

CANDY SOLOMON'S SPEECH
ROSH HASHANAH
SEPTEMBER 18, 2020 (5781)

Shalom and Good Evening!

Rabbi Bloom told me that I had to keep my speech short tonight. So I told him that I would keep my speech short, but then he would have to keep his sermon short!

Tonight we celebrate Rosh Hashanah, our Jewish New Year and the first day of Tishrei. We eat apples dipped in honey to evoke a sweet new year. This is the time to take stock of what we have done and how we will make improvements going forward as we begin the Ten Days of Repentance.

Being a teacher for 40 years, I was always concerned with the three R's, reading, writing, and arithmetic. Rosh Hashanah is also a time to think about three R's.

The first R is reflection. When we reflect we think seriously about what we've done. We reflect on past experiences and look at them again thoughtfully. We think about what we've done right this past year, and what we've done that wasn't right. We look at our mistakes and learn from them so as not to repeat them. Reflection not only helps us, it can help and inspire others. Reflection allows us to focus on our successes as well as our failures. It gives us perspective so that we can realize that mistakes don't have to rule our lives. Rosh Hashanah is our time to reflect.

The second R is repentance or Teshuvah. Teshuvah is a Hebrew word translated as returning. Repentance is a return to the path of righteousness. When we repent, we review our actions and are contrite for past wrongs. We make a commitment to our actions and make a change for the better. We may have qualms, remorse, and self-reproach. We resolve in our heart to never commit the sin ever again. This may mean that we must ask forgiveness from our friends as well as from G-d. Teshuvah is an ongoing process and can't be accomplished overnight. The days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur are an especially auspicious time for repentance.

The third R is renewal. When we renew, we make a new beginning, a new start, a spiritual revival. It's the renewal of body and soul to bring internal peace to ourselves. This can be achieved through meditation, prayer, and song. No matter what happens to us, there are always opportunities to shift a situation, to optimize our chances, and/or to start all over. This is the time to consider making changes and to set the course for the year moving forward. Get rid of thoughts that are weighing you down. Think about what you value most in your life. What is the best way to use your time to create the life you want to have?

Here are some things to consider as we begin our New Year to rethink who we are and who we want to be.

Streamline your life by decluttering your mental and emotional clutter. Reorganize your priorities and reevaluate your commitments. Let go of the past to make room for new things. Begin something new and take better care of yourself.

Be spiritually and physically active. Attend more CBY services. Invite mindfulness into your life. Exercise to connect your body with your mind and spirit.

Be in nature. The outside world connects us to the cycle of life. Take a walk, plant a garden. The cycle of life reminds us that change is the norm.

Take a trip. This allows you to reflect on your life and feel rejuvenated. It helps you reestablish balance and sets you on a course for the upcoming year.

And, finally, last but the most important. Remember to say, "Thank you." Every act, no matter how small or large, deserves a thank you.

In conclusion, Rosh Hashanah is our time to be introspective so that we are able to take the necessary actions and make necessary course corrections. The three R's to remember are reflection, repentance, and renewal. So I challenge you tonight to take these next ten days and examine where you've been and where you want to be. From my family to yours

L'Shana Tova!