

RABBI'S MESSAGE

EVERY DAY IS ROSH HASHANA

*In your wisdom, God, You renew each day, the miracle of Creation.
Yet we, your children, tend to accept the awesome rise of the warming sun
without the courtesy of a silent thanks...*

These opening lines of "A Parent's Prayer," were written 45 years ago and recited by the poet at a bar mitzvah. The poet is now about to celebrate her 86th birthday. She recently participated in the wedding of her eldest grandchild. She has enjoyed playing with three grandchildren and one great grandchild. With her husband of 63 years, she raised three adult children who have strived in their professional lives to make the world a better place. Her middle son became a rabbi.

Yes, the 1974 bar mitzvah, complete with checkered bellbottom pants and a polka-dot bow tie, was mine. I have recited my mother's poetry often to celebrate new babies and bar or bat mitzvahs. Each time I reread those words, I think about the child who is being blessed on that day and consider the joys and complications of relationships between parents, children and community. I also think about my own relationships and try to add my personal silent thanks.

In Chapters 7 and 8 of Deuteronomy, we learn about abundance and hardship. Moses reminds the children of Israel of their journey in the wilderness, with times of hunger that were then satisfied by manna "...to teach you that man does not live by bread alone..." (8:3). We are reminded that faith and devotion can help us through the most difficult of times. Three Hebrew words express the process of gratitude: *v'achalta*, *v'sa-va-ta*, *u-ve-rachta* – Eat, Be Satisfied, and Bless (8:10). When we enjoy our gifts, it's time to offer blessings.

I believe these words are not just about food. We don't just fill our bodies; we fill our lives. The abundance of food God promised us in the new land is only a beginning. We can fill our lives with song, with beauty, with love and with challenges. Every moment is a chance to breathe in the spirit of the Divine, to embrace our fellow human beings, to learn something new, to enhance someone else's life and to be enriched by others.

On Rosh Hashana, we think about the year that was and the year that will be. We try to connect with God on this day, praying that the next year will be better than the last. It's a great opportunity to begin the year with the spirit of gratitude. We can accept that our connections are not limited to those days and times when we attend a worship service that reminds us to become our best selves. We can seize the opportunity, every day, to acknowledge the blessings we already enjoy and more blessings to anticipate. We can welcome challenges that help us develop strength and determination. And we can offer a silent thanks that the sun continues to rise, the grass continues to grow, and our lives will continue to be filled.

Shana Tova! Happy New Year! And Happy New Day!
L'shalom,

Rabbi Dan Gordon

THE SHARED ROOTS OF JUDAISM AND CATHOLICISM YOUTUBE PRODUCTION WITH RABBI DAN

TBT Rabbi Dan Gordon was recently featured as a guest on *The Catholic Talk Show*, a weekly televised production led by a Catholic priest and two other scholars. The show is entertaining and fun, giving a glimpse into many similarities between Judaism and Catholicism...and also, of course, the differences. There was a lot of learning in the hour-long conversation, that Rabbi Gordon described as "kind of like The View, but about religion. It might have looked like 'three against one,' but it was really a great discussion!" Check it out with this link.

<https://youtu.be/dSMPL5xUJZY>