year than any other time I can remember. Never before have I been so glued to the news, refreshing my TOI news feed continuously, an ever-present pit in my stomach and pain in my heart; worrying about the hostages, the soldiers, the existential future existence of Israel, and my own children and grandchildren in TA. And beyond Israel, I have deep fears and profound sadness about situations in the world, in our country, and in our local community. And as a minyan community, we have experienced so many losses—our shiva committee has worked tirelessly this year. And personally, I experienced a tremendous loss as one of my dearest friends, Cheri Fox z'l who I said Misheberach for every Shabbat for so many years, lost her long struggle with cancer.

In the Hadar booklet, Shei Held shares a teaching of R. Joseph Solovitchik, on a midrash that imagines G-d creating and destroying multiple worlds before creating the one we now inhabit. Solovitchik says “As G-d creates and recreates....so too should human beings be ready to rebuild and reconstruct, even as previous structures collapse. We are “bidden to start over again with faith as resourcefulness, as G-d did.

So I wonder:

- How do we move forward after seemingly insurmountable tragedy and despair
- How do we reclaim happiness after deep personal and communal loss
- How do we rebuild a life of hope out of the depths of hopelessness

Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, z'l recorded a series of videos in advance of RH 2011. In his message focusing on hope, Sacks said

“G-d has given us the one gift that redeems life from tragedy, the gift of freedom.

Sacks continues: “We can choose. We can change. We can act differently next time. We can make sure the future is not an endless replay of the past....Out of faith came the one word with the power to redeem life from tragedy. The word tikvah—hope”

Jews lost many things in the course of history” their land, their home, their city Jerusalem, their holy of holies, the Temple, sometimes they lost their lives. But never did they lose their hope. Jews kept hope alive, and hope kept the Jewish people alive.

Sacks continues “faith is the ability to know the worst and yet remain committed to the best, to know how cruel life can be and yet never ever to despair. Faith is the courage to hope.”

As we are called to recite the Barchu, and as we join together in prayer tomorrow, and recite “Unetaneh Tokef”, and listen to the shofar, let us reflect on the year, and the years, that have passed.

And as we look forward to the year, and the years, ahead, may we have the faith, the courage, and the hope to build, and to rebuild, lives filled with Tikvah—with hope, for our family, for our community, for Israel, and for the world.