

Rabbi Cohen is not happy. The families of Beit Ahava V'Chesed have not prayed with sincerity. When they arrived back for Neilah, the closing service of Yom Kippur, they found this letter on their chairs. I know what you're thinking. It's not really in keeping with the law or the spirit of Yom Kippur to write and photocopy an angry letter in the middle of the day. Rabbi Cohen has been annoyed at the congregation for quite some time, the letter was written before the holiday began at sundown last night.



**BEIT AHAVAH V'CHESED**

**בית אהבה וחסד**

This House is Filled with Love and Kindness

Dear Ahava V'Chesed Members,

I'm disappointed in you. There's no other way to say it. Still, these holy days are all about change and starting fresh, so I want to share with you where you missed the mark in hopes that you will reflect and change.

When the Hebrew month of Elul -the time we use to prepare for the High Holy Days- began, I thought members of the congregation would spend time thinking about how they had hurt one another and to apologize. I know that didn't happen because I got phone calls; more than one person thought they deserved an apology because someone scraped the icing with the picture of the b'nai mitzvah twins off the top of the cake before they had a chance to see it last May.

Elul ended, and Tishrei began. On the very first day of the month we celebrated Rosh Hashanah as a community. To celebrate, we eat apples and honey, but not in the sanctuary. I didn't think you needed a reminder that the High Holy Day prayer book, or Machzor, isn't a napkin, but I found pages stuck together. And it was clear that someone was listening to the baseball game when the shofar was blown; the Shofar Squad sounded great, but no one has ever yelled, "Go, go, go!" before.

At Taschlich instead of throwing bread into the water to symbolically cast away our sins, the children threw whatever they could find: rocks, trash, Dr. Fishman's medical bag. And the lake wasn't their only target; one first grader got hit in the head with a stethoscope.

On Shabbat Shuva, the Shabbat of Return which occurs between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, not one of you returned to synagogue.

And now it's ten days later. I've spoken to some of you before about wearing synagogue-appropriate clothes. Though many people wear white on Yom Kippur to symbolize purity, a bathrobe from the Hilton is not what our ancestors had in mind. Not to mention that during the traditional afternoon reading of the biblical book of Jonah, a group of teenagers spit water as if it were coming from a whale. And I understand that you're hungry, but to those who bring candy bars each year and sniff them longingly, I would say, as Cantor Feldman chanted from the book Isaiah this morning, "Is this the fast I want?"

So, even though I'm annoyed, I also believe you can change. Maybe you just need more time, I've locked the shofar in the tzedakah box in the lobby; it was empty anyway. Spend some time reflecting and learning about the meaning of the holiday. Then you'll be able to unlock the box. We can hear the tekiah gedolah from the shofar, recite a quick havdalah, and bite into those candy bars.

