

THE BLESSINGS WE ALL HOPE FOR

by Rabbi Label Lam

It's a big wonder! The Talmud tells us that "the entire livelihood of a person is decided between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur" (Beitza 16A) and in the liturgy of those days, the Machzor and Slichos, there is barely a whisper of a request. It's a serious matter! Money means a lot to most of us and here a great determination is being made it's not a serious part of the discussion. How then it is decided during these days of awesome judgments?

A young and very successful surgeon once told me of a job interview he had with someone who was looking to join his thriving practice. The dialogue went something like this: The doctor asked him, "What kind of work are you looking for?" (A nice open ended question) The job candidate took the opportunity to answer affirmatively, "I would like to be making over \$200,000 and year, and be able to take off one weekday and one weekend day each week. I would need to have full health insurance coverage and it would certainly be a plus if my travel expenses were covered too!"

Do you think he got the job? The doctor told me he was appalled by the attitude. "He made no mention of what he felt he could contribute to the practice or learn, how dedicated and diligent he was, nothing! There was no talk about healing or helping people either." This was a job interview from the black lagoon. You come in demanding and requesting and expecting this is what you want? The boss wants to know how much grit and intellect will you bring to the workplace?! Are you worth investing time to train etc.? How serious are you!

What can we learn from the sagely statement above that the entire livelihood of a person is decided between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur? We are going on a job interview and a salary review. The Machzor guides us cleverly through the process. In Musaf we mention "Malchios"-Kingship- which helps us present our understanding of the seriousness of the task at hand. Then we speak of Zichronos- Remembrances which focuses on our identification with the success of those who preceded us! It's an expression of optimism and our confidence in our ability to accomplish the task. Then comes Shofaros- the Shofar which betrays our deepest desire and willingness to get it done! That covers everything.

Steven Covey writes in 7 Habits of Highly Effective People that a habit (a good habit too) consists of 1) Knowledge, 2) Skill, and 3) Will! There you have it!

Rosh HaShana is not about us! It's not about what we hope to earn! It's about what we aim to do and accomplish in G-d's world for heaven's sake. There's always something to do for those who are

willing to be helpful. Givers will find a place to give and they will be granted the resource to make good things happen. It's what I call "the vacuum cleaner effect". The cleverly designed machine is able to pull in forcefully because it pushing air outward. That creates the vacuum into which goodness flows. Maybe that's what the Shofar is expressing by blowing out and thereby attracting **the blessing we all hope for!**