Such Stuff as Dreams are Made On:

The Future of Teshuvah

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The Jewish Center

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Though the title of this morning’s talk is excerpted from Prospero’s soliloquy in the fourth act of the Tempest, I’d like to begin our journey with the opening act of Macbeth.

To refresh your memories, we’re introduced to the Scottish King Duncan as he hears the news that his generals, Macbeth and Banquo, have defeated the invading armies of Ireland and Norway. As the play begins, Macbeth is the trusted friend and noble warrior – praised by his captains and his king. He commands the respect and admiration of his officers. Words like sedition and treason aren’t to be found on the lips of this loyal servant. Repeatedly, he’s described as a brave and decent soul.


CAPTAIN Doubtful it stood,
As two spent swimmers that do cling together
And choke their art. The merciless Macdonwald—
Worthy to be a rebel, for to that
The multiplying villainies of nature
Do swarm upon him—from the Western Isles
Of kerns and galloglasses is supplied;
And Fortune, on his damned quarrel smiling,
Showed like a rebel’s whore. But all’s too weak;
For brave Macbeth—well he deserves that name—
Disdaining Fortune, with his brandished steel
Which smoked with bloody execution,
Like valor’s minion carved out his passage
Till he faced the slave,
Which ne’er shook hands, nor bade farewell to him,
Till he unseamed him from the navel to th’ chops,
And fixed his head upon our battlements.
KING O valiant cousin, worthy gentleman!

But already in Act II his character has totally changed. Macbeth, Macduff and Lennox are all thanes, the rough equivalent of barons. And Donaldbain and Malcolm are the unsuspecting sons of King Duncan.


MACDUFF O horror, horror, horror!
Tongue nor heart cannot conceive nor name thee!
MACBETH AND LENNOX What’s the matter?
MACDUFF Confusion now hath made his masterpiece!
Most sacrilegious murder hath broke ope
The Lord’s anointed temple and stole thence
The life o’ the building!
MACBETH What is’t you say? The life?
LENNOX Mean you His Majesty?
What happened? How did Macbeth go from being a noble soldier to an ambitious and monstrous villain? A moment ago he was a decent guy. Suddenly he’s murdering the king, framing his servants and killing those servants to cover his tracks. Then he looks into the face of the king’s grieving son and tells a bold-faced lie about how it all happened.

Of course we know his ambition is encouraged by the ever-scheming Lady Macbeth, but how does it begin? Where does it come from? How – in the first instance – does Macbeth hit on the idea of a palace coup and an overthrow of the honest king? What accounts his utter transformation? Hold this question in the back of your mind. We’re going to return to it in a few moments.

But before we do, I want to zoom out and see if we can think about some larger issues this morning. We’ve just come out of Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is looming. The New Year is upon us. We’re in shul davening for Hashem to do his part. What about our part?

So allow me to share with you two questions that I’ve been thinking about in this teshuva season:

- There is a principle which we’ll learn more about in a moment called המיראת ליבו – the penitent’s resolve for the future. And it figures prominently in the writing of the Rambam. The question I’d like to examine is is: What is the function of this resolve? How does simply contemplating the future or making a resolution contribute to the process of repentance?
My second question is: Is there value in a little teshuvah or is it fundamentally an all-or-nothing proposition? Think about mechila, one of the components of teshuvah that we’ve talked about in the past. Either the person grants forgiveness or he does not. There doesn’t seem to be a category of fractional forgiveness or partial credit. How about when it comes to teshuvah writ large? Is it possible to move the needle even if we have not accomplished full repentance? To put it a little differently, is it possible to be an aspirationalist and a realist at the same time?

To crack open some of these issues, let’s do a little learning together. I want to learn two Rambams with you:

Rambam 3. הלכות תשובה פרק י לחטאת

כל מין שלחואנים מעשה ציון שלשת בנים שלчь悖ת דית חורי ולכשרות, לוק שאר פסליון דית שק

פסליון משמע כמות שמחה או שלג ולע פישיותاريינך ישנהו והר חפוסיון זהиш סיועו שלח钮

ולדבוק הראד.

נאים חזור מזרע ברוך מישיקום תשesdaית מעפטם, יהוה חוץ גמורה שלח ילב אפורל

לךלהם.

נאים חזור המושק באמצעות בקשות מרושבים או פספסים, יהוה חוץ גמורה שלח ישב אפורל

נאים חזור מפריך ויניש מישרבו אהל שזרד בוך, יהוה חוץ גמורה עבור לא

ייש.

Now, the simple reading of this Rambam seems to answer both our questions in very stark terms. There’s no value to resolve or looking at the future. Everything is about repairing the past. And there’s certainly no partial credit. In fact, the Rambam is saying it’s not enough to go back to square one; you have to do one better. The dice player is not even allowed to play the game just for fun. He has to repudiate the enterprise in its entirety. According to the Rambam, teshuvah has to be so complete and so thorough that the penitent leaves absolutely no trace of his past at all.

