

SMALL CHANGES MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE!

The “lazy days” of summer are behind us, and many of us have just breathed a sigh of relief as we have readied and dropped our children off at college, or have ensconced our younger ones back into a regular routine at home. We have come back from vacation, from our beach houses, from visits with old friends, and we are trying to dig back in at work, with renewed vigor and purpose.

We have picked up our “Holiday Packets” at Beth Rishon, and our looking forward to time with our families and friends as we worship together at the end of this month, as the cycle of the Jewish calendar begins again.

It’s that time for each of us, as Jews, during Rosh Hashanah, to take stock of ourselves and our lives. In the Jewish calendar, this is the time of the year to make changes. The word for this introspection and change is *Tsuvah*, loosely defines as repentance. *Tsuvah* actually means "return". The idea is that during tsuvah one returns to a more pure state of being.

Given the trouble that our natural world faces coupled with the impact of our own lifestyles on this degradation, it is a good time to take a look at how we are living on Earth, and to make a pledge for a **Green Tsuvah**. While one can make this Green Tsuvah at anytime, the month before and during Rosh Hashanah is a good time, since according to Jewish tradition, we are most open to making changes at that time of the year.

Make these changes easy things for you and your family to accomplish; enjoyable changes that your families can do together, and be proud of. Some ideas include:

Make a pledge to **visit a local farmers market** together as a family once a week. Enjoy local produce, support a local farmer, and as you taste the goodness of something “just picked”, the next time you are in a grocery store and pick up bananas from Ecuador, think about the journey they have traveled, and the energy used to get them to your table.

Go apple picking with your grandchildren, remind them when you eat those apples and honey on Rosh Hashanah, where the apples came from, and be thankful that we live in such a beautiful and bountiful part of the world.

Take a family hike in one of our local parks and hiking trails. Bergen County has a plethora of areas where we can easily get out into nature and enjoy the wilderness around us. Remember God’s creations, and how important it is that we sustain and protect them.

Once a week, **pack a “garbage free lunch”** for your child to take to school, or for you to take to work. Have a discussion at home about where all the garbage goes, when you throw it out. Can you reduce what you use at home? If you live in Wyckoff, you can now recycle all plastics up to a number 5. Look at the plastic containers you get at the grocery store or Deli. Check out the little triangle at the bottom. If it has a number 1-5, you can recycle it, rather than throw it in the trash. Can you reduce the number of cans of garbage you throw out each week?

Small changes, compounded by many people will make a BIG difference in caring for our environment. May our Green Tsuvah bring us one step closer to taking the necessary steps to protect our earth, and appreciate God’s natural gifts and creations for humankind? Shana Tova!