

Weekly Teaching

December 28, 2018

Soon we begin our new secular year.

Like our annual observance of Rosh Hashanah, a new year prompts us to examine our lives again and to consider more carefully the world around us.

I find myself worried by the growing tensions that confront us; locally, nationally and globally.

I worry as a Jew, an American and a human being.

We live in unsettling and uncertain times. Yet I find strength both in my Jewish faith and in the history of the Jewish People.

From the time of our biblical spiritual ancestors onward, we Jews have been all too historically familiar with confronting uncertainty.

Throughout our history we have confronted the curses that come with life, and we have still always found the strength to pursue and celebrate life.

Our ancestors understood that one way to accomplish the mitzvah of “choosing life” is by accessing the power of prayer.

According to rabbinic tradition, when we pray, we create the spiritual bridge between earth and heaven.

Our prayers express our faith and our insistence that we will not give in to the fears that confront us.

Because of our faith we are able to remind ourselves that God has faith in us as well.

Our prayerful words remind us that we are God’s partners in all of Creation.

We pray because we ask God to give us the strength to be the best we can be and for God to help give us an extra divine nudge in the right direction.

All of Jewish history is the story of how God acts through the human beings who had faith in the Divine Presence.

Our prayers are a collective cue to resume the living of the sacred Jewish historical narrative.

May our prayers take on a special intensity and depth in this new secular year.

May God listen to our prayers—or us and our families, for the Jewish people, for our American brothers and sisters, and for all of humanity.

May this new secular year grant us all health, fulfillment, blessings and peace.

Shabbat Shalom & L’Shanah Tovah!

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