

Rabbi's Column

We are in the middle of a very intense religious season for Jews worldwide. Each individual Jew decides how much of this intensity will spill over into their daily lives, of course, which is one of the reasons why there is a wide range of religious behaviors within Judaism. The way the holydays are structured over the month (which this year stretches from the night of September 19th through the night of October 13th) teaches some lessons for how life might be lived.

[As I write this, I realize that everything in the current climate can be taken in a political way. That is not my intent.]

In no particular order:

- A person needs to find the faults within themselves, and identify how they have harmed others. When dealing with the faults of others, the basically valid way is to already be in relationship with them, and gently let them know how you have been hurt by their actions or words. When you do not desire to be in a friendly relationship with them, then you do have to let them become a person on their own.
- God wants humans to get along. If you have worked on getting along with your fellow human beings, then God is ready for you to become a better partner (Jews consider themselves as God's very junior partners in perfecting the world – there is job security, as the world has yet to be perfected after thousands of years).
- It is not enough to say, "I'm sorry." If your actions do not change, words are meaningless.
- Improving yourself is only part of what you are here for. You must act upon the world as well in some practical manner, because very few people can help perfect the world by focusing solely upon themselves.
- There is always much in this world to be enjoyed.
- The joys experienced in this world are to be deepened by understanding that our influence can objectively be considered minimal. Over the course of thousands of years, very few people are remembered for who they really were, if they are remembered at all.
- Striving to do all of these things well consists of intense moments of prolonged introspection and intense moments of mindful enjoyment while remaining in relationship with other people and God.