

Drip Drop Judaism

Israel's Reversal of the Global Water Crisis Can Reverse the Global Jewish Crisis

Chabad of Port Washington

Last Shabbat, on the 25th day of Elul, world Jewry marked the first yahrzeit of Shimon Peres.

In August 1942, Shimon Peres's grandfather Rabbi Zvi Meltzer was marched by the Nazis along with more than 2,000 Jews into their town's wooden synagogue, where they were burned alive.

Seventy-four years later, the leaders of more than 70 countries – representing well over half of humanity – came to Jerusalem for Peres's funeral. Kings, princes, presidents and prime ministers dropped everything to pay respects for a little Polish Jew.

Put in historical perspective, that is nothing short of a miracle.

Peres often told the story that when he went to the train station in 1934 with the rest of his family to move to Palestine, his grandfather—a deeply observant and learned Jew, who would study Talmud with young Shimon on a daily basis—hugged him and said to him in Yiddish 5 words:

מיין קינד, בלייב א איד!

“My child, remain a Jew.”

“As the train left,” Peres recalled years later, “I took one last look at my grandfather. This would be the last time I saw him.

His last words to me and the hug he gave me, accompany me every moment of my life.”

At Peres' funeral, his son Chemi mentioned his great grandfather's parting words in his eulogy to his father and he said:

“You never forgot to be a Jew. And I promise you from here, that neither will I.”

And Peres was a Jew (even if I might strongly disagree with some of his decisions.)

He was a Jew who had **regular Shabbat dinners** with his family, who recited **Kiddush every single Shabbat**, who placed in his will the stipulation that **the one song he wanted sung at his funeral was Avinu Malkeinu** – one of the central prayers of the Yom Kippur and Rosh Hashana liturgy.

This is the call of the Shofar—

The timeless, simply cry to each of us, from our Father in Heaven, from our parents and grandparents, from our deepest depths within:

מיין קינד, בלייב א איד!

“My child, remain a Jew.”

Every one of you who is here today responded to that call.

The Supreme Court

And let me tell you something. Last year, even the Supreme Court of the United States of America understood this calling.

You see, **federal law requires the American Supreme Court to open** the new session—after the long summer break—on the **first Monday in October**.

But last year, the first Monday in October, October 3, was Rosh Hashanah.

Three of the judges sitting on the Supreme Court, **Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Stephen Breyer and Elena Kagan**, who are all Jewish, were not present on the opening day of the US Supreme Court.

So what happened? The opening session lasted only about five minutes and consisted largely of admitting new attorneys to the Supreme Court bar. Because it was Rosh Hashana, they would not hear arguments in cases until Tuesday.

But how did this happen? How did The Supreme Court yield to Rosh Hashanah?! After all, if any institution is going to follow American law, it would be the US

Supreme Court. If the law dictates that the court opens on the first Monday of October Monday, how did the court surrender to RH?

So let me tell you the remarkable story.

Back in 2003 Yom Kippur fell out on the first Monday of October.

So the two Jewish judges, Justice Stephen Breyer and Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg went to the **Chief Justice Rehnquist**, and requested that we delay the opening in deference to Yom Kippur.

The Chief Justice was not persuaded. He said 'Why should we delay? **We always hold our Friday conferences on Friday, even if it is Good Friday!**' Why should YK be given more prominence than Good Friday? So Ginsburg replied to him 'So move that conference to Thursday; that would be fine for us.' The Chief was still not persuaded.

So Ruth Ginsburg said to him:

"Lawyers wait their entire career to appear before the Supreme Court. For many of them, it is a once in a lifetime chance to argue in the Supreme Court. What if a Jewish lawyer's chance to appear in court was on this Yom Kippur? We should not make that lawyer choose between observing his or her faith and appearing before the Court!"

That persuaded the Chief Justice and the Supreme Court changed the calendar. From that day it was decided that if RH or YK are on the first Monday of October, the court will open up for five minutes but no arguments would be heard so no lawyer should have to choose between his Judaism and his career!

Even the gentile Chief Justice understood that not a single Jewish lawyer trying to "make it" in America should have to neglect his Jewish heritage and faith. Every single Jew deserves the right to "remain a Jew" fully!

The Water Crisis

So the Shofar cries out to us and to our children today:

מיין קינד, בלייב א איד!

"My child, remain a Jew."

But here is the big question. How? How do we guarantee that we and our loved ones heed that call to remain Jewish in the 21st century?

