

# WORD *prompt*

Every week The Jewish Press asks 5 individuals to remark on a word or phrase.

## This week's word is HOPE.

*Ruchama Feuerman*



What could be problematic about the word “hope”? Such an innocent, well-intentioned word.

I hope things work out okay. I hope you feel better.

I’ll just say it. Hope is cheap.

Hope and prayer often get lumped together, but they couldn’t be farther apart.

Hope doesn’t require me to believe anyone is out there on the receiving end.

Prayer asks me to consider to whom I’m addressing my prayer, some Being I might think about.

Hope, unlike prayer, isn’t directed toward anything. Hope is a monologue, prayer a dialogue.

One demands nothing. The other demands everything.

Could that be why Rav Kook found the stanzas in Israel’s national anthem Ha-Tikvah – The Hope – less than pleasing? As though all the Jewish people, century after century, exile after exile, merely hoped?

No, hope is empty, a thought-gesture. I think of it as prayer’s very distant cousin, twice removed.

The Chief Rabbi of Israel composed his own national anthem as an alternative: HaEmunah – The Faith.

Now, there’s a fertile, weighty word that could carry a nation.

*Ruchama Feuerman lived in Israel for a decade and taught Torah before returning to the U.S. to get her MFA in fiction. She is a prolific writer and ghostwriter whose novels “Seven Blessings” and “In the Courtyard of the Kabbalist” have earned national praise. Ruchama lives in NJ with her husband and family.*

*Rachel Tuchman*



Researchers have reported that hopeful people have a greater sense that life is meaningful.

In times of darkness though, it can be hard to be hopeful, but remember hope is not cancelled.

There are actions you can take to restore hope.

1) Realize you are not alone: You are part of a bigger picture here and everyone is in this together. Stand up to hate, support your fellow Jews and remember that we are a nation of survivors.

2) Reach out for support: When you open up about feelings, you give them less power.

3) Take it one day at a time: When we get too far ahead of ourselves, despair takes over.

4) Speak to yourself the way you’d speak to a loved one: You spend most of your day inside your head. Make sure it’s a nice place to be.

5) Think of the bigger picture: You are part of something bigger and greater than you know. Pray, meditate, connect to something outside of you in whatever way you can.

6) Reach out to a therapist. We must bring our own light in to the darkness. Nobody can do it for us.

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*Dan Eleff*



We hope for peace in Israel and Mashiach. But hope itself isn’t enough.

Rabbi Akiva famously said that loving your fellow as yourself is the basis of Torah. And yet, his students perished because they didn’t do that.

We’ve been through a year of plague, where everyone knows someone who perished. We’ve bickered about everything from masks to vaccines. Did we learn to be any kinder, to respect one another, or love our fellow as ourself?

And then on Lag Ba’Omer, 45 more souls tragically pass away.

It’s certainly nobody’s fault, but how can we overlook that they were crushed because there was no space for one another?

It’s time that we learn to truly love one another and make space for other people and their opinions. We can disagree, but it can be done respectfully. The second Bais HaMikdash was destroyed because of *sinas chinam*. Let’s work on *ahavas chinam*, and surely, we won’t have to hope, but we’ll be celebrating together as the third Bais HaMikdash descends upon Yerushalayim.

*Dan Eleff is the CEO and founder of Dansdeals.com, voted the #1 miles and points blog by USA Today’s readers. He lives in Cleveland with his wife and four children. He received rabbinical ordination and an MBA before deciding to turn DansDeals from a hobby into a career.*

*Simcha Eichenstein*



I like to think about hope in two ways.

First, there are the little things I hope for. I hope I’ll find a parking spot. I hope the baby sleeps through the night. And so on. We all experience these multiple times and, hopefully, they work out.

But it’s the big things we hope for which truly define us.

When I decided to run for the NYS Assembly, I had to think: Do I really want to dedicate my entire life to public service? Do I want to spend all those nights away from my family at our State’s Capitol? Do I want to spend hours traveling to Albany and back? Do I want to deal with the many challenges our community faces?

But that little word “hope” kept coming back to me because I am an eternal optimist. And so, I jumped in headfirst, hoping that as an elected official I will have a positive impact on my community. Hoping that my presence in the NYS Assembly can benefit the district. And hoping that my work as a legislator can make a real difference in people’s lives.

Ultimately, I am hoping I can help to make the world a better place for all of us.

*Simcha Eichenstein is a member of the New York State Assembly, representing the 48th district which includes the neighborhoods of Borough Park and Midwood. A life-long resident of Borough Park, he is also the first chassidic lawmaker elected to the State Legislature.*

*Racheli Herman*



(Reader Response)

Doctors sometimes tell patients, and we all sometimes tell ourselves, “There’s no hope.” It’s a statement that comes from hubris – overestimating ourselves and underestimating G-d.

I think the problem lies in our tendency to connect hope with statistical probability (or rather, improbability). If something is extremely unlikely or even impossible according to the laws of nature, people often pronounce it “hopeless.” But as long as you believe in G-d, that’s never, ever true. If you have faith, you can hope for the greatest miracle, no matter the outlook or prognosis.

You can lose your health, your money, your freedom, someone close to you – but no one can ever take away your hope. Hopefully (forgive the pun), hope inspires prayer. When we hope, we ask G-d to make our will His will. Generally it’s the other way around: We’re supposed to make Hashem’s will ours. If we don’t get what we’re hoping for, that’s what we have to go back to. But even then, we can still hope.

*Racheli lives in Queens.*

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(Readers are invited to send in their submissions, too. The word for the June 25 issue will be {Anti Semitism}. Please send your submissions to [word@jewishpress.com](mailto:word@jewishpress.com) by June 20 to be considered for publication.