

# IT'S NEVER TOO LATE

by Rabbi Pinchas Avruch

*"See - I have placed before you today life and good, and death and evil...and you will choose life so you will live, you and your offspring." (Devarim/Deuteronomy 30:15,19)* As Moshe cajoles the Jewish Nation one last time - for it was the morning of the day he would die - to maintain their G-d consciousness and remain true to their covenant, he reminds them of the consequences of their decisions. At the start of the narrative Moshe made clear that that day's commitment was a renewal of the covenant of old. Why did he need to reemphasize that this essential choice between good and evil is being made "today"?

Rabbi Moshe Feinstein (1) explains that every day we have the choice of two paths to pursue, and that day's decision is wholly independent of the past. One who has made spiritually corrosive, unhealthy decisions throughout life can (and should) choose that today's decisions will be growth oriented, spiritually nourishing and healthful. Likewise, one whose decisions have been spiritually productive cannot rely on past performance to guarantee future results. On any given day, the path of evil is still present as a very enticing option; every day must have an active decision to live with G-d consciousness. Further, when one has a child, the educational and instructional process, from the child's earliest days, must be rooted in and enriched by spiritual nourishment.

As we approach Rosh Hashanah we are easily dejected when we recall our growth goals of the past as our limited success in meeting them over time. But we must remember who we are: "You are children to G-d, your L-rd." (ibid 14:1) When a rebellious subject of a king desires to return to the kingdom the king may opt to punish the transgressor before restoring his citizenship. But a wayward child who returns is welcomed by his parents with open, loving arms. Our Father awaits us...it is we who must so choose.

Have a Good Shabbos and a Sweet, Happy and Healthy New Year!

(1) 1895-1986; Rosh Yeshiva/Dean of Mesivtha Tifereth Jerusalem in New York City; the leading Halachic/Jewish legal decisor of his time and one of the principal leaders of Torah Jewry through much of the last century

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