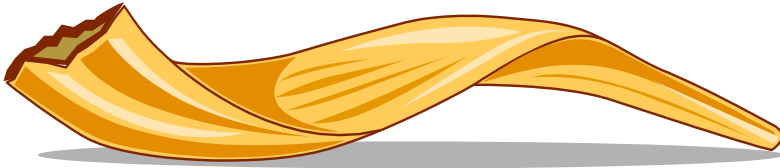


SHOFAR שופר



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Rav Moshe Dovid Tendler

A Rosh Hashana Message for 5768

King Dovid's exuberant blessing to those who "follow the ways of Hashem" (Psalm 128) concludes with the prayerful wish:

"וראה בנים לבניך שלום על ישראל"

"May you merit seeing children of your children."

More is encompassed in this prayer than the wish for longevity to enjoy grandchildren.

In 1994 I spoke at an AIDS conference in San Francisco. My topic "Consoling but Not Condoning" analyzed the ethical concerns in treating AIDS patients. During the "Question Period" following my address, a participant in the conference, a Reform clergyman, posed a question unrelated to the contents of my presentation. The Mi-Yehudi? (**מי-יהודי?**) Issue was then being debated heatedly, in the Anglo-Jewish press. The questioner referred to my expressed concern for "consoling" or ministering to the AIDS patient with the charge "Why do you reject me as a Jew, deny my Jewishness, because I was converted under Reform auspices, and am married to a non Jewish woman?" A participant at the conference – also a Reform clergyman – rose and shouted "Let me answer. I will tell you who is a Jew – the one who will take his grandchildren to the Temple. My only son just married a non-Jewish girl. I will not

take my grandchildren to my temple. I no longer share the destiny of the Jewish people."

These past weeks, the tragedy of intermarriage was debated in the newspapers. An academician, a former Yeshiva student, a lonely man of no faith, married a non-Jewess. From the pages of the newspaper he railed against those who have shunned him, excluding him from contact with the Orthodox community. His idolatrous worship of "American Autonomy" blinded him. He could not see the reality of his rejection of the discipline, the truth and beauty of our Torah faith. I do not know if his parents observed the ritual of mourning when they learned of his intermarriage. Surely this ritual is a most appropriate reaction to this familial tragedy. Rending one's garment, and "sitting shiva" is not to punish the son for his transgressions. It is preemptory mourning for the grandchildren who will not live to walk to "shul" with their grandparents, and will not share the glorious destiny of Nation Israel.

May we merit to walk to shul with the children of our children's children, who walk in the paths of Torah and Yiras Shomayim.

בברכת כתיבה וחתימה טובה

תחל שנת סלוק הרפתינו