



TAL

YOM KIPPUR 5775

THE COMMUNITY PARASHA SHEET

One Small Step!

Rabbi Jonathan Tawil



After a big storm, thousands of starfish had washed up on a secluded beach. One day, a man was walking down the beach and saw a stranger picking up one starfish at a time and throwing them back into the ocean. The man told the stranger he was wasting his time – that his effort alone wasn't going to matter in the grand scheme of things. The stranger picked up

It's so easy to get wrapped up in our own lives and completely forget to make the little efforts. To see a homeless man sitting in Starbucks and think one cup of coffee or a handful of change couldn't possibly make a difference in their life. So, we do nothing. I think you're right, a lot of the time we get lost in the idea that we need to

another starfish, threw it into the ocean, and replied, "It mattered to that one."

have a giant impact on the world all at one time or our contribution is altogether meaningless. We don't think it's worth taking those small steps of service or making the small acts of kindness.

Our Sages put it this way: "A person is not given the opportunity for greatness until he is tested in the small things." Moshe Rabenu, the greatest leader in Jewish history, started his career as the shepherd of someone else's sheep. The same is true for King David: first a shepherd, then a king. A future Moshe Rabenu or a King David is entrusted

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with the destiny of the Jewish people only if first he is able to tend a flock with integrity and compassion and take care that the sheep don't wander off and eat a bit of grass from someone else's field.

Probably the most famous quote of the 20th Century was said by the first man on the moon, Neil Armstrong. It was heard by over 600 million listeners around the world. As Armstrong stepped foot on the moon back in 1969, he uttered those famous words: "One small step for man, one giant leap for mankind."

What a remarkable group of ten words which sum up so much. Indeed, Armstrong's small step with his foot (if one can describe any space motion as small) represented a marvellous achievement for humanity. But his message runs much deeper.

If each and every one of us starts taking small steps, then a large leap for human kind will follow.

Every little helps and every step is essential.

We are ten days from Rosh Hashanah, ten days into the New Year. What should be our focus?

On Rosh Hashanah we coronate The King of Kings – Hashem. Our focus is on the big picture.

Rosh Hashanah beckons us to take a panoramic view of our lives, all

the while paying scant attention to the nuance that lies therein.

Yom Kippur, on the other hand, is just the opposite—entirely nuance: the tree, the leaves, and the nourishing roots, with barely a thought to the great forest in which we stand.

It's a day of introspection; a day on which we ask forgiveness, realising and admitting our sins.



A day so powerful, bursting with potential.

A time we understand who we really are, where we have been and how we can improve going forwards.

But once we look into the past, we feel that it's difficult to change. Being realistic we say to ourselves, it's not possible to conquer the world. We are who we are, and that's how we will stay.

Yet on Yom Kippur a small voice from within radiates our essence.

How do you feel when you don't have the food and drink you have so accustomed yourself to? Questions start arising as to direction in life, and your soul emanates from within, with a cry against that backdrop is a 'realistic' you.

"I can't change my lifestyle; I won't succeed in doing everything my soul yearns for!"

Yet the answer today is clear, 'Take one step at a time, and you will succeed!'

Some of the most powerful words we say in prayer today are "Al Na Teshivenu Rekom Milfanecha – Don't leave us empty handed from in front of you."

The simple understanding is that we beseech G-d not to return us empty handed. We have spent the day praying and yearn for a positive answer from G-d.

Yet there is a deeper explanation. On this day that we have worked so hard for, a day of fasting, introspection and of seeking repentance for our sins, we beseech the Almighty and say, "Please G-d, don't let us come away empty handed. Ensure that we are able to come out differently than we came in. Let us take with us something from our experience today that will last into the rest of the year."

A year from now, you will wish you had started today.

One small step for man – what will

Halachot of Yom Kippur

Rabbi Dov Levy



Is it good to smell the spices passed around in the Bet Hakeneset on Yom Kippur?

