



**SHOSHANA JUDELMAN**

TORAH TIDBITS CONTRIBUTOR

**YOM KIPPUR**

## A Return in Uman

On Rosh Chodesh Av, I was in Uman with my husband.

We had traveled to Ukraine to daven at the Kivrei Tzadikim. It had been an intense year, and both of us felt the need for a journey to nourish our souls and give us strength for the year ahead.

I think I also needed to wash myself free of the accumulated weight of a year of treatments, anxiety, and all the ways illness can wear on the soul.

It was six in the morning. I had just finished davening and opened my Tehillim when, suddenly, a wave of emotion rose up in me.

The whole year came rushing back. The uncertainty. The fear. The sadness. The

questions. The thoughts I had carried quietly for months.

And the floodgates opened.

I ran to the Tziyun and collapsed against it, crying. Not graceful tears. Sloppy tears. Heaving sobs.

I poured everything out.

To Rebbe Nachman.

Because he had invited me to.

Rebbe Nachman's Torah makes space for coming to Hashem exactly as we are: broken,

frightened, angry, ashamed, carrying thoughts and feelings we wish we didn't have.

It's the deepest kindness, to know that we do not have to clean ourselves up before we come. We can bring it all. The dark. The painful. The parts of ourselves

we do not understand.

Rebbe Nachman teaches again and again that there is always a way back.

אין שום יאוש בעולם כלל

There is no despair in the world.

Not because there isn't pain, but because that isn't the end of the story.

Rebbe Nachman's Torah has often felt to me like a life-saving net—something that catches you when you fall and gives you the strength to stand again.

So, I cried.

And I let myself believe that I could be held. Slowly, the tears quieted. My breathing



Kever of Rabbi Nachman of Breslov

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changed. I returned to my seat and wiped my face.

I felt emptied out in the best possible way. Cleansed.

As though I had finally been able to put down something I had been carrying for far too long.

And with that came a new understanding of the pasuk:

סור מרע ועשה טוב

We often hear these words as instructions for how to behave. But sitting there in Uman, they felt like an invitation into a process.

First, make space.

First, let go.

First, allow what is weighing you down to leave.

And then there can be room for the tov.

I opened my Tehillim again.

Dovid HaMelech's heartbreaking beautiful words filled the space my tears had cleared. They soothed me.

I sat there in wonder at how much better I felt. I had not solved anything. And yet something inside me had shifted.

About an hour later, a cleaning lady entered the ohel.

I watched as she sprayed cleanser onto the plastic covering the kever and, section by section, wiped it clean.

And something inside me smiled.

In that moment, with my heart still raw and newly opened, it felt like something more.

As if, section by section, she was wiping my slate clean.

I felt as though Hashem was accepting my tears as a teshuva offering. A sense of calm came over me.

Teshuva does not mean pretending the past year was easy. It does not mean convincing myself that I had no fears and no questions.

It means bringing all of that to Hashem and believing that He will hold it.

Coming back to Him again and again. And believing that the dark parts don't define us.

Coming back with everything we have been carrying.

And trusting that when we finally place it down, Hashem is there.

Wiping the slate clean, and making room for us to begin again. ■

**Shoshana Judelman** is passionate about learning and growing through Chassidus. She gives shiurim to women in many communities around Israel, including Efrat, Elazar, Raanana and Jerusalem as well as at Midreshet Rachel V'Chaya. Shoshana also guides groups at Yad Vashem and leads journeys to Poland and other countries around Europe for JRoots.



A vibrant poster for a Sukkot Singles Soirée event. At the top left is a 'RECHARGE' battery icon. To its right is a logo for 'Jewish Singles' with the text 'Jewish Singles 20s & 30s'. The background features a night view of Jerusalem with the Dome of the Rock and palm trees. The main text reads 'IN ISRAEL FOR SUKKOT? STEVE EISENBERG INVITES YOU. SUKKOT Singles Soirée'. Below this, it says 'LIVE MUSIC | DRINKS | REFRESHMENTS' and 'OPTIONAL SPEED DATING'. A large diamond icon is next to the text 'EXCLUSIVELY FOR JEWISH SINGLES IN THEIR 20S & 30S AGE STRICTLY ENFORCED'. The event details are: 'WED, SEPT 30 7-10 PM' and 'JERUSALEM GREAT SYNAGOGUE'. Pricing is listed as '\$25 / BONIS UNTIL SEPTEMBER 28 \$30 / 100 NIS AFTER / AT THE DOOR' with 'ACTIVE SOLDIERS FREE'. A registration link is provided: 'REGISTER: bit.ly/sukkot26'. At the bottom, it says 'FACILITATORS PRESENT' followed by logos for 'RAJE', 'JERUSALEM CITIES', 'JERUSALEM GREAT SYNAGOGUE', and 'Zohar Eilat'.

רפואה שלמה מהרה  
לליעם יעקב ניסן בן אורה