

EREV ROSH HASHANAH

29 Elul 5786

Friday • September 11, 2026

CANDLE LIGHTING

7:18 PM

Friday • Vaughan, ON

SECOND NIGHT

8:17 PM

Light from an existing flame

TORAH READING

Rosh Hashanah

Bereishis 21; Bamidbar 29:1-6

SHOFAR

Sunday

Day one is Shabbos

ANOTHER WAKE UP CALL



Rabbi Avrohom Levi Lipskier a"h, 1940–2026, who taught baalei t'shuva for more than sixty years. He died on 28 Elul.

Long hair, jeans, no Jewish schooling behind them. As early as 1962, young men like that began wandering into 770 Eastern Parkway, tired of what they had and unable to say what they were looking for, and the neighborhood was wary of them and afraid they would put its children on drugs. One of the rabbinical students there, Avrohom Levi Lipskier, still learning for smicha, sat down with them, one at a time, then in small groups, then in a class he ran for them inside 770. A class like that was unheard of, and people did not know who was stranger, the teacher or the students. He kept at it for sixty years. Rabbi Lipskier died on Thursday, 28 Elul, the last full day of 5786, at 86.

The legendary chassid and mashpia, famed for leading so many Jews to the path of t'shuva with his inviting smile and charisma, he was among the very first mashpiim of our generation to work with baalei t'shuva under the direct

guidance of the Rebbe. For years he farbrenged with his talmidim almost daily, a regime of ongoing, uplifting inspiration that left him with a snow-white beard. Those farbrengens ran to three and four in the morning and ended with the singing of "Throw 'im in the mikvah," to the tune of Napoleon's March, at which the bochurim would take hold of one of their own, carry him out of the room and dip him in the mikva, the ritual bath, fully dressed, hat and jacket and shoes, in the middle of the night.

He was born in Kutaisi, Georgia, to R' Yankel and Teibel Lipskier, and the family reached America in 5708. He learned in 770, and in 5722 he was sent to Brunoy, France, with the first group of shluchim.

Rabbi Yisroel Jacobson, the mashpia to the rabbinical students, encouraged him, and Hadar HaTorah opened with the Rebbe's blessing, with him in front of it as its main teacher. It was the first yeshiva in the world for baalei t'shuva, Jews raised without Torah who come back to it as adults.

The Rebbe held it close. Of these bochurim the Rebbe said "meine kinder, my children," and when the yeshiva came up in conversation, "Ich hob gemacht di yeshiva, I made the yeshiva."

He taught at Hadar HaTorah until 1967, married Cirel and went on shlichus to Milan. In 1972 he wrote to the Rebbe about an offer to work on college campuses, and the Rebbe told him to accept it. That summer he advertised a program in Morristown called Live and Learn. A Chabad campus director in Buffalo telephoned to say he was bringing five students down to Crown Heights for Shavuot, and that unless they went straight on to learn in Morristown they would scatter and be lost. The five came ten days early, and one of them wrote to the Rebbe asking to stay on. The Rebbe answered that since he had been successful where he was, he should stay. That was the beginning of Yeshivas Tiferes Bachurim, which he led for decades. In 5760 he founded Yeshivas Tiferes Menachem in Sea Gate.



About fifty of his alumni filled a shul in Ramot Dalet, Yerushalayim, to farbreng with Rabbi Lipskier, Kislev 5778.

The men who came were of every kind and every age: college students, Russian immigrants, professionals, university researchers, servicemen out of the forces. Some stayed years, some two weeks, some came back each winter break. One who came shaving with a blade found that an electric razor had been bought for him, and handed it back the day his beard came in. He put the original texts straight into their hands and taught them the language and the reasoning to read them, on the principle that learning which does not move a man to do a mitzva and help another Jew has not finished its work. Asked in 2012 what he was trying to give his students, he named the study and practice of Chassidus and a deep attachment to the Rebbe, and said that what this produced was leaders rather than followers.

He was in 770 on Gimmel Tammuz 5754. Within a day or two he gathered his students at Tiferes Bachurim and handed them a compilation of the Rebbe's teachings, set out so that the Rebbe's own response to the passing of the Rebbe Rayatz after Yud Shvat 5710 stood beside the day they were in: the talks published, the spreading of Chassidus demanded faster, "Yaakov Avinu lo meis, Jacob our father did not die," the bond deeper than before. He gave them an order of work to follow. A therapist had been handing out business cards at the Ohel that week, on the assumption that Lubavitch was on its way to mourning. His students went back to learning.

Rabbi Lipskier's levaya passed 770 at three o'clock on the day he died, and he was buried at Old Montefiore, near the Ohel.

The Torah commands the blowing of the shofar and gives no reason for it. The Rambam, in the laws of t'shuva, writes that the sound carries a message all the same: "wake up you

sleepy ones from your sleep." He says who is being spoken to: people who forget the truth in the vanities of time and spend the whole year in emptiness. They are asleep, and the shofar is what is sent to wake them.

Awake, he is given something to do. The Gemara asks why the Torah ordered particular verses to be said on this day of all days, and answers in God's own words: "Kingships so that you will crown Me as King over you; Remembrances so that your remembrance will rise before Me for good; and with what will the remembrance rise? It will rise with the shofar." The day is a coronation, and the Jew saying those verses is the one performing it.