With hopes for a better year ahead,

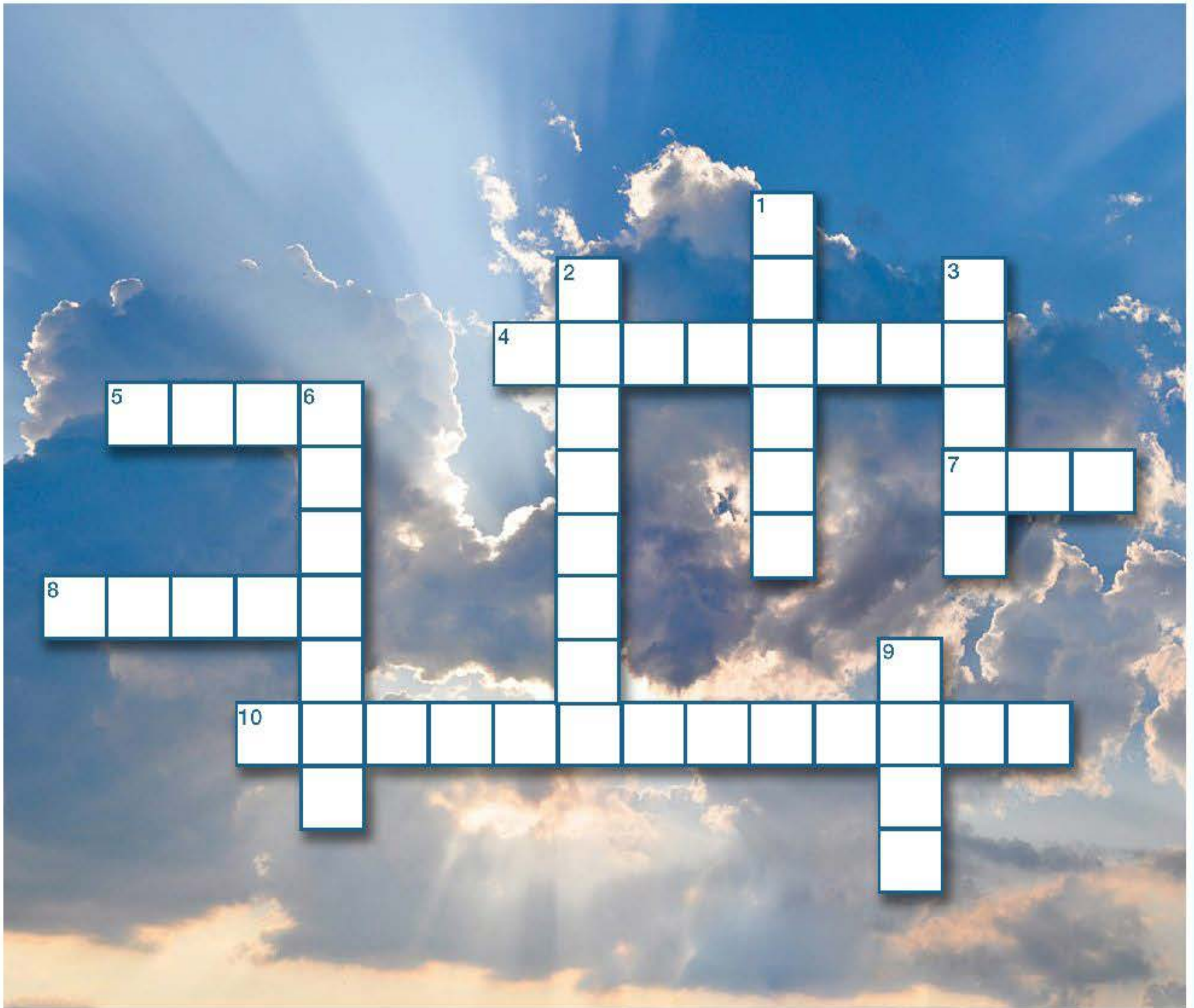
Rabbi Cohen

10 Tishrei Drive, Tzedakah Township, IL 10919

**Feeling puzzled** about the traditions and rituals of the High Holy Days?

**The key** to feeling accomplished is in solving the clues.

Show this to Rabbi Cohen, or their proxy, when you're finished.  
No bragging please, it's not in the spirit of the day.



### ACROSS

- 4 Ceremony that happens after Yom Kippur ends
- 5 Don't eat
- 7 Number of days from Rosh Hashanah through Yom Kippur
- 8 Name of biblical book read on Yom Kippur afternoon
- 10 What kind of shofar sound marks the end of Yom Kippur

### DOWN

- 1 He said, "Is this the fast I want?"
- 2 Ceremony in which sins are "thrown"
- 3 Color often worn on Yom Kippur
- 6 Month of Yom Kippur
- 9 Name of the month before Tishrei

