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Brodetsky Primary School

18th September 2018
 9th Tishrei 5779

Dear Parents and Carers,

Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement, the holiest day of the Jewish year. Historically, this is the day that Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the second set of Tablets, proving that G-d had forgiven the Jewish People for the sin of the golden calf. From that day forward, every Yom Kippur has a metaphysical power to rectify our mistakes, both individually and collectively.

Ten days before Yom Kippur, on Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, Jewish People are encouraged to look at themselves and ask such questions as, “What changes do I need to make in my life?” “Do I give enough to charity?” “Do I spend enough quality time with my family?” “Was I as caring to my neighbour as I could have been?” It is at the point when we cannot give a definitive answer that we decide that we need to change.

Often, while contemplating the changes that need to be made, we start judging ourselves and our actions. However, what we really need to judge are our intentions, especially in relation to people.

During the Yom Kippur afternoon service we read how Jonah had time to contemplate his intentions seated in the stomach of a big fish for 3 days. We too have the time to scrutinise our lives over the 25 hour period of Yom Kippur, whether that be in the main shul, the children’s service or at home. This self-examination of our intentions is the essence of what takes place on Yom Kippur.

It was a Friday afternoon and my class were enjoying a ‘choosing session’ as a reward for their week’s excellent behaviour. It was the end of the session as I declared “tidy up time” when I came across a child who had poured out all of the various classroom resources into a heap in the middle of the carpet. Although my first instinct was to become frustrated at the situation that was going to dramatically extend the amount of time needed to tidy up, I simply asked the child what they thought they were doing. The child responded with “I wanted to make sure all pieces were put away in their proper baskets”. True to his word, as I looked at the shelving unit above where he was sitting, he had placed empty baskets ready to collect the various resources.

When our children finish school with grades that are not as we would have hoped, before getting upset we should ask ourselves, what were their intentions? Did they try their absolute best? After all, even those with the best of intentions can sometimes fall short.



This year on Yom Kippur, no matter what our religion or beliefs, we should take the time to think about our life's intentions and how we are going to match them with positive actions that will help make the world a better place, not just for ourselves, but for everyone.

גמר חתימה טובה Gmar Chatimah Tovah

May you and your families be inscribed and sealed for a year of good health, peace and prosperity.

Warmest Wishes,

Mr Yechezkel

Head of Limmudei Kodesh and Ivrit
Brodetsky Primary School
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