

# MESIVTA'S MESSAGE

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## FEATURED TORAH *Message*

Rabbi Shmuel Wasser

As we approach Yom Kippur, I wanted to share a fundamental idea regarding our tefillos during this auspicious time. Throughout the Yamim Noaraim, we beg Hashem over and over again that He grant us life for the year ahead. Furthermore, we work hard to recognize that indeed everything lies in balance and there are no Chazakos- no assumptions for the year ahead. We are truly coming in front of Hashem "Kdalim U' Chrashim"- with nothing, and begging Hashem to grant us life and all wonderful things. As I was davening this past Rosh Hashana it occurred to me that there is something strange about our davening. I certainly understand from OUR end, that we are passionate in asking Hakadosh Baruch Hu to grant us life for the year ahead. Every human being has a tremendous desire to live and enjoy the experience of the beautiful world that Hashem has created for us. However, from a spiritual perspective, much of what humanity as a whole values about life is petty in the big picture. We enjoy relationships, experiences, and delicious food, but from a perspective of pure ruchniyus, what are the true value of these pleasures?

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## THOUGHTS *on* YOM KIPPUR

Shmuel Winter, 11th grade

On Yom Kippur, we take responsibility for all the actions that we have done over the past year and we do this many different times throughout the day. We confess our sins and acknowledge our failures. We read the story of Yonah on Yom Kippur to teach us a valuable lesson. When the boat that Yonah was traveling on was about to get destroyed by the storm, Yonah took responsibility and said that the danger was because of his sin. This was even though most of the others on the boat were idol worshippers who were guilty of many sins. Yonah was a prophet of Hashem and he was the closest one to Hashem on the boat, yet he still took responsibility for the collective great danger and did not accuse anyone else but himself.

On Yom Kippur, we do the same. We can always make up some excuse for why we did what we did. We can blame it on the circumstances we are in, or the people who are around us, but really every single situation that we are in we have 100% free will and can always do the right thing no matter what the case is. On Yom Kippur, we must acknowledge this and repent for what we have done badly, and we have to commit to change.

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## SPARKS *of* MUSSAR

*Reprinted with permission from "Sparks of Mussar" by Rabbi Chaim Ephraim Zaitchik, Feldheim Publishers*

**Rav Yitzchok Blazer**

Another time R' Itzele participated in an assembly of the gedolim in St. Petersburg, R' Yosef Dov Soloveichik asked a difficult question in the name of his son R' Chaim that touched off a heated discussion.

Brilliant explanations and arguments flew back and forth. Finally, R' Yosef Dov amazed the assembly with two explanations - one of his son, and one of his own.

R' Itzele had sat through the storm without opening his mouth, as if he had no idea what was flying. R' Yosef Dov decided to check up on this 'great man' who gave the

impression of being so ignorant. Arriving home, he opened R' Itzele's work Pri Yitzchok to see what kind of scholar the author was. To R' Yosef Dov's surprise, he found in the book both R' Chaim's question and the two explanations he had given at the assembly. "How great," he exclaimed, "is R' Itzele's humility!"

## RECENT *Happenings*

### Akiva Wogan, 11th grade

A few weeks ago, MTI went on our fall achdus trip. The achdus trip is a great way for us as a school to do some activities together. No matter how old you are, everyone is included in all of the fun and bonding time throughout the day. On a beautiful Thursday, the entire yeshivah gathered together at Castlewood Park for a day of lots of fun. Throughout the big field, two flag football games were going on and a game of ultimate frisbee. The games did get a bit competitive, but no matter who won, everyone had fun running around and scoring touchdowns. Even many rebbeim got in the games and showed off their skills on the field. Also, many people got in groups and went on hikes in the woods. People would talk to each other, and became close with new friends.

Later at night, there was a barbeque with hot dogs, hamburgers, and grilled chicken. Talmidim were grilling the food and blasting music to keep everyone in good spirits. At the barbeque, talmidim and rebbeim schmoozed with each other while munching on a good piece of meat or some potato chips.

After all of that, there was a big kumzitz led by Rabbi Lintz and some bochorim playing the guitar. Everyone was singing with big smiles on their faces.

Whether playing frisbee or football, going on hikes, or singing at the kumzitz, the achdus trip was a great way for everyone to bond and make tight relationships with other talmidim and the rebbeim.

## FEATURED TORAH *Message*

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I believe it is important for us to understand that from a Torah Perspective, what gives life its great value is the opportunity life presents us to use the power of bechira that we have to connect to the ruchnius of the world. Hashem has given us the gift of life so that we can follow the guidelines of the Torah and understand our great responsibility to see the darkness that surrounds us, staying focused on the path that Hashem has laid out for us. Indeed, we know that our greatest giants put incredible value on every moment of life. This certainly had nothing to do with their desire to go on another vacation to Florida, rather it was their appreciation of the phenomenal unique opportunity of showing our allegiance to Hashem in battling our Yetzer Hara, day in and day out. The Maharsha in Sukka actually tells us that in the end of days, when the Yetzer Hara will cease to exist, the tzadikim will cry because they will have lost their opportunity to fully take advantage of their experience in this world to show their allegiance to Hashem in the strongest way.

This idea is captured in the tefilla we say when we express that Hashem should grant us life "Lmaancha"- so that we can use the gift of life to SERVE HIM.

When we stand before Hashem this Yom Kippur and beg to be granted another year, let us keep our focus on what we are asking for. Let's use those thoughts not only for the sake of our tefillos, but also during our daily experiences, seizing every possibility to use our time here to use our bechira to come closer and closer to Hakadosh Baruch Hu.

# MAZEL TOV

- Mr. & Mrs. Naftali & Ditzza Friedman on the bar mitzvah of their son Dovid!
- Mr. & Mrs. Jordan Roseblum and grandparents and board member Mr. & Mrs. Stuart Roseblum on the birth of their son/grandson!
- Mr. & Mrs. Avi Rubin on the birth of their son!
- Baruch Usprich on his marriage to Ms. Ilissa Davison!

## THOUGHTS *on* YOM KIPPUR

*continued*

Rav Moshe Feinstein needed a pacemaker and sought a top surgeon to operate on him and install it. Unfortunately, after the surgery, his pacemaker became loose and the doctor said the surgery would have to be redone. Rav Moshe was lying in bed and he couldn't stop thinking about why Hashem caused him to have to go through not only one surgery, but two. He came up with two possible reasons and asked his rebbetzin, hoping she would know which reason was the correct one. She told him that it likely was neither of those reasons, but because he had placed too much trust in one of the best heart surgeons in the world instead of placing trust in Hashem. Rav Moshe agreed and was able to relax, undergo the second operation, and recover. Rav Moshe could have blamed the doctor or the pacemaker but he realized that it was his own actions and thoughts that caused the surgery to be unsuccessful the first time.

This Yom Kippur, let us put all our excuses aside. Once we do that, we can ask Hashem for forgiveness.

*(adapted from Rabbi Moshe Kormornick's book on Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur)*

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