Why should a sound be what brings a Jew to mind before God? The Berditchever Rebbe answers with a parable. He takes the verse "With trumpets and the voice of the Shofar, sound out before Adonai the King," and tells of a king who rode into a great forest to hunt and could not find the road home. He asked the villagers he came across, and they could not tell him, "because they'd never known the straight, true path of the king." One man in that forest was wise enough to see who was standing in front of him. He drew back in fright, then walked the king home along the road he knew and sat him on his throne. The king raised him above the ministers of the kingdom, dressed him in fine clothing, and had his old clothes put away in the treasury. Years later the man sinned against the king, and the king handed him to the highest of them to be judged. Before the verdict came out he begged for one thing: to be dressed again in the clothes he had worn the day he led the king out of the woods. The king allowed it, and when the man stood there in them, "the king remembered the great kindness the man did for him in returning him to his palace and sitting him on his throne." His sin was taken off him and he was put back in his place.

The Berditchever then applies the parable to the Jewish people. At the giving of the Torah the Holy One went round every nation and language with it and they would not have it, and the Jewish people took it with joy and delight, putting “we will do” before “we will understand,” and crowned Him King over them. “And now we have trespassed and rebelled against God.” So on the day of judgment “we sound the shofar and dress in the clothes we wore at the time of the giving of the Torah,” the day “the voice of the shofar grew louder,” so that He will remember that day and write us for a long and good life.

The Gemara in Avodah Zarah tells of Elazar ben Durdaya, who had given his life to immorality and left no sin of that kind in the world untried, and who heard it said that he would not be accepted in t’shuva. He asked the mountains and hills to beg mercy for him, then heaven and earth, the sun and the moon, the stars and the constellations, and each answered that it had to beg for itself first. Then he said, “Clearly the matter depends on nothing other than myself,” put his head between his knees and cried until his soul left his body. A Voice came out and said, “Rabbi Elazar ben Durdaiyya is destined for life in the World-to-Come.”

Rabbi Yehuda HaNasi heard and wept. “There is one who acquires his share in the World-to-Come only after many

years of toil, and there is one who acquires his share in the World-to-Come in one moment.” And: “Not only are penitents accepted, but they are even called: Rabbi.” The title comes from the Voice, at the end of one afternoon, to a man with no learning to show.

The Rambam rules the same way. A baal t’shuva should not imagine himself distant from the level of the righteous on account of what he has done, “he is beloved and desirable before the Creator as if he never sinned,” and the Sages said, “In the place where Baalei Teshuvah stand, even the completely righteous are not able to stand.” The reason the Rambam gives is that such a man has tasted the sin, separated himself from it, and conquered his inclination, which those who never sinned have not had to do.

Rabbi Lipskier spent sixty years with the men that ruling is about. They came to him unable to read Hebrew and went out as teachers, shluchim and rabbonim, and their communities call them Rabbi. On Rosh Hashana the rest of us ask to be seen in the clothes we had on the day we crowned Him, and the shofar says what Rabbi Lipskier said to the men at his door: “Wake up you sleepy ones from your sleep and you who slumber, arise. Inspect your deeds, repent, remember your Creator.”

SOURCES

Rambam, Hilchos T’shuva 3:4 and 7:4 · Rosh Hashanah 16a · Kedushas Levi, Devarim, for Rosh Hashanah, on Tehillim 98:6 · Avodah Zarah 17a · beismoshiach.org memorial page, drawing on Beis Moshiach #848, #1098, #1165, #1173, COLlive and CrownHeights.info.

ZMANIM · VAUGHAN, ONTARIO

FRIDAY · 29 ELUL

6:53 AM Sunrise
10:01 AM Latest Shema
7:18 PM Candle lighting
7:36 PM Sunset

SHABBOS · 1 TISHREI

6:54 AM Sunrise
10:01 AM Latest Shema
7:34 PM Sunset
8:17 PM Second night candles, from an existing flame

SUNDAY · 2 TISHREI

6:55 AM Sunrise
10:02 AM Latest Shema
7:32 PM Sunset
8:15 PM Yom tov ends

THE DAYS OF AWE · TISHREI 5787

ROSH HASHANAH

1 Tishrei · Sep 12 Shabbos. Bereishis 21:1–34; Bamidbar 29:1–6; haftarah Shmuel I 1:1–2:10. No shofar, no Tashlich
2 Tishrei · Sep 13 Bereishis 22:1–24, the Akeidah; haftarah Yirmiyahu 31:1–19. Shofar and Tashlich today. Yom tov ends 8:15 PM

THE TEN DAYS

3 Tishrei · Sep 14 Tzom Gedaliah
8 Tishrei · Sep 19 Shabbos Teshuvah
10 Tishrei · Sep 21 Yom Kippur

SUKKOS

15–16 Tishrei · Sep 26–27 Sukkos
17–21 Tishrei · Sep 28–Oct 2 Chol HaMoed
22 Tishrei · Oct 3 Shemini Atzeres
23 Tishrei · Oct 4 Simchas Torah

DAILY RAMBAM · ROSH HASHANAH

Shabbos, 1 Tishrei · Day 222. Sefer HaMitzvos: positive commandment 105, that semen is impure. Three chapters: She’ar Avos HaTumah 15–17. One chapter: Ishus 16.
Sunday, 2 Tishrei · Day 223. Sefer HaMitzvos: positive commandment 105. Three chapters: She’ar Avos HaTumah 18–20. One chapter: Ishus 17.