

Sicha 1

Individual Teshuva

Despite all odds

There are many levels in places of holiness – for example the Bais Hamikdash is considered holy even in reference to the rest of the land of Israel which is “the Holy Land.” So too, during the ten days of repentance, the Jewish people are even closer to the A-lmighty than throughout the year.

During the Ten Days of Repentance, each individual can achieve as much as an entire community can all year. How much more so the community itself! During the ten days of repentance their power is even greater.

Each day of the Ten Days of Repentance is even greater than the day before. Since we now stand after “Shabbos Shuva” – the Shabbos of the ten days of repentance – we can reach even higher.

The power that a Jew has to do Teshuva, emanates from his G-dly soul – a “part of G-d Above.” It is infinite and boundless. During these ten days G-d – ‘the Source,’ “comes closest to the spark – the soul.” The soul’s power is magnified, assisting in the fulfillment of its task – to create a dwelling place for G-d in this world.

Sicha 2

Group Teshuvah

Two against one

We find something puzzling concerning Teshuva: On the one hand, it requires deep concentration and introspection. These are best performed, one would assume, in private – far away from prying eyes. Yet we extol the virtues of the community during these days of repentance. Furthermore: Yom Kippur, the climax of the ten days, and the day when “all are obligated to do Teshuva” is the day every single Jew can be found in the synagogue together with the community. Can Teshuva really be achieved in a communal setting?

In order to make a proper and objective assessment, without one’s own judgment being distorted by self-love, one must have the assistance of another person. What’s more: Each individual excels in his or her own special area, in which they can assist the shortcomings of others. So in order to rectify oneself in a most complete fashion, one must be part of a community.

It’s important to remember not to feel dejected by one’s wrongdoings, for these negative aspects are not

intrinsically connected to him, but are a result of external influences that attached themselves to him from this lowly world.

But man has the power to perfect himself, rectify his shortcomings, and ultimately, serve G-d in a foremost manner. But he cannot suffice with that. He shouldn't rest! He must continue onward, to influence his surroundings – both Jews and non-Jews – that they too serve G-d, creating a dwelling place for His Divine presence here below, and revealing G-d's kingship to all.

Sicha 3
World Teshuva
Despite all odds

When we gather together for a Yahrzeit, we are reminded that the soul is eternal. In certain respects, the deceased maintains his or her contact with this physical world, as demonstrated through the conduct of her loved-ones on the Yahrzeit. We must therefore draw lessons from the lifetime my mother, whose Yahrzeit we commemorate today.

My mother put her very life on the line and acted with genuine self-sacrifice to rescue my father's

Torah writings from behind the Iron Curtain. Thanks to her impenetrable sense of determination, those writings were subsequently published and are available for all to study today.

The lesson is clear: One cannot be intimidated by the difficulties that stand in the way of achieving important goals, even when at times it seems highly unlikely that he'll actually be able to carry through with them. One must go ahead with spreading G-dliness in his surroundings without getting caught up in intellectual exercises. This is especially applicable in the United States, where belief in G-d is of the most basic principals of life, printed even on our currency.

Sicha 4
Tract on repentance
A Talmudic Analysis

Sicha 5
In Answer to Your Letter...
Response to New Year well-wishers

From the conclusion of today's daily portion of the Chumash we can learn, amongst other points, of the virtue of gratefulness. Now is the appropriate

time to express my gratitude to all those who sent their heartfelt wishes for the New Year. Even though it is not possible to respond to each individual, everyone is blessed by G-d Almighty Himself, as it says "And I shall bless those who bless you..."

No need to wait for answers

Many people have submitted questions and, due to the limited time available at this time of year, did not receive answers. Many of them begin to reason why they were not answered, what the implications are, and so on. There's no need for all of that, especially when their questions are largely with regard to issues that have already been addressed numerous times in the past:

Students inquiring about where to study during the coming school year should ask the advice of the school they are currently in. Those asking as to whether or not they should travel here from Israel for the holidays must ask a rabbi if it is Halachically

permissible. As well, debts should not be incurred in order to pay for the trip.

The Chana Fund

It is our custom during this Farbrengen to hold an appeal for the fund in my mother's memory.

Sicha 6

The Ten Mitzvah Campaigns

In order to conclude with something practical, we will mention all the ten Mitzvah Campaigns.

Sicha 7

Concluding Blessings

As we now stand in the Ten Days of Repentance, just days away from Yom Kippur, may G-d bless each and every person to be sealed for a good and sweet New Year.