

# HAPPY NEW YIRA

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

*The end of a matter is better from its beginning... (Koheles 7:8)*

A great deal of preparation goes into planning for and getting ready for the days of Rosh HaShana. Why are so many good old regular days sacrificed for another day? I had the same question when planning a Bar Mitzvah celebration and more recently a wedding. Why are we giving away so many days for the benefit of a one day event? What makes that day so much more important?

A certain Musar giant wanted to impress his students of the import of the time we invest on Rosh HaShana. He told them over the following frightening scenario. When we hear that Shmerel So and So passed on in the middle of the year, everyone is curious to know, "What happened to Shmerel?" The usual pedestrian answer is that he was walking outside in January without his galoshes and he stepped into a puddle and his feet got wet and he caught a cold. The cold turned into a pneumonia which became complicated beyond the Doctors abilities and within a short time he was overcome by illness and he died. "That's not what happened!" the Rabbi would remind them. "That's not when he caught his cold! It was during Musaf that he chilled out and that's when he got a life threatening cold."

Although we devote two days to Rosh HaShana, our sages remind us that it is really to be treated as a "Yom Arichta" one long day. It's a day that has implication for the rest of the days of the year like the head effects the rest of the body. What we put into the head through qualities of thought, food, and air directly impacts the health and well being of the entire organism.

Therefore we start a New Year or a new anything with joyful trembling, fully aware that we are inscribing on a fresh paper, a blank check, filled with endless and new possibilities. The good news is that whatever we put into it, that's what it can become. The bad news is that whatever we put into it that's what it can become. Those are the same feelings a parent experiences when holding their infant child. Faced with raw potential they tread happily and cautiously.

Rosh HaShana is the DNA of the entire year. It is the blueprint for all that is possible to unfold throughout the entire year. So it is with a Bar Mitzvah boy on his special day and the Bride and Groom standing under the Chupa. This is not just another day like any other. In seed form, the whole future is being scripted in those prescient moments.

Recently my family and a few other families happily joined forces locally in Monsey for a beautiful Shabbos together. It worked out so nicely that the adults and each of the kids found with whom to

converse and/or play. There was one little boy visiting from Lakewood New Jersey for the event the same age as my six year old son. One of my daughters expressed to him how nice it was that he found had a friend his age with whom to play. He looked up in a matter of fact way and told his sister, "It's only for two days."

The Sefas Emes writes, "On Rosh HaShana everyone needs to accept the yoke of heavenly authority for the whole year." It's not an isolated time "only for two days" but rather it's a special time for fueling up on all the requisite quantities and qualities of genuine devotion and commitment for a **happy new yira.**