

Yom Kipur

The lamim Noraim (the 10 days going from Rosh Hashana to Iom Kipur) are, perhaps, the most well-known days in our luach – calendar.

Where does the incredible potential of these days lie? Why do those Jews that for 50 weeks a year do not come to the synagogues suddenly feel that they must be present during these days?

Two historical events provide the framework for this special moment of the year. It is not a coincidence that we chose the creation of man as the day in which history began. And, as this year, during a Friday afternoon, as the sun was setting; before a world which displayed itself in front of him like a dinner table, waiting for its guests. Nevertheless, just before it began, there was a change in plans. The Man is grabbed from Earth, from which it was created, and placed in Paradise, from which he will later be expelled, 10 days after, by the end of Yom Kipur.

Adam arrives at this Paradise full and naive. Alone. In a process of inner search and discovery. He soon discovers that loneliness is not good and that it should be confronted as well as his ideas, his thoughts and his feelings. So, he begins by recognizing his environment. Starts calling things and creatures by their name, grasping essences and virtues which describe the qualities of each creature.

Once he is settled, he goes back to being alone. Because towards reality, he is alone. And because of that, his identity is divided, to confront himself, to confront his side (or rib). Here is where we find his greatest loss, but, at the same time, his greatest triumph. The loss of complete truth. As Maimonides says, when describing the punishment of the fruit of knowledge, as the loss of Truth, towards an inferior quality which is Taste (good and evil). Until then, the skies could have been green, the grass could have been red and trees blue and nobody would contradict it. As from that moment, when his “other one” appears, the curtains of his house would be ocher-colored with golden sparks, and there would be no discussion about it. Or, even better, there would be the right to differ. The first step out of this bubble and into the real world is to acknowledge that we are not bearers of the whole Truth, but rather of a very small part of it, and that not even by putting all those small pieces together we would acquire complete Truth. The lost Truth only reveals itself through the Torah as a Divine gift of Its Light. That might be recovered in the creative process of the encounter with your other half, of giving birth, giving light.

This Torah, which commands us “u beajarta ba jaim”, and you shall choose life, because our first choice was not originally the fruit of life, but the fruit of wisdom. But would life, even eternal life, be worthy without knowledge? Considering it in all of its different aspects, that of science, of learning and also inner knowledge (sexual knowledge). Consciously we choose to know, and from there we contemplate our surroundings, and we look ourselves, we felt too naked, unprotected and, therefore, embarrassed. How are we supposed to not feel embarrassed when contemplating our surroundings, when realising what we have done or failed to do, what we stopped doing? How are we supposed not to feel naked and helpless in front of such injustice, evil and grudge that we bear inside us? So our first attitude will be to find clothing with the leaves of the tree of knowledge. And those clothing represent our awareness as how to cover our embarrassment. In that moment, precisely, comes the question “Aieka”, where are you? Where are you, now. From whom are you hiding? Are we afraid of the future; are we uncertain about the present? Do we search for excuses from other to justify for our behaviour? There is always a snake behind every action, but are we trying to play smarts like her? The first Kipur does not speak about our exit from Paradise. It doesn't speak about regret, but rather of two beautiful gifts that were given to humankind. “By the sweat of your brow will you have food to eat”, cherish everything you owe, because you have earned it. Learn to enjoy life, because it is not easy, and nothing comes for free.

Learn how to sow in order to harvest and believe that G-d will do his job, for the blessings to pour over the seeds. so as to bring pour blessing over those seeds. And in the same way, the pain of birth, to learn that the greatest happiness comes, sometimes, from a terrible pain. To learn how to turn all our pains into birth pains, creative pains, which will help us grow and transform.

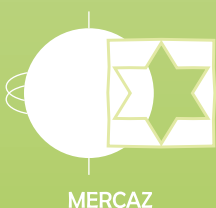
This 10 days in Paradise that are ahead of us, bring a range of possibilities. They are the field for experimenting, for us to sow the seed for the New Year. “A zorim ve dima, ve rina ikzoru” (those who sow tears will harvest joy) is what we pray every day when we finish eating.

May it be G-d's will that the tears that we shed in these days, when we regret, when we ask for forgiveness, when we look inside ourselves, and when we mystically find our ancestors and physically meet with our community, water our seeds of dreams and yearns for a better world. Let's transform our kutnot or (leather clothes) into kutnot hor (clothes of light).

And let's bring “Or zarua la tzadik, ule ishrei lev simcha”, that light sowed for the Tzadikim which fills the heart with joy.

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MERCAZ



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