Making a beracha on spices is mainly encouraged in order to fulfil the obligation of saying 100 blessings per day. Since we don't eat and the *amida* prayers have fewer blessings than the weekday, we are short of berachot towards this total. However there are authorities who

consider enjoying spices inappropriate being that Yom Kippur is a day of affliction.

How about Tabaco?

Smelling Tabaco is permitted (but possibly inappropriate) but tasting or chewing is forbidden. You should not say a beracha before smelling it as the smell does not naturally come from the solid substance. When smelling liquids be careful not to rub them on your skin as this constitutes *sicha*.

I smelled spices earlier on should I make another beracha later?

Your beracha earlier on covers the spices now, unless you had no intention of smelling later. It's always best to find herbs to smell which have varying berachot (*Asei, Isbei, Minei*) so as to avoid this problem and gain extra berachot.

What do I need for Havdala of Yom Kippur?

Even though it's *motsaei Shabbat* you still need a flame that was burning from before Yom Kippur started, and *nobesamim* are used.

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"You forgot the rock Who gave birth to you and forgot G-d Who brought you forth." (32:18)

QUESTION: Why does Moshe mention the Jews' forgetting of Hashem twice?

ANSWER: There was once a person who owed money to many creditors. Unable to bear the pressure and demands for payments which came from all sides, he consulted a friend who, incidentally, was also one of his creditors. The friend advised him, "From now on when anyone comes asking for payment, act insane so that the creditor will think you have lost your mind and stop bothering you." Once, when the friend himself came to demand payment, the debtor began to act demented,

hoping to put him off. Angrily the creditor said to him, "Don't act crazy in front of me — it was my idea!"

Among the many gifts Hashem has endowed man with is the power of "shikchah" — forgetfulness. Thus, when one is, G-d forbid, confronted with trials and tribulations he is able to remove his mind from them, and go on with his life. Moshe said to the Jewish people, "tzur yeldecha — the rock Who gave birth to you — [has instilled in you a gift, the power of] teshi — to forget. The problem is that "vatishkach Keil mecholelecha" — you are using this power of forgetfulness to also forget Hashem, Who brought you forth and Who does so much for you."

"I shall hide My face from them and see what their end will be." (32:20)

QUESTION: What would be the end of Klal Yisrael if, G-d forbid, Hashem would hide His face and not look after their welfare?

ANSWER: There is no question in anyone's mind what would happen with the Jewish people, G-d forbid, if Hashem were to stop taking an interest in them, and it is unnecessary for the Torah to raise such a question. However, Hashem is expressing His infinite love for Klal Yisrael and is saying that even in a time when it appears as if "Astirah panai meihem" — "I shall hide My face from them" — yet, "erah" — I will look after their welfare and attend to "acharitam" — "their end" — i.e. everything be well for them in the future.

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The True Judgement Of The High Holy Days

Rabbi Danny Kada



Devarim (10:17) G-d is described as 'great, mighty, awesome and not

Clearly, then, our children's scales needs an explanation. What difference does it make which side of the scale is heavier? Either way, one receives full retribution for one's sins and reward for his good deeds.

This is the time of the year when our children come home from school with all sorts of designs and pictures of scales depicting the upcoming judgement of the High Holy Days. The one whose upright deeds outweigh his wicked deeds merits to emerge from the judgement with a verdict for a sweet and happy new year and, conversely, one whose wicked deeds outweigh his upright deeds is destined for a challenging year ahead.

Unfortunately, we often tend to grow in age and build (and white hairs) but not in intellectual capacity. Conceptions and notions which we were taught so well in our youth accompany us year in year out, with us failing to 'outgrow' them. One of these concepts is the aforementioned image of the scales. To go through our adulthood with this shallow idea would be a colossal mistake.

