

# A BLAST FROM THE PAST

*by Rabbi Label Lam*

(HASHEM) Remembers the forgotten with judgment... (Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur Liturgy)

Where is there to hide?! If everything is remembered by G-d then what hope to we have to rehab our image?

The Kotzker Rebbe cleverly and sharply deduced from these words a saving notion. The implication of HASHEM remembering the forgotten matters implies too that HASHEM forgets things that are mentioned or remembered by us. What does that mean?

Let us say a person buries his sin and tries to cover it up pretending it never happened. It's like ignoring a tax bill. It just never goes away even if we choose to ignore it. The flip side is also true that if he verbalizes it and confesses then it is forgotten. King Solomon discerned this point when he wrote, "One who covers his sin will not be successful but he who admits and abandons (his ways) will receive mercy. (Mishlei 28:13)

Alos, if one mentions his accomplishments and brags aloud about his successes they too can be forgotten or deleted from the memory bank of the universe. If he buries his good deeds and does not cash in on them in this world for honor or public recognition then they are remembered forever by HASHEM.

I know of a few prominent families with extraordinary success with their children. In both of these cases the grandfathers exerted themselves during World War II to save thousands and thousands of Jews from the ravages of the Nazis.

After the war when chroniclers of the history approached them to interview them about their activities they remained silent and never uttered a word or told a single story portraying their self-sacrifice and heroism. "(HASHEM" extends kindness to thousands (of generation) to those who love Me and keep My Mitzvos". Those deeds done for HASHEM and HASHEM alone are never forgotten. (Shemos 20:6)

Therefore it is important to take an inventory, especially during these auspicious days between Rosh HaShana and Yom Kippur and see if there might be something there that needs mentioning so it can be forgotten.

A bunch of years back on Erev Pesach I got a call, a blast from the past. A young Jewish girl, Leslie S someone I had gone to public elementary school and public high school with many moons ago was

reaching out for some spiritual assistance. She called me by my English name and introduced herself. We had not spoken since 6<sup>th</sup> grade but I remembered immediately who she was. She told me that she heard I became a Rabbi and she hoped I could guide her on a certain matter. I neither denied nor confirmed her claim about me but I did agree to listen carefully to her plight and do what I could.

When the conversation was winding down I asked her if she was in touch with anyone from the old days and she shared with me a short list of people, some of whom I remembered and inquired about.

Then she asked me whether I was in touch with anyone from way back then. I have a friend who had become Shomer Shabbos like me and he was basically the only one that I have any connection to after all these many years. So I told her I'm still in close contact with, let us say Steve Goldberg (the name has been changed to protect the innocent-guilty). When I just mentioned his name, she immediately chimed in, "Steve Goldberg!? He pulled the chair out from under me in 6<sup>th</sup> grade!"

After we hung up I called my buddy and asked him to guess who just called. There was no way he was going to get it so I dropped her name, "Leslie S!" He responded laughingly, "Leslie S? I pulled the chair out from under her in 6<sup>th</sup> grade!" I told him, "I know! When I mentioned your name, she told me!" He got such a shock! "SHE REMEMBERED!? SHE REMEMBERED!?" I have to give her a call myself and ask for forgiveness! Here it was more than 40 years later and Leslie S did not forget and certainly HASHEM does not forget either, and we must act here and now to avoid being surprised with **a blast from the past.**