

Sherrie Miller-Heineman



Proper Preparation Prevents Poor Performance



Rosh means beginning and *shana* means year. We are celebrating the beginning of a new year. What is the significance of these two words and the message they impart?

Shana refers to the dimension of time and stems from the same root as *shinui*, change. We must change with time or we will stagnate and die. We must choose to move forward or inevitably we will find ourselves moving backward. Nothing can thrive in a vacuum. We must be adamant in our resolve to better ourselves and make the necessary adjustments in ourselves before we can hope to attain a fulfilling and satisfying relationship with someone else.

The beginning of a new year is a time of reflection, a time to stop and introspect and assess what we have accomplished in the past year in order to determine and choose our destination and goals for the coming year. Rosh Hashanah is a time to ask ourselves how well we have succeeded in achieving our goals of last year, what still needs to be improved and

changed, what traits need to be eliminated and which new attributes need to be incorporated to reach more elevated goals in the coming year. Our Rabbis tell us it is easier to learn the entirety of Mishna than to change one character trait. However, they console us with the adage: לפום צערא אגרא – “according to the effort, is the reward!”

Marriage is the pivotal arena for interfacing the lower self with the Divine self, by requiring us to see our reflection – the good and the bad – through our partner. We are sometimes faced with many unpleasant revelations about ourselves and must choose if we wish to play the blame game and project the flaw onto our partner, rendering ourselves unchanged and smug, or accept responsibility, seek the path of self-refinement and move toward our true essence of G-dliness.

One cannot do this work alone. In Bereishit we are told, “it is not good for Man to be alone.” It is precisely for this reason G-d split the all-encompassing Man into a Man and a

Woman, for there to be an encounter, a meaningful dialogue through which each gender collectively and individually is afforded the unique opportunity of knowing and understanding ourselves first and then our other half. This holy encounter leads to a total integration and perfection of male and female traits and heals the original fragmentation of the universe while re-uniting us with our Maker.

The letters of ראש, when rearranged, spell אשר, happiness. Happiness is a product of a job well done. Happiness is a sense of satisfaction that the yeoman’s effort we made has borne fruit and enables us to live a much more meaningful life.

The first word of the first *parasha* in the Torah is *Bereishit*, which is comprised of two words – ראש (beginning) and בית (home). The implicit message is that the preliminary and primary purpose of Creation is achieved through the home. G-d’s expectation of us is to make Him a home on earth in which His glory will be revealed and appreciated. This can be achieved by consciously striving to create an ideal relationship in the coming New Year and preparing to build and strengthen our marriages. If we can do that, we will discover ultimate fulfillment and satisfaction in our lives.

Blessings for a joyous and meaningful New Year!

Sherrie Miller-Heineman has an M.A. in marriage counseling with 30 years experience.