

Free Translation

By the Grace of G-d
Fourth Day⁴ of the Week of
"Arise, shine forth"²
18th of Elul,³ 5738
Brooklyn, N. Y.

To --

Greeting and Blessing:

Mention was made at the beginning of this year that ~~the year 5738~~ has a special significance in that it is a Leap-Year, and also the conclusion of a (19-years) Cycle (Machzor Kattan).

^{purpose?}
The significance of a Leap-Year - in the ordinary sense - is that it makes up the "lag" in time of lunar years vis-a-vis the solar years, to ensure that our festivals should occur in their proper seasons of the year (Pesach in the spring, etc.).

7 In a deeper sense, our Lunar Calendar ("Jews reckon the time according to the moon") is symbolic, and a periodic reminder, of the fact that every Jew has the G-d-given capacity to make up for the days that - for one reason or another - have not been fully utilized in matters of Yiddishkeit, Torah and Mitzvos. Moreover, even if certain aspects of one's conduct, involving thought, speech and action, were not as they should have been - a Jew has the ability, with the proper resolve and determination, to rectify completely all failures and deficiencies of the past "with one 'turn' and in one moment." 14

Herein can be seen the unique quality and special preeminence of Teshuvah in addition to all it has in common with other matters of Torah and Mitzvos, the vast majority of which require and take a certain duration in time -

For instance: The first Mitzvah that a Jew has to fulfill upon becoming duty-bound to fulfill all the Mitzvos is the Mitzvah of Kabbolas Ol Malchus Shomayim (Submission to the supreme rule of G-d, which is the prerequisite and basis of all the Mitzvos), and this Mitzvah is fulfilled through the recital of Shema, which requires a clear and deliberate enunciation of the words, with proper concentration, necessarily involving a period of time -

But as regards Teshuvah, its unique aspect, as aforesaid, is that it can be accomplished "in one moment." 15

Because Teshuvah transcends the element of time and the physical world, and in one moment it transforms the whole past and sets the stage for the whole

proper

future.

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The month of Elul is, of course, the month of Teshuvah¹⁷, set aside for the Jew's "return" to his roots and essence through rectifying and completing all matters wherein he failed in the foregoing days of the year. And within the month of Elul itself, its last days, beginning from the 18th of Elul¹⁸, correspond to the twelve months of the year, each day for a month.

Therefore, if every year this is the time to make up for all deficiencies - through Teshuvah, how much more so in the month of Elul of a Leap-Year, and one that ~~completes~~ completes the period of the Cycle.

It is also understandable that if all matters of Torah and Mitzvos have to be done with true joy, in keeping with the principle, "Serve G-d with joy,"²² surely the Mitzvah of Teshuvah should be fulfilled with profound joy, considering the special preeminence of Teshuvah over all other Mitzvos, as mentioned above

And there is ~~no~~ contradiction²⁴ involved here, even though Teshuvah is associated with earnest introspection and profound regret, etc. For, with all that, it is ~~surely~~ ^{surely} cause for the greatest possible rejoicing that the Al-mighty has given every Jew the capability and strength to do Teshuvah - and "in one moment," together with the assurance that when a Jew resolves to avail himself of this opportunity, his Teshuvah will be accepted.

Thus, when a Jew undertakes to do Teshuvah and does it with joy, and since "joy breaks through barriers"²⁵ it takes him out of all constraints, including the constraints of his former improper conduct; also the kind of conduct which, though good at the time, could oftentimes have been even better. In all these cases there is the assurance that "Nothing stands in the way of Teshuvah," increasing still further the joy in doing it.

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And then - since G-d "reciprocates in kind,"²⁹ but in a most generous measure³⁰ also G-d's blessing pours down without limit, "to overflowing,"³¹ including the blessing that all good resolutions made during these days of the month of Elul will be fulfilled to the fullest and most complete measure,

Increasing still further the blessing of Kesivo vachasmo Tolvo for the new year that is coming unto us and all Israel for good and blessing,

Including the essential blessing that "G-d does wonders"³² - therein also the wonder of Teshuvah, for the Torah promises that the Jewish people are certain to do Teshuvah toward the end of their Golus, whereupon they shall immediately ("in one moment") be redeemed.

ASSURANCE:

With esteem and blessing of
Kesivo vachasmo Tolvo
for a good and sweet year
materially and spiritually