

A Taste of Torah

The King's Committee

By: Rabbi Moshe Heyman

Rabbi Dovid Gottlieb relates the following parable. There was a man named George who had a small business in his town. He ran his company very well, doing every thing on his own terms. One day George got a call from the president of his country, offering him the opportunity to join his economic team. The only catch was that he would have to live in a certain place, act in a specified way, and not do everything on his own terms. George accepted the job, and while it seemed as though he had lost a portion of his freedom by doing so, in reality, he became a more liberated man in the bigger picture.

On Rosh Hashanah we sit in shul, and all we discuss is the greatness of Hashem, our King. We describe His Awesomeness and contrast that with our smallness as human beings. These thoughts may lead to a recognition of the greatness of Hashem, which will instill a fear of Him, because of the punishment that He can inflict. That is how some people understand the concept of fear of G-d. But such a fear can soon become stale. And how can such a fear be transformed into the love of G-d that

we are taught is an outgrowth of fear of Heaven?

If we look at the greatness of G-d, our King, and understand that as great as He is, He wants us to be part of his team, we can then use this concept as an impetus to look at the commandments not as restrictions, but as a necessary responsibility to make a bigger difference. When we make that leap from looking at religious observance as a restriction to our life and realize that it is our opportunity to become part of a bigger, greater world, a world where we are on G-d's team, we then feel a tremendous love for Hashem, in appreciation for this opportunity. The same way George will always appreciate the president's giving him the opportunity to be on his economic team (unless George gets blamed for the economic downturn), so, we will feel love toward G-d.

This Rosh Hashanah, may we merit the clarity and feeling of love from G-d, who is inviting us to have the freedom to see a greater picture, and may we understand what we can accomplish by attaching ourselves to the opportunities that G-d has given us.

Ask the Rabbi

New Year Resolutions?

From: Amanda

Dear Rabbi,

Is there a concept of New Year's resolutions in Judaism for Rosh Hashana?

Dear Amanda,

The answer is yes, and even more so than in what's generally associated with the non-Jewish New Year.

For most who attribute significance to January 1, the celebrations of the

Stories For The Soul

Measure for Measure

Shaarei Teshuva, the classic work on the topic of Teshuva, return to Hashem, brings the following parable.

Two men were in the royal prison. One day, one of the walls collapsed, allowing the prisoners to escape. One of the men immediately seized the opportunity to escape while his friend declined, not wanting to break the law again.

Later, the king's guard arrived and found that one man escaped while the other, who could have easily escaped as well, was still sitting in his cell.

The guard began to furiously beat that man with his club. The man asked the guard, "Why are you beating me? It was my cellmate who transgressed by fleeing.

"Yes, but you had an opportunity and didn't take it. For that I beat you." By failing to escape, the prisoner showed that to him, prison was not such a bad place to be.

Sin traps us in a prison as we become so set in our bad ways that it is difficult to repent. We have a golden opportunity to break out of that prison and do teshuvah. Hashem gives this opportunity every day - and even more so on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. Were we not to seize this opportunity to escape, we would be showing that in our minds, the prison of sin is not such a terrible place to be. That would be the saddest shame of all.

Adapted with permission from ShulWeek by Rabbi Boruch Lederman.

Kollel Happenings

CHERRY CREEK MUNCH AND LEARN, MON., SEPTEMBER 13

The next Cherry Creek Munch & Learn for men, led by Rabbi Yehuda Amsel, will be held on Mon., September 13, at 12:30 p.m. at Colorado Capital Bank, 55 Madison Ave. The class focuses on Pirkei Avos. For information, contact Rabbi Amsel at 303-820-2855 or at rya@denverkollel.org



3RD ANNUAL DONOR APPRECIATION EVENT, MON, SEPT. 13

Mark your calendar! The Kollel's 3rd Annual Donor Appreciation Event will be held Mon., Sept. 13, at 7 p.m., at the home of William Silvers, M.D., in Englewood, CO. The theme of the event is "The Secret of Joyful Living," and it will mark the launch of "A Year of Joy." The event will also feature "Beyond Sushi: A Kosher Japanese Dining Experience."



BRIDGING THE GAP: CONNECTING ROSH HASHANA AND YOM KIPPUR

Join Rabbi Levi Lebovits for "Bridging the Gap: Connecting Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur," a pre-Yom Kippur class for men and women at the home of Bob and Allison Weiss in Greenwood Village. The class will be held at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 14. For information, call 303-820-2855 or email rll@denverkollel.org.

Quiz Question

A Mother's Cry

Question: I cried, so now the Jews have a certain number to blow. Who am I and what blows is this referring to?

Submitted by
Rabbi Moshe Heyman

Last week we asked: We had thought that we had fallen from good grace, but now we know we are still beside you. Who are we?

Answer: The Jewish people. When the people heard the 98 curses in the Admonition, they thought their future was bleak. Here, Moshe comforted them by saying that despite their shortcomings, they were still standing before Hashem.

Submitted by
Rabbi Avraham Abrams

Ask the Rabbi

Continued from front

general New Year are hardly expressions of ideal behavior. Drunkenness and lasciviousness quickly eradicate any resolutions one may have made.

In Judaism, however, Rosh Hashana, which occurs on the same date mankind was created, namely the first day of the Hebrew month Tishrei, is truly a day of rectification and repair.

This day actually culminates an entire month of introspection and review of one's deeds, character traits, intellectual and theological orientation and quantity and quality of mitzvah observance. During this month, a person not only makes resolutions regarding what needs to be corrected and improved, but more importantly, he actually starts implementing those changes.

By the time Rosh Hashana arrives, the last thing a person would do would be to squander away all the progress he's made by "celebrating" the day in an inebriated stupor of inappropriateness. Rather, well on his way to having gradually integrated beneficial changes in his life over the month before Rosh Hashana, the Jew stands before G-d asking for Divine favor, not based on tenuous resolutions, but rather on implemented ones.

This intense, but gradual repentance is then extended through what's called

the Ten Days of Repentance between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, where the focus is on fine-tuning one's service of G-d in order to achieve the greatest degree of personal perfection possible. It is in this milieu that G-d atones for and purifies the individual and Nation on Yom Kippur.

Having gone through the elevating process of penitence, the re-Jew-vinated Jew then emerges from Yom Kippur to celebrate the joyous holiday of Succos where the theme is rejoicing in the bounty of G-d while simultaneously departing from an overemphasis on the mundane in order to literally celebrate with G-d. We thus leave our earthbound houses in order to dwell with G-d in the heavenly oriented succah.

Once we have made and implemented our resolutions (Elul), asked for Divine favor (Rosh Hashana) and received atonement (Yom Kippur), thereby deserving bounty whose purpose is to enable us to truly cleave to G-d (Succot), we are then fully able to renew our love for, and commitment to, the Torah (Simchas Torah), after which time our penitential resolutions crescendo by restarting the yearly Torah reading cycle, "In the beginning G-d created..."

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