



### STEP BY STEP...

by Emuna Braverman (aish.com)

A friend of mine was cleaning out her garage this summer. Her progress was impeded by her perusal of the years of journals stored there. All that time. All that ink. All those identical entries. "I feel fat. Tomorrow I'm going to go on a diet."

How many of us have similar journals? How many of us end each day discouraged by our lack of progress, reasserting the same old commitments? How many of us arrive at Rosh Hashanah stunned to discover that we're making the same resolutions we made the year before - and the year before that - and the year before that? Do we have any motivation left? Do we have any credibility left? I certainly don't believe myself anymore. Perhaps the Almighty is more generous.

How do we break this pattern? How do we treat this New Year as truly new, as a real opportunity for growth and change? What goals do we have a realistic chance of achieving?

Change doesn't happen overnight.

Deep down, we all want to be great. We all aim to scale lofty heights. "I'll never lose my temper again." "I'll be endlessly patient with my children." "I'll be the perfect wife." "I won't worry about money, my weight, earthquakes...fill in the blank...ever again." And we fall down flat. Because change doesn't happen overnight. And when change does happen, it's not usually immediately evident.

Change happens slowly, incrementally over long periods of time. The accomplishment is in the persistence, in the ability to continue to look ahead, to keep putting one foot in front of the other.

It's common wisdom that fad diets are ultimately unsuccessful. Even though we may initially lose a lot of weight, if there are no tools for real change of

habit, and if we don't plan to live on a steady fare of grapefruits, we will soon revert to old patterns.

This is true of all attempts at change. We need logical, thoughtful planning with rational, accessible steps. There are no quick fixes.

This principle could be applied to all areas of life. Perhaps you want to curb your gossiping. Pick 15 minutes per day that you won't gossip. After six months, add 5 more minutes. And so on. Don't focus on the gossip you engage in the rest of the day (this system is not *carte blanche* to fill the rest of your hours with juicy slander!). Focus on those special 15 minutes. You'll be a different person.

We all read stories of exciting and heroic acts done in a brief moment - saving a child from a burning fire, lifting a car to pull out a trapped loved one, wrestling a bank robber to the ground. These are wonderful stories. But it's not how you build a life of greatness.

I want to be great overnight. But this year I'm accepting that's not going to happen. It's not even the goal.

True growth and change, true closeness to the Almighty comes about in those small, consistent steps. I want to be great overnight. But this year I'm taking a deep breath; I'm accepting that's not going to happen. And even more importantly, I'm accepting that's not the goal.

And hopefully through this slower pace, I will achieve real change and restore my credibility.

Let's mean it this year. Let's take those small steps to grow and change, to unite our people and come closer to our Creator. And in the merit of our baby steps, may the Almighty cause great change for Jews throughout the world and particularly in the land of Israel. Shana Tova.

The "Tashlich" prayer is said on the first afternoon of Rosh Hashana by a pool of water that preferably has fish in it. These prayers are symbolic of the casting away of our mistakes. Of course, it is foolish to think you can rid sins by shaking out your pockets. Rather, the Jewish approach is deep introspection and commitment to change. If "Tashlich" was not said on Rosh Hashana itself, it may be said anytime during the Ten Days of Repentance. Both the body of water and the fish are symbolic. In Talmudic literature Torah is represented as water. Just as fish can't live without water, so too a Jew can't live without Torah! Also, the fact that fish's eyes never close serve to remind us that, so too, God's eyes (so to speak) never close; He knows of our every move.



Thoughts for the year:

"Beware the barrenness of a busy life."  
(Socrates)

"One of the greatest joys known to man is to take a flight into ignorance in search of knowledge."  
(Robert Lynd)

"There is no remembrance of them of former times; neither shall there be any remembrance of them of latter times that are to come."  
(Ecclesiastes 1:11)

## THAT'S JUST WHAT I AM...

by Rabbi Aron Feldman (aish.com)

Why are we lazy? Why do we overeat? Why are we always getting angry? If we are ever reprimanded for improper behaviour, we usually have one ultimate response. "That's how I am."