The answer can be found from an expected source.

About 18 months ago a new book hit the shelves. “Let There Be Water” tells the story of how Israel had dealt with the Global Water Crisis. It chronicles the history of how a small country, with little access to water sources, has managed to revolutionize irrigation. And now dozens of countries are beginning to emulate Israel’s trailblazing path.

The story is remarkable—and it is about one determined Jew, by the name of **Simcha Blass. As a young water engineer**, Simcha was walking by a row of trees in the field of a Jew. He noticed one tree was taller than the others. Though it was planted at the same time as the other trees, it was growing into a much finer and taller tree than the others. While looking around he found there was a leak in a pipe that happened to be situated underground near the roots of this tree. He assumed that it was the leak that contributed to the unique success of this tree.

Some years later, as Israel faced a major water shortage, Simcha asked himself this question: Routinely, trees and orchards were being irrigated by irrigating the fields through water canals transferred through furrows and ditches, or by water sprinklers. But the problem was that a third or even half of the water went to waste, as they never made it to the roots of the tree, or just overwhelmed them with too much water at a time, damaging the tree. What if Israel could create tiny pipes that would be buried under the soil near the roots of each tree and deliver drops of water slowly and consistently to water the roots of the tree? Maybe the leak he observed back in the 30’s contained the secret to the Israeli water crisis?

Wow. I call this a Jewish way of thinking! Take a leak in a pipe and turn into a solution for a country’s crisis!

The idea at first sounded insane to the government of Israel. The first experiments found the pipes getting clogged and the trees died! He made ten different presentations to the government to try to encourage the State to invest in his idea, but each time they dismissed his ideas as ludicrous.

But the man did not give up. He finally got an investment company and they began experimenting with the drippers at the base of each individual tree and it caught on.

Sure enough, the trees watered in this manner grew bigger and stronger than the other irrigation methods. **It used 50 percent less water and produced incredibly more powerful, bigger, healthier, taller trees!**

As the years progressed, it revolutionized Israel's water system. The water used earlier for agriculture was cut in half!

The Lesson to Our Human Trees

Friends, this is not only a great story. It also contains a deep lesson for our own future.

Torah says: **"a human being is a tree of the field."**

Talmud: **Torah is compared to living fresh waters that give life to trees.**

We tend to flood ourselves with Judaism three days a year... and Passover time...

Too much water in one shot can just flood the tree, or end up in waste.

What we need are small pipes near the roots of each tree, delivering water steadily and slowly, day by day, week by week, month by month. That is far more effective.

I believe it is time for the entire Jewish world, and for our community, to emulate the new Israeli irrigation system.

Drops of Water on the Rock - Rabbi Akiva

And you know who was the first one to invent this idea? Not Simcha Blass. But a Jew who lived 2000 years ago. Rabbi Akiva, considered the greatest sage in Jewish history.

What is unique about his life story is that till the age of forty he did not even know how to read Hebrew. He did not know the Alphabet of the Jewish language.

Working as a shepherd for a wealthy Jew, his master's daughter Rachel took a liking to Akiva. She saw the sparkle in his eye and realized his potential for greatness and

leadership. She offered to marry him, even though that meant her parents would disown her, if he would go and study Torah.

He studies for years and became the greatest sage in all of Jewish history.

How did he do it? At first he became disheartened, thinking he'll never succeed. He's got so much to learn, it's too late...

The turning point came one day when he saw drops of water falling on a huge stone – drop by drop – and directly where the drops were falling there was a deep crevice in the stone. The shepherd was fascinated. He gazed at the drops and at the stone.

“What mighty power there is in a drop of water,” thought the shepherd. “Could my stony heart ever be softened up that way? Look what the little drops of water did to the rock. Maybe there's hope for me too. Let me begin to study the Torah, little by little, drop by drop.”

And this is how Akiva the shepherd became the great Rabbi Akiva, the greatest and wisest scholar and teacher of his day, who had 24 thousand pupils! He often told them that it was his wife Rachel, and a drop of water, that changed his life.

You see, the drops of water saved Rabbi Akiva.

The drops of water saved Israel from a water crisis.

And this very system can save our own global Jewish crisis today.

Stop the Flood

You see, we may be good at **“flooding our trees,”** our precious children, and ourselves, with the waters of Judaism.

Comes Bar Mitzvah or bat mitzvah, and we have our kids learning intensively for a year's time.