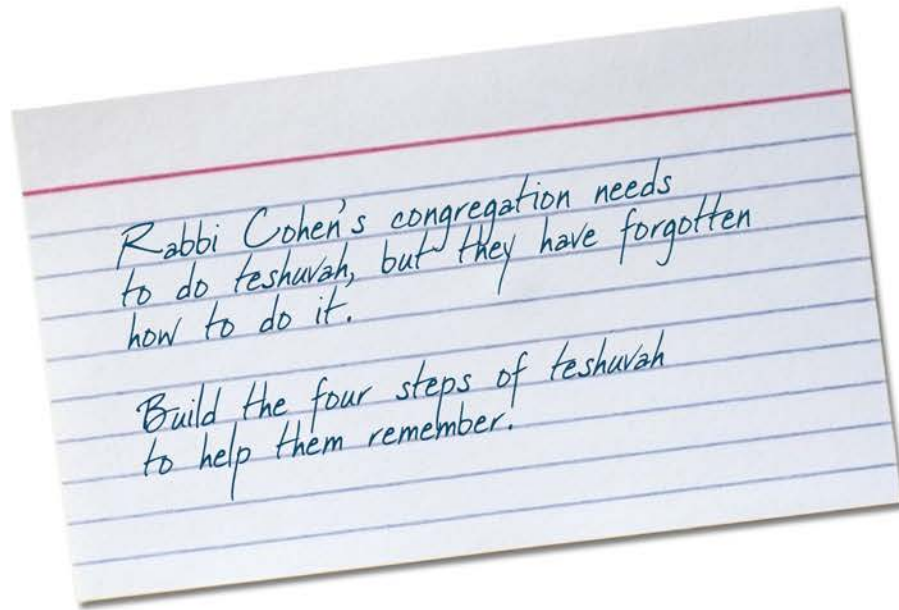


Jewish people are weighed down by sin,  
And feel like they just cannot win.  
Count the number of “heits,”  
That the prayer book states,  
And you’ll have a good place to begin.

In order to balance the scale,  
Without schooling from Harvard or Yale,  
Find three weights that equal,  
Your count in the prequel,  
With the lock you will surely prevail.



For the sin we committed before You under compulsion and willingly.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך באנס ובכצון :
And for the sin we committed before You by callously hardening the heart.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך באמוץ הלב :
For the sin we committed before You inadvertently.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בבלי דעת :
And for the sin we committed before You with an utterance of the lips.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בבטוי שפתים :
For the sin we committed before You openly and secretly.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בגלוי ובסתור :
And for the sin we committed before You in sexual immorality.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בגלוי עריות :
For the sin we committed before You through [misuse of our power of] speech.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בדבור פה :
And for the sin we committed before You with knowledge and with deceit.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בדעת ובמרמה :
For the sin we committed before You by improper thoughts.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בהרהור הלב :
And for the sin we committed before You by cheating a fellow-man.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בהונאת רע :
For the sin we committed before You with [mere] verbal confession.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בודוי פה :
And for the sin we committed before You by joining in a lewd gathering.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בועידת זנות :
For the sin we committed before You intentionally and unintentionally.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בזדון ובשגגה :
And for the sin we committed before You by insufficient respect for parents and teachers.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בזלזול הורים ומורים :
For the sin we committed before You by using coercion [to harm others].	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בחזק יד :
And for the sin we committed before You by desecrating the Divine Name.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בחלול השם :
For the sin we committed before You with foolish talk.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בטפשות פה :
And for the sin we committed before You with impurity of the lips.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בטמאת שפתים :
For the sin we committed before You with the Evil Inclination.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך ביצר הרע :
And for the sin we committed before You knowingly and unknowingly.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בידעים ובלא יודעים :
And for all of these, God of pardon, pardon us, forgive us, grant us atonement.	ועל כלם אלוה סליחות. סלח לנו. מחל לנו. כפר לנו :
For the sin we committed before You by forcing someone to give or take bribes.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בכפת שחד :
And for the sin we committed before You by false denial and false promise.	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בכחש ובכזב :
For the sin we committed before You by evil talk [slander].	ועל חטא שחטאנו לפניך בלשון הרע :



not just about saying sorry. Rather, *teshuvah*, which comes from the same root as the Hebrew word for “return,” is an idea that reaches as far back as the prophets, who urged the Jewish people to return to God.

The 12th-century philosopher and doctor Rabbi Moses ben Maimon (RaMBaM), considered by many to be one of the world’s greatest thinkers, dedicated an entire section of the Mishnah Torah to the laws of *teshuvah*. From here, the classic four steps of *teshuvah* have been handed down through the centuries. According to this understanding of the *teshuvah* process, the four steps include

**Stop** (the Action)

**Confess** (to a Rabbi)

**Regret** (what you did)

**Build** (an Altar)

**Confess**  
(the Problematic Behavior  
to God)

**Read** (the Torah)

**Act** (Differently Next Time)

**Dance** (to the Music)

**Whip** (Yourself)

**Say** (Shema)

**Listen** (to the Shofar)

**Bathe** (in Ice Water)

**Avoid** (Screens)

**Help** (a Friend)

**Draw**  
(a Picture of What You Did)

**Tell** (a Friend)

**Dress**  
(in Sackcloth and Ashes)

**Eat** (Kale)

**Give** (Tzedakkah)

**Go** (to Synagogue)

Print this on a  
30-Label Sheet  
like AVERY 5160



Four-Digit Lock



Four- or Five-Letter Lock



Key Lock



# YAY!



**WE FIGURED IT OUT!**

**SOUND THE SHOFAR!**