

# HIGH HOLIDAYS & SOUND INVESTMENTS

by Jon Erlbaum

## (Insights for Rosh Hashana)

*Imagine the world's wealthiest investor finally gives you a meeting, after you've waited an entire year for meaningful face-time. You know all too well that if you can only manage to get him on board with your vision, he can effortlessly transform your creative dreams into a concrete reality. After painstaking preparation, you arrive at the meeting and begin to present him with a PowerPoint summary of your strategic plan: you take him through your mission statement, demonstrate the market needs, point to your track record and articulate why you are the right person for the project. Then comes the climactic moment: you request the amount you would need to turn this plan into a reality. He pauses, sighs, and regretfully responds: "in theory, the amount would not be a problem at all - but your project is not in line with my investment priorities".*

## **MAKING SURE WE DON'T BLOW THE PITCH**

During the High Holidays, we get meaningful "face-time" with the World's Wealthiest Investor, and He Himself wants to make sure that we don't blow the pitch. Even though He has given us opportunities to meet with Him all throughout the year, He now offers us 10 focused days of "power-meetings", inviting us to not only present Him with our strategic plan, but to also solicit Him to stand behind it (these are known as the 10 "Days of Awe", beginning with Rosh Hashanah and culminating on Yom Kippur). The great news is that G-d - the ultimate Investor - already believes in us and is tremendously eager to invest in our projects. Amazingly, He even takes it upon Himself to steer us away from pursuing the wrong proposals. **Do you hear what a tremendous kindness this is? The very same Investor that we are coming to with our strategic plan is focused on making sure that we don't blow the pitch to Him.** How does He go about this?

## **THE FIRST 2 DAYS: AN "ORIENTATION SYMPOSIUM" KNOWN AS ROSH HASHANA**

Since He realizes that we may not have researched His investment priorities so carefully, He begins our 10-day meetings with an interactive, 2-day orientation symposium: allowing us to discover more about this Investor's "background"; to explore what types of ventures He values and supports; and more. During those 2 days - known as Rosh Hashanah - He watches us to get a sense of our sincerity and integrity: Are we awake during the seminar? Are we alertly paying attention to the content? Do we seem to be getting the big picture? Are we internalizing its message? In short: are we viable candidates worth sinking major resources into?

## THE NEXT 8 DAYS: ADJUSTING OUR STRATEGIC PLAN

Once we understand where this magnanimous Investor is coming from, He grants us 8 more days to revise our proposal. He urges us to spend at least a little extra time going through His brochures and "corporate literature" - available in the form of Prayer Books and Torah texts - to maximize our chances of creating revisions that will attract His support. And He even lets us practice our pitch on Him - as many times as we need to get it right!

## 10 DAYS OF QUALITY TIME

Over the next 10 days, we all have a golden opportunity: to spend quality time with the Investor that can truly supply the resources we need to make great things happen in this world. He only wants to know what we will do with those resources. What will we do with the health; the strength; the wisdom; the money[1]? If we really tap in to what's going on during the 1st two days - during the awesome orientation opportunity available on Rosh Hashanah - we can clearly understand how the Investor would want us to use these blessings. May we all merit to perceive that message clearly, and may we be worthy recipients of abundant investments in the year to come!

Have a Shana Tovah U'Metukah (a Good & Sweet Year)! Love, Jon & The Chevra

*1. Important Note: G-d's annual determination for how (and how much) to invest in each of His beloved creations is certainly more complex than how it is presented in this article. In no way am I purporting to represent all of the factors that go in to the infinite, multi-faceted "formulas" that He uses in His process of carrying out judgment and mercy. Clearly, for example, there are many righteous people who are allotted sparse financial resources even though they would use increased money to promote good in the world. Our Sages tell us, nonetheless, that the primary apportioning of reward is reserved for the Next World. Therefore, the ideas presented above merely reflect one important component for how G-d decides to bestow blessings in this world (i.e. the assessment of what will we DO with those blessings), but there are clearly many other factors that He considers.*

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