

## ***New Beginnings***

“This month shall mark for you the beginning of the months” –Exodus 12:2. Also in this chapter is found the commandment by God to change the numbering of months in the year. The first month was *Tishrei*, the month of *Rosh HaShanah* (literally, “head of the year”), the beginning of the world. Since the Exodus from Egypt, however, the first month of the calendar has become *Nisan*, the month in which the Israelites left Egypt. God is telling us that whenever we get out of slavery is our time of new beginning. While time does not stop nor does the sequence of years change, we recognize our new beginnings by counting the days, months, and years of our life from our release from bondage...we are given the power and responsibility to number the months and the time so that we can differentiate between our time spent in slavery and our time in freedom.

- How do you mark your new beginnings?
- How have you acknowledged whether or not you are currently living in slavery?
- What does freedom from bondage mean for you?

(From *Finding Recovery and Yourself in Torah*, by Rabbi Mark Borovitz, p. 105)

### *Sweet New Year*

“May it be your will *Adonai* our God and God of our ancestors to renew us for a good and sweet year.”  
—On eating an apple on *Rosh Hashanah*. There is something so profoundly simple about apples and honey on the New Year. It’s so basic. For me, it is a prayer of thanksgiving and hope rolled in one. All of my life’s aspirations brought into focus. I humbly recognize where I have come from and where I need to go, what I have yet to do to make my life holy. No glitz, no glitter. I simply savor the sweet juices of the fruits of God’s world as I prepare myself for the spiritual renewal I long for all year long. I know it’s possible at any time, but there is something special about the Holy Day season that makes it ever the more possible for me.

For me, apples are symbols that I can return. So I get ready for my return with a modest prayer and an unadorned act. According to tradition, when children are born, trees are to be planted—their branches to be used for a *chuppah* (bridal canopy) much later in that person’s life. In recovery, through spiritual renewal, we are all as children who take that first breath in the world.

*(From 100 Blessings Every Day: Daily Twelve Step Recovery Affirmations, Exercises for Personal Growth & Renewal Reflecting Seasons of the Jewish Year, by Rabbi Kerry M. Olitzky, p.3).*



## Starting Over

Rebbe Nachman teaches that we should pay no attention to our own conception of ourselves, especially if that conception is negative. If you find that you are limited by your idea of who you are, throw that idea out the window!

Understand: *Every day you are an entirely new creation.*

A person is created anew each and every day. Believe you can start over. Know you can start over. You can start over next week or tomorrow, and you can even start over again today. Start over as many times as you want or need. Why not start over now, this moment in time? Take a deep breath and start over.

If you're feeling down and your thoughts are in a negative spiral, start over.

If you tried to control your temper and failed, start over.

If you meant to be kinder and forgot, start over.

Rebbe Nachman tells us that no good thought is ever lost. Thoughts have their own lives and your good thoughts still exist in the spiritual realm where thoughts live. No thought ever needs to go to waste.

Find a good thought. Think back to the time when you had a good thought about your life, about God, about yourself. Remember that good thought. Go back in your mind. Retrieve that positive thought about yourself and refresh yourself with the positive concept you had of yourself in the past. Really, think this thought right now. With this thought in your mind, you can start anew.

(From *May You Have a Day*, by Chaya Rivka Zwolinski, p.1).

### *Tashlich for Recovery*

The ritual of *tashlich* involves symbolically casting off the remnants of our doing wrong. One tradition is to empty our pockets of crumbs and cast them off into a body of water, a visual reminder that we were walking around with the remnants of doing wrong and that now we are rid of even the remnants. This casting away of crumbs is often accompanied by a verse from the Book of Micah “God will take us back in love; God will cover up our iniquities, You will hurl all of our wrong doings into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19). Earlier in the Book of Micah, we were reminded of what God wants from us in order to make amends. “With what shall I approach the LORD, do homage to God on high? Shall I approach God with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Would the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with myriads of streams of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for my wrong doings? ‘God has told you, O man, what is good, and what the LORD requires of you: only to do justice and to love goodness and to walk humbly with your God.’” (Micah 6:6-8). Micah has responded with instructions for making a living amends—do the next right thing, and listen for and follow Sacred guidance with humility. As we make *tashlich*, let us cast out the crumbs of people, places, and things that keep us from recovery. We don’t need to carry them around with us any longer. “God will take us back in love; God will cover up our iniquities. You will hurl all of our wrong doings into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19).