

A Taste of Torah Renewed Vision

By Rabbi Levi Lebovitz

We find ourselves in the midst of the time known as “The Ten Days of Repentance”, the period that begins with Rosh Hashanah and culminates with Yom Kippur. The fact that the Rabbis group these ten days together and call them by one name is indicative of the fact that they all have one thing in common: teshuva, repentance.

I don’t know about you, but I sure didn’t notice anything in the Rosh Hashanah prayers that alluded to repentance. What, then, is the significance of Rosh Hashanah as part of the Ten Days of Repentance? Furthermore, growth in Judaism usually occurs as a process. That being the case, what is the process of repentance which begins with Rosh Hashanah and concludes with Yom Kippur?

In order for us to truly return to Hashem, we must gain focus of our lives. On Rosh Hashanah we are introduced to a new world, Hashem’s world. Throughout the year we may forget about His world and think that it is ours. We pursue “success” and assume that to the extent that we conquer this world and bring it under our control,

we will be successful. We are liable to forget that it really isn’t our world, but His. Once a year we get the opportunity to regain focus as to what really is the purpose of our existence.

On Rosh Hashanah the central theme discussed in our prayers is that we want the entire world, including ourselves, to recognize that Hashem is the Master of this world.

After we have gained the proper perspective of our existence we can approach the world of repentance properly.

Teshuva is usually translated as “repentance.” As is often the case, the English rendering of the word does not to the original Hebrew justice. The literal translation of the word “teshuva” is “return”. To return means to go back to the original source. By repenting we are returning to Hashem, but in order to return, we must recognize what the original source is. This is the essence of Rosh Hashana and it is for this reason that it precedes Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. As we enter Yom Kippur, it is incumbent upon us to realize how fortunate we truly are to have somewhere to return and a service that gives real meaning to our lives.

Ask the Rabbi Heartstrings

From: Stacia

Dear Rabbi,

I don’t understand why I should pray, if G-d already knows whatever it is that I need.

Dear Stacia,

To address your question, I’m sending you an adaptation of the first chapter of Rabbi Menachem Nissel’s new book entitled Rigshei Lev:

The Sages teach us that Adam Harishon opens his eyes and sees a bleak and

Continued on back

Stories For The Soul

Hand in Hand

A little girl and her father were once crossing a flimsy bridge. The bridge began to shake from side to side.

The father was growing increasingly nervous, so he asked his young daughter, “Sweetheart, please hold my hand so that you don’t fall into the river.”

The little girl replied, “No, Father, you hold my hand.”

“What’s the difference?” asked the puzzled father.

“There is a big difference,” replied the little girl. “Father, if I hold your hand and something happens to me, chances are that I may let your hand go.”

“But,” she continued with a wisdom beyond her years, “if you hold my hand, I know for sure that no matter what happens, you will never let my hand go.”

In the Yom Kippur *davening* we beseech Hashem, “Like the mercy of a father on children, may You (G-d) have mercy upon us.”

On Yom Kippur we must remember that Hashem loves us with an infinite love and is waiting to hear our prayers and give us what we need. Even if our sins are black as night, Hashem is waiting with open arms to lovingly receive us, just as a parent will always yearn for a child to return.

May we pour our hearts out to Hashem on Yom Kippur with purity and deep sincerity. May Hashem grant us a happy, healthy new year.

Adapted with permission from ShulWeek by Rabbi Boruch Lederman.

Continued on back

Kollel Happenings

The Kollel is on Sukkos break. Programs resume Su., Oct. 10.

FATHERS-AND-SONS PROGRAM SUN., OCT. 10 AT EDOS

The next Fathers-and Sons learning program will be held on October 10th at EDOS. Breakfast begins at 9 a.m. with learning following. For information, contact Rabbi Yehuda Amsel at 303-820-2855 or email rya@denverkollel.org



CHERRY CREEK MUNCH AND LEARN, MON., OCT. 11

The next Cherry Creek Munch & Learn for men, led by Rabbi Yehuda Amsel, will be held on Mon., October 11, 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



'ALLOW NATURAL DEATH?' AT OCT. 13 TORAH FOR TYCOONS

Join Dr. Lynn Taussig, Special Advisor to the Provost at the University of Denver, Retired President of National Jewish Hospital, and Kollel Dean Rabbi Aron Yehuda Schwab for "Allow Natural Death? End of Life Decisions and Dementia" at the next Torah for Tycoons, Wed., Oct. 13. The program will be held at noon at the East Side Kosher Deli. Cost: \$20. To RSVP, call 303-820-2855 or email info@denverkollel.org

Halacha of the Week

Even the Smallest Amount

Theft is prohibited even if the item being stolen is worth less than a perutah (the smallest monetary unit discussed in the Talmud.) For example, one may not "sample" a grape or two while shopping for groceries, even though their value is negligible.

However, if nobody would object to such an item being taken, it is not considered theft. For example, it would

not be theft to take a splinter from a wooden fence to use as a toothpick. If the owner protests this action, however, even this is forbidden. In any event, it is always preferable to first ask permission from the owner.

Adapted with permission from Rabbi Pinchas Bodner's sefer "The Halachos of other People's Money" (Feldheim Publishers)

Ask the Rabbi

Continued from front

barren world. Adam looks deeply into himself and understands that in order to survive, he must nurture and build the world around him. This will ultimately justify the purpose of his creation. He looks at the miserable earth and in recognizing his inadequacy to fulfill his task, feels emptiness and despair.

Adam looks heavenward and he does something that represents the most basic instinct of humanity. He prays.

Within moments, the rains come pouring down and earth becomes the glorious Garden of Eden. Man has prayed. G-d has answered.

The word "Adam," man, has the same root as "adama," earth. Man, who is made from adama, justifies his existence by bringing out the potential of the adama. Thousands of years later, you and I are still planting seeds in the earthly ground, justifying our own existence. The earth still needs to be tended to bring out its innate goodness and we concern ourselves with the improvement of society. As Jews, we study Torah and build the world through acts of kindness. And we, too, feel inadequate.

We need rain. We pray for rain three times a day. Even in our non-agrarian society, rain remains the everlasting symbol of earth's dependence on heaven.

The Hebrew word for rain, geshem, is related to the word gashmi, physical. Rain symbolizes "ruchaniyus shehigashem," the transformation of the spiritual into the physical. When we look heavenward for our many needs, we are asking for the transformation of the spiritual into the physical; we are asking for rain.

Why, though, did Hashem create us with deficiencies which we must pray to fulfill?

The answer is astonishing. All our problems are in fact nothing more than a means to have a relationship with Hashem. Every challenge, pain, and moment of suffering exists so that man can connect to G-d. Man's inadequacy is an opportunity for prayer.

Our challenge is to internalize this crucial point. When life seems to be good we sometimes see prayer as a chore, part of our daily ritual. When life seems to be bad we rush to our prayer books to solve our problems. Yet, all life's events are just roads to prayer. When the road is smooth, G-d is challenging us to acknowledge that we can take nothing for granted. And when the road is rocky, G-d is giving us the opportunity for extra intensity in prayer, to achieve an even higher level of closeness to Him.

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