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One reason many people do not keep their resolutions for the new year is because they fail to believe in themselves enough. They did not have a strong enough will that they were able to keep to what they took upon themselves.

However, *Chazal* established in *Shemoneh Esrei* the *tefillah* of “*V’hasieinu*,” thus, it must be possible to maintain our goals and improve our spiritual connection with Hashem. Even if we cannot keep all our resolutions completely perfectly, we can still grow and maintain a higher level than the previous year.

However, it is pointless to try to keep resolutions if we fail to seek advice on how to do this in practice. The *Ramchal* (author of *Mesillas Yesharim*)’s advise in sefer *Derech Eitz Chaim* is as follows:^[1]

‘It is therefore a duty upon each person to reflect with himself. If he doesn’t reflect and think, wisdom will not come after him...a person, for many years of his life, thinks a lot about his various responsibilities, which are only his temporary responsibilities. Why can’t he think for an hour about the things that really matter, such as: Who am I? Why did I come onto this world? What does Hashem want from me? What will be with my end?’

“This (an hour of self-introspection every day) is the greatest remedy one can have against his evil inclination. It is easy and yet it does so much. It bears many results. Every day, a person should reflect for at least an hour a day, and empty himself from the rest of his thoughts so that he can only think about just this (what he have said).

“And he should ask himself in his heart: “What did the forefathers do, whom Hashem found desirable? What did Moshe Rabbeinu do? What did Dovid HaMelech do? What did all the great leaders before me do?”

“And he should realize in his mind how good it is to do this for all his life.”

The *Ramchal* is advising us to undertake this process of introspection for the entire year, not just inspiration for Elul. If we are really truthful with ourselves, and if we really want to gain from *Yomim Noraim* for the rest of the year, then we must put in regular *avodah* to ensure we protect what we have gained from *Yomim Noraim*.^[2]

Make A Self Accounting

The *Ramchal* teaches that the most essential tool we need in order to maximize our potential and our

connection to Hashem is to set aside time for self-introspection. Ideally, this self-reflection should be conducted on a daily basis. However, these days it is unusual for people to consistently achieve this level. Thus, realistically, such a self-accounting may be conducted every week or ten days.

During this time, we can make a self-accounting akin to the following: “On Rosh Hashanah, I made a resolution to do X. At the peak of the *Yomim Tovim* I also reached a certain spiritual level. Have I succeeded in keeping my resolutions and maintaining an elevated level compared to last year? If not, what can I do to make sure I maintain this level and keep my resolutions?”

On Rosh Hashanah, Hashem decrees each person’s fate for the coming year. However, our responsibility is to keep our word. Realistically, we must face the fact that we will face responsibilities, challenges, and difficulties in the coming year. It will definitely not be simple to maintain the level we reached on *Yomim Noraim* throughout the rest of the year. During this time, we must stop and think about the purpose of life. We must be truthful with ourselves, recalling our resolutions and good intentions we set for ourselves and what we promised Hashem we would try to achieve on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

One practical method to achieve this process is to write down our resolutions. Then, we can take out the paper and review it during our reflection time. This process will reveal whether we are really keeping our word, and where we need further work. If we are not fulfilling our resolutions, we can ask ourselves: “How will I face Hashem next Rosh Hashanah...?”

In summary, in order to maximize our chances of the spiritual high gained on *Yom Tov* spilling into the rest of the year, we must designate regular times of quiet during which we can make a self-accounting. We all have the free will to decide whether or not we want to put in the effort to increase our chances of experiencing our *Yom Tov* blessings throughout the rest of the year.

[1] This has been loosely translated and is fairly literal to the text.

[2] See also Kedushas Levi: Shavuot, and also Ramban: Emunah UBitachon, chap. 19

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