Judaism teaches that each thought, speech or action – for the good or for the bad - of a person receives retribution. In

taking bribes'. One needs a creative imagination to conjure the vision of G-d taking a bribe. How would G-d supposedly take a bribe? The Sifrei (classical Jewish legal Biblical exegesis authored by the Talmudic Sages) explains that this verse does not mean a monetary bribe rather a spiritual

'G-d will not take one of his mitzvot as a 'bribe' to atone for his sin'

bribe – a bribe of 'mitzvot'. In the words of Ramban (Nachmanides 1194-1270) on that verse: 'Even a complete and pious individual who commits a sin, G-d will not take one of his mitzvot as a 'bribe' to atone for his sin; rather He will punish him for that one sin and will give him full reward for all his good deeds'. However many good deeds one has will not cancel out even the slightest sin a person has. This idea is echoed by other commentators such as Me'iri (1249-1310).

The true judgment of the High Holy Days is not about how many mitzvot and aveiroth we have. It is about how much they weigh to us. How important to us is our religion-our mitzvot, our good deeds and our actions. We are sometimes guilty of living ideals without idealism - we perform many good acts but our appreciation for these acts are lacking. Minchat Chinuch (1800 – 1874) even ventures to say that the classification of 'tsadik' and 'rasha' is not dependent on the respective mitzvot and aveiroth one has. It is possible for one to have many sins and still be called a tsadik, and conversely it is possible for one to have many mitzvot and be called a rasha. For mitzvot and aveiroth is what one does, and being a tzadik and a rasha is who one is. That is what the judgment of these days is about. And that is the true meaning of the concept of the scales – what weighs more to us, our mitzvot or aveiroth?

Our Chachamim

Mother and Child



One Yom Kippur eve, when Chasidic master Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael of Kriminitz was granting the traditional blessing to his children, he noticed that one of his daughters, overcome by the emotion of the moment, was weeping softly. The young child in her arms was also crying.

"Why are you crying, my child," asked the Rebbe of the tot.

"My mother is crying," answered the child, "so I am also crying."

In the synagogue that evening, the Rebbe ascended the podium and related what his young grandchild had said to him. Bursting into tears, he then said:

"A child who sees his mother weeping, weeps as well, even if he cannot comprehend the reason for her tears. Our mother, too, is weeping. Our sages tell us that the Shechinah 'keens like a dove

and cries: "Woe is to My children, that because of their sins I have destroyed My home, set fire to My sanctuary, and have exiled them among the nations." "So even if we ourselves have become inured to the pain of the exile," wept Rabbi Yaakov Yisrael, "at least we should cry because our mother is crying."

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his attorney, "we have a court date for two weeks from Wednesday." Richard groans. "But", continues

the attorney, "I have some excellent news for you." "What could possibly be excellent about going to court?" Richard asks sadly. "I'll tell you. The judge who will be sitting on our case is the most merciful and compassionate judge in the entire judicial system. He is not interested in punishing people. Of course he will if he has to, but that isn't what he aims for. He wants that people will be good, law abiding citizens, so he has an interesting policy not used by any other judges. His policy is that he won't allow the prosecutor to speak in court. The judge already knows the charges, so he asks the accused what he has to say. If he acknowledges his guilt and shows genuine remorse for his crimes, the judge lets him go. He might fine him a little or give him a short prison sentence – but the more he's convinced of the sincerity of the accused, the easier he is on the sentence and in many cases he lets the offender off with no punishment at all. A promise not to go back to his life of crime is all he

needs to hear – but it must be sincere." Richard cannot believe his ears. "Are you serious? That means I actually have a chance." "Yes, you have a chance. However, you must be totally focused and even look the part. I suggest you skip breakfast that morning, because the discomfort you feel will help you maintain the humility necessary to genuinely feel that you've done wrong, and it will bring about more sincerity in your presentation. And don't wear shoes either. That will also put you in a contrite mood. See you on Wednesday." Richard is ecstatic. All his fears, all his worries – and now he has a real chance. Wednesday comes and Richard skips breakfast. He doesn't even get a chance to eat lunch, but the judge accepts his plea and lets him off the hook. It's the best day he's had all year.

Hashem is the Judge and every one of us is "Richard". If we are sincere, if we can commit to improve in the future, if we make a little more effort in our commitment to Torah rules and values...then we are headed for the happiest day of the year.

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