This answer, in effect, is a way of saying that we are not responsible for our actions. We are saying that we cannot change ourselves because that is how we were constructed. In other words, we do not have the free choice to be otherwise. "That's how I am" is such a popular response because, in fact, most of us do not believe that we have free choice. This is one of the characteristics of modern man.

Avoiding the belief that we have free choice helps alleviate guilt feelings for any of our shortcomings – after all, no one needs to feel guilty about a nature over which he has no control.

Rosh Hashana is a time when we can begin ridding ourselves of this attitude. Today, the first of Tishrei, is the day when man was created. Man's creation was unique among all beings created before him. He was the first being with free choice.

Only he could decide his fate. Only he could choose between good and evil. Only he could rise above his nature.

The first day of man's creation is also the day of his judgment. Because man has free will, he is responsible for his actions. A responsible person has to answer for his actions. Just as on that first Rosh Hashana man was given life, similarly on that day every year God judges man as to whether he deserves to live for another year. This judgment depends upon whether or not man has used, and intends to use, his free will properly.

Thus, the first step in approaching Rosh Hashana and its judgment is to remind ourselves that we are free to choose. We are not merely highly developed animals. We are responsible human beings. We are unique in capacity for free choice. We never lose the capacity to control ourselves. We never lose the capacity to choose.

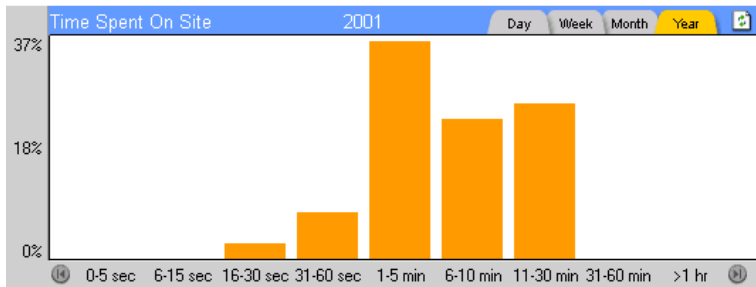
The holiday of Rosh Hashana is a time when it is vital that we regain our belief in our free choice and that there is nothing stopping us from changing. The next time we feel like saying, "That's how I am," we should ask ourselves instead, "What would I prefer to be?"



## KATANGA ONLINE - THE YEAR THAT WAS...

Newsletter: The last year has seen continued growth in Katanga's online presence. Our weekly newsletter now has an online subscriber base approaching 150 (with a 10% international component of: Israel, South Africa, America and London) and an offline readership of 300. The offline edition is even hand-delivered to private residences! As we enter the 3<sup>rd</sup> Series of the newsletter - we again welcome subscribers new and old. If you know of people interested in subscribing, please email us their details to: [katanga@post.com](mailto:katanga@post.com)

Website: The Katanga website has continued to develop and grow, with a complete online archive of past newsletters (in online 'HTML' and offline 'PDF' formats). Hits to the website have experienced steady and continued growth, with the total number of hits so far at 1,437 - a remarkable 75 or so per month. Most visitors are Australian (54.4%) though we do seem to attract international attention with visits from: Israel, South Africa, America, Austria, England, Belgium, Spain, Malaysia and Congo etc. Most visits occur between the hours of 1-2pm (35.45%), most visitors use Microsoft's Internet Explorer (63.3%) and Windows NT (34.4%). The graph pictured (right) depicts the average length of time spent on the website.



People have found the website an interesting source of information about Katanga and its recent history/events. New additions to the site include; a Mazal Tov archive and photos from past events.

We thank all those who provide ongoing feedback and suggestions to the newsletter and the website - your contribution is invaluable. We look forward to continuing the service well into the future. Shanah Tovah.

"The Editors" would like to wish the entire community a happy, healthy and sweet year - Kesiva Vachasima Tovah.

Shanah Tovah, Chag Sameyach and a Gut Yom Tov.

We also take this opportunity to ask forgiveness from all those whom we may have inadvertently offended in any way.

May our hopes for "Leshono Habo'oh Bi-Yerushalym" finally be realised.



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