

CONNECTED

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

"You are all standing today before Hashem your G-d" Debarim 29:9

On the last day of his life Moshe Rabenu a'h concluded his 36-day long "last words" to the Jewish people by commanding them to enter into a new covenant. This covenant was one that made every Jew responsible for every other member of the Jewish people. Araboot -- guarantee -- was the nature of the promise. When one enters into a contract and the party extending credit is not 100% sure of the creditworthiness of the other party, the lender may ask for guarantees. A third party co-signs the document making him responsible should the party to the deal fail to fulfill his obligations. The people accepted responsibility for the actions of their fellow Jews.

Once there was a group of people traveling on an ocean liner. Suddenly the alarms began to ring. The crew scurried about alerting the passengers to the deck and the lifeboats that were hurriedly being lowered to safety. Other crewmembers searched for the cause of the trouble. As the boat slowly sunk into the water, they found a steerage class passenger in his cabin drilling holes in the bottom of the boat. "What are you doing? Are you crazy? Stop drilling or we will all go down under!" they exclaimed. "It is none of your business", replied the busy saboteur, "it is my cabin and I can do whatever I want to in here." The lesson is clear. No Jew stands alone -- the actions of one affects all of his or her fellow Jews.

Rav Aharon Kotler, zt'l, said that this guarantor role is not merely a responsibility regarding reward and punishment. The Tomer Deborah, a classic written by Rabbi Moshe Cordebora, zt'l, says that the Jewish people are actually connected and each member of our nation is a part of one holy neshamah [soul]. The joint responsibility of one Jew to another is based on the fact that each has a portion of the soul of all others ACTUALLY inside of his or her soul. Therefore, should one do a misvah, one enhances the other souls contained within them self. Conversely should one commit a transgression; one damages the souls of every other Jew.

The Gemara [Yoma 86b] says, "For the sake of one who does Teshubah [repents] Heaven forgives the entire world. How can this be? Could one's repentance benefit those who have not repented them self? The explanation is that in the soul of the one who does repent are the portions of all other Jews in the world -- and that piece of spirituality at least -- gains from the repentance of the person.

Today -- more than ever -- the Jews of the world need unity. Each one must feel that his or her actions are crucial on the results of the judgment of our people on this Rosh Hashanah. Each must

feel responsible for the fate of all of us. May each of us do our share of repentance and good deeds in these crucial final days of the year to tilt the scale to the side of merit and mercy for the unified Jewish people -- Amen.

DID YOU KNOW THAT

The one who blows the shofar says 2 blessings before blowing; "To listen to the shofar" and "Shehehiyanu". Even if the one blowing has already fulfilled his obligation and he is blowing to fulfill the obligation of the congregation, he says the two blessings for the congregation. The blessings and the blowing must be done while standing. However, if the blowing was already done sitting, the obligation has been fulfilled b'diabad [after the fact] and one does not have to repeat the blowing while standing. [Source: Shulhan Arukh, Siman 585:1,2 and Mishnah Berurah loc. cit.]

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