Joke: Rabbi, priest and minister all have a mice problem at their congregations. They get together to discuss what can be done. The priest, then the minister, complain that they've tried everything from exterminating to bombing to mouse

traps but nothing's worked, the mice keep coming back. Said the rabbi: Here's what I did. **I gathered all the mice in the sanctuary, I gave them a Bar Mitzvah, and I never saw them again...**

Joke: A rabbi once presented the Bar Mitzvah boy with an umbrella. The boy's father was perplexed. Why an umbrella, and not the more common rabbinic gift of a Torah book? Said the rabbi: **I thought I'd give him something that he might actually open...**

Comes High Holidays and we spend hours in shul with our families.

But what happens is, that many of our kids are bored. They find the high holidays tedious and the bar mitzvah lessons monotonous and burdensome.

Joke: After many long tedious hours at services on Yom Kippur, during the break, an 8 year old boy is walking in the synagogue lobby with his father. He notices a full wall of names and lights. What is this, he asked his dad. Says dad: **This is for all the people who died in the service. The boy: Which one? Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur?**

It's too much. They do not get the nutrients we are trying to impart to them.

Packing our Judaism into three days of RH & YK is too much, it's an overdose... it's too much pressure. Don't flood the fields...

Let us consider something a little different. Let's build small pipes of irrigation, in which the roots of our spiritual tress will be watered steadily and slowly, so they can get what they need. Let's insure that every individual tree gets its water and gets the amount it needs for its growth.

Bring your family to Shul on a semi regular basis, not just on High Holidays.

Let them come on the Shabbat, once a month, when we offer Kids Minyan (it's in your Program Guides).

Let them get the drops of water steadily.

Put those small pipes near your roots. Try the drip irrigation.

Consider dedicating five or ten minutes every day to your Judaism.

5 minutes each morning and recite the Shema, to put on tefillin, to talk to G-d.

15 minutes each day and study something Jewish online.

Do you have a commute? Download something to study on the way.

Try taking a JLI course this year...

Join a class once a week, a meditation once a month.

Shabbat dinner at home once a month.

Keep a meaningful Torah book on your night table and read a page every now and again.

Allow yourself and your children to get Jewish nutrients coming into their system on a regular basis.

People commonly ask me, how long is the Shabbat service?

My answer is: As long as you can make it.

Just come. You need to come late, that's ok. You have to leave early? That's okay too. Show up!

Friends, I ask of you this year – make small New Year's resolutions! Another baby step, another drip drop... but be consistent about it!

It might be a drop, but it's a drop that will make you grow.

You know about the people who get rich from \$5... \$5 a day of savings...

A friend of mine who became a recognized Torah scholar told me he did in an hour... He began setting aside one hour a day to Torah study...

Do not underestimate the power of a drop. But be consistently

Need guidance? We are here for you always. It is easier than you think.

But it was one drop of water that transformed Jewish history, giving us Rabbi Akiva.

Don't underestimate the small drops. It revolutionized Israel; it will enhance you and your loved ones.

Story of college kid whose family was close bc of shabbat dinners

Story of these guys discussing marriage

What's the secret to a happy marriage? Women like when you give them gifts...

Joke: Guy says to wife: What do you want for your birthday this year, a fur coat or a trip around the world? Wife: Actually, I want a divorce. Husband: I wasn't thinking of spending that much...

So anyway, back to the story... so three long time friends meet, ten years after marriage... Only one is happy, the other two are miserable... They ask how do you do it?

He asks, what do you give her? Women like when we give them something from time to time.

Guy 1: I give her yearly vacation alone and together, gornisht mit gornisht... we're growing apart...

Guy 2: I give her expensive jewelry for both her birthday and our anniversary each year & it don't help... There's nothing there... We're like brother and sister... who haven't spoken for 6 months...

And... what do u give her? They ask of him.

I give her something every day

Really?! Every day?! What do u give her?

I give her a call from work to see how she's doing!

All she wants is to know she's part of my life

Relationship with G-d is a marriage

He's not looking for us to move mountains. He wants to know He's part of your life

Everyday Modeh ani a few moments of prayer Sheva yisroel Some Torah study

Drip by drip but consistently

Very soon you realize G-d is part of your life!

One of life's greatest blessings is a real marriage

Life's absolute greatest blessing is a real relationship with our true beloved

Our father in heaven!

This year, let's resolve to give Him something every day!

Shana tova!!!