



Thoughts on the Parsha

Rabbi Shmuel Wasser

During the days of the עשרת ימי תשובה, we reach out to ה', davening that we be granted a positive outcome for the year ahead. Rabbi Chaim Freidlander was a famous Mashgiach in the Ponovezh Yeshiva who unfortunately passed away at a young age. In a powerful letter, written in 1985 from his sickbed in New York to his students back in Eretz Yisroel, Reb Chaim presented an important idea to help us with our davening. Reb Chaim expounded on the gemara (ר"ה ט"ז:) that tells us "Any year that is 'poor' at the beginning brings riches at the end." Rashi explains that this refers to the way we should feel when we daven - "If we feel like poor people and daven with humility and a feeling of poverty, ה' will grant us a year of tremendous ברכה. Rabbi Freidlander clarified to his students that they must realize that nothing they have is really theirs. We may have many ברכות - livelihood, health, etc., but in truth, we start each year with nothing. There is no carryover and there are no assumptions. The way we are today has nothing to do with what will be tomorrow. The message

MTI Recent Happenings

Gavin Kornblum
 11th Grade

We welcomed in the יום הדין with a truly inspiring shmuess from Rabbi Wasser about how lucky we are that we are of the precious few Jews who are in yeshiva learning day in and day out. Because we have a chance to have such a special experience, it's so important for us not to blow this once in a lifetime opportunity. Then we had a delicious seudah with all of the special simanim for Rosh Hashanah.

The next morning, before Mussaf, we heard a very emotional speech from Rabbi Goldman about how on Rosh Hashanah we come before Hashem saying that He is our only Father and He is the only One we can turn to. One of the stories he said brought me to tears. That evening we had a learning opportunity during which each shiur learned about a different aspect of Rosh Hashanah. Then we each presented what we learned to the entire Yeshiva. My shiur learned about why you can't

Featured Torah Message

Dovid Goldman
 9th Grade

Adapted from "Pinnacle of Creation"

In this week's parsha, the pasuk (32:7) זכר ימות עולם, (דברים) says, בינו שנות דור ודור. Rashi explains that the ימות עולם - days of old - refers to how ה' punished people who did עבירות. If remembering the past doesn't help, then בינו שנות דור ודור - think about the years of each generation - meaning that in the future, ה' can bless you with so much.

One would think that the best way to motivate people is to show them how bad it is to do the עבירה, and how bad the punishment for it is. Especially motivating would be an example from history - a solid proof that punishment will happen if עבירות are done. However, in Rashi's explanation of the pasuk, it says that the best way to motivate someone is to look to the future, at how much reward ה' will give the person if he does the מצוה. If it's in the future, there is no visual or solid proof that there will be a great reward. So if avoiding punishment, of which there is historic proof, doesn't motivate a person, how can the unproven possibility of reward motivate someone?

Sparks of Mussar

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Reb Yitzchak Blazer was commonly known as Reb Itzele Peterburger. He was a primary Talmid of Reb Yisroel Salanter, and was a major figure in the early development of the Mussar Movement. He passed away in 1907. Reb Itzele was known to express the following:

Our Sages taught that the shofar blasts of Rosh Hashanah confuse the Soton and make him think that Moshiach is coming and that his own function of leading people astray is ended. Even though for so many years Jews have been blowing shofar on Rosh Hashanah and Moshiach has not yet come, each year the Soton still thinks that perhaps this time they really did do teshuvah and brought Moshiach.

Some people give up hope of improving themselves. They say, "I have lived through so many Rosh Hashanahs and heard so many shofar blasts without doing teshuvah - I'm hopeless." People who think along those lines, concluded R' Itzele, are worse than the Soton.

of this gemara is for us to impress upon ourselves that we are entirely in the hands of ה' and all that we have is only a result of the kindness that He chooses to extend to us TODAY. We must beg ה' that He extend those same blessings and more for the year to come. We must daven with the realization that we are truly impoverished. This realization has powerful repercussions, with the gemara assuring us that the year will end with a wealth of blessing.

May we merit to recognize our dependence on the חסד of ה', a recognition that itself will provide a great זכות for a true חתימה לטובה.

carry a shofar on Shabbos.

On the second night of Rosh Hashanah, we had a beautiful kumzitz after the meal. The second day of Rosh Hashanah before tekiyas shofar, we heard a very powerful speech from Rabbi Fromowitz about how on Rosh Hashanah we can't rely on what we have had in previous years, whether that be our money or our opportunities. After the seudah we went to a nearby lake for tashlich. This Rosh Hashanah was an amazing experience that I will never forget.

Rav Henoch Leibowitz, zt"l explained that the nature of a person is to more readily respond to positivity than to negative motivations. Our human nature would rather hear inspiration of happy notes, even if those notes are unknown, rather than negative messages that are solidly based.

So as the serious day of יום כפור approaches, knowing the punishment for our עבירות is a powerful tool of motivation. Even if, for some reason, we feel that we didn't do proper תשובה, the days after יום כפור - יום סוכות, יום עצרת, יום תשובה and שמחת תורה - can provide another chance to do תשובה, with the joyous atmosphere and promise of great reward for serving ה' properly. These days have much potential, so may we use these opportunities to return to, and serve ה' in the fullest way possible.

Mazel Tov!

Rabbi & Mrs. Shmuel Wasser & family on the marriage of their daughter Leah to Yaakov Striks of Valley Village, CA!

Mrs. Debbie Graff & family on the of a birth of a grandson!

Board member Dr. Keith Mankowitz & family on the birth of a grandson!

ALUMNI SIMCHOS

Menashe Brown on his engagement to Ms. Liba Yelizarov of Detroit, MI!

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(UCity Group)

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CHOLIM LIST

If you would like MTI to include a choleh on our list of people that we will be davening for in yeshiva during the yomim noraim, please email tehillim@missouritorah.org.