



October 7

This is a season of anniversaries.

Rosh Hashanah is an anniversary — it marks the very first day on which human beings were brought into the world. Hashem started His days of creation on the 25th of Elul, and Adam was created on Rosh Hashanah.

Yom Kippur is also an anniversary — it commemorates the second ascent of Moshe to the summit of Mount Sinai, where he received the second set of tablets. It was a time of atonement following the previous occasion when Moshe smashed the tablets on his descent from the mountain.

This year, for the saddest of reasons, we are marking another anniversary. It is the first anniversary of that awful, tragic, horrific day when, on Shemini Atzeret — corresponding to the seventh of October — Hamas terrorists mercilessly murdered so many of our people.

But how should we approach this day? Regarding Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, we reflect on the past, but that is only for the sake of the future. We recall the arrival of human beings in this world and ponder our ways, seeking to better our lives and make this world a better place.

On Yom Kippur, we atone for our sins for the sake of a better future — for ourselves, our families, our communities, our nation, and the world. The past inspires our productive, constructive, and hopefully happy future.

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In that context, while we remember where we were exactly a year ago, when we heard that awful news and how it all unfolded, we must also commit ourselves to the future in the name of those who perished — to ensure that we contribute to a safer and better Israel.

When we recite the Yizkor prayer, we take it upon ourselves to give Tzedakah. We use our sad memories of what transpired to better our environment and our fragile world.

Therefore, at this time, on this exceptionally sad first Yahrzeit, let us do whatever we can to support Medinat Yisrael and pray to Hashem that the hostages will come home safely and soon. Let us engage in numerous acts of Chesed, an outpouring of loving-kindness.

We live in a world where, tragically, there is so much hatred. Let us ensure that love, consideration, and decency will ultimately prevail. In this spirit, may Hashem bless the State of Israel and world Jewry, please God, with a Shana Tovah, a happy, secure, and peaceful new year.

God bless you all.

This is a transcript of a video, which is available to view via chiefrabbi.org/dvar-torah