But now let’s look at the Rambam in Hilchos Teshuvah.

Rambam 4. הלכות תשובה פרק ב

א י דו חירוט מפורים. הז שAlabama יד בושב ובאפשרת יזרו לועשות ופרסה ולא עשה מתמי השבובה.

לא חירית או מכשולים כה, יזרו יד שיא אשה עשה עבירה ואלזרן גומר וננייה עמה והרא ענייה נמי באיתובות בכה

ובכה גמור מהאנת חשב הפרסה אל עזר והצל השבובה גמורה, הזה ששלמה אפר חוצר או בריא

ביים בחורייה. או לא שבע אלא יזרו ולבת שא פ셔ר ולא לעשות פיר והרא ענייה אפוי פ שיאנה

שלשה מעילות מתימיה יזרו אל ילב השבובה לא. אפורל יזרו אל יזרו עשה שיאנה התורה יזרו משלמה שלשה

כל הקטנות מנהלין סאמר על_HERE להושם והרא והירה והיד tasarיב ושבר עביס אחר הגעוה שיאנה

ויש מימת, מלכוי שאמיך יזרו ושב קודם שימור נחלו.

לכל דב

Vm ההוא חוסן הוא עיתון הווה הם יזרו מזרוף ומזרוף למזרוף למזרוף כלב שלח ישבה עזר שמאני ינדיב

רשי דרכו גם, זכו יה텐 על שעיב שאמיך או חורי שביר חומת. יזרו על ידי ודועו תולמות שלח ישבו לה
What is repentance? It means that the sinner abandons his sin, banishes it from his thoughts and resolves not to do it again, as it is written, “Let the wicked man forsake his way, [and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return to the Lord].” Likewise, one should regret his past, as it is written, “For after I repented, I regretted [what I had done]”. The Knower of Secrets will testify about him that he will never return to that sin, as it is written, “neither will we call any more the work of our hands our god, etc.” One needs to confess with his lips and verbally articulate what he has resolved in his heart.

So let me throw it out to you: What strikes you about this Rambam – either in comparison to the previous Rambam we just learned or just about this halacha as a free-standing source?

Notice the contrast. It’s striking. The Rambam here isn’t just saying: “Don’t dwell too much on the past.” He’s saying, “Don’t think about the past at all!” – put the sin, put the past, out of your mind entirely. If you want the recipe for teshuvah, it’s first and foremost about – the resolve about how you plan to live your life going forward. It’s true, he does mention the idea of regretting your past – and we’ll return to this. But we’ll see that it is very much secondary in this future-looking approach.

Now the questions are really piling up. But don’t worry – I have them listed for you on your source sheets:

5. Queries:
   1. Where did Macbeth go wrong? Who planted the seed of his ambition?
   2. What is the function of the Rambam’s notion of resolve? How does simply thinking about the future or making a resolution contribute to the process or repair?
   3. Is there value in a little teshuvah or is it fundamentally an all-or-nothing proposition?
   4. How do we reconcile this disparity in the Rambam? Is resolve for the future sufficient or must one “break up the dice”?
   5. What does the Rambam mean when he writes that God will testify that the sinner shall never return to his sin?

Now let’s see if we can begin to find some answers. Let’s start with the Rav. Rav Soloveitchik develops at some length the notion that there are really two totally separate levels of teshuvah.
6. On Repentance, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, pages 56-57

There are two strata in the teshuva process. The most basic level is what the Rav called acquittal – it a kind repentance that just accomplishes only Kaparah. The root is always used in reference to covering or protection. Look even just at the first two times the word appears in the Torah:

It’s about hiding and covering. Yom Hakippurim is the Day of Atonement. If you achieve kaparah, it means that you’re covered. You’re shielded from punishment. Your sins are no longer actionable. It’s a big deal, but it’s not the end of the story.

The sin, as the Rav explains, still has an affect on you. In order to be purified – in order to be restored to your status as kasher – you need something more than kaparah. You need Taharah.

It’s a beautiful explanation and now we at least have the makings of some answers. There are, in fact, different levels of teshuvah. It’s possible to be solidly on the path forward while still maintaining the aspiration of moving further along.
In my mind, this isn’t just a powerful and compelling message, it’s a tremendous relief. Because for those of us who aren’t tzaddikim, it tells us that there’s plenty of room for hope. It tells us that even if we’re not able to reach the highest echelons of the teshuva process, we’re still in the game.

What I’d like to see is if we can take this notion one step further. I’d like to suggest that the Rambam is actually giving us a roadmap for how to begin. But we have to take one more step back before we can go forward.

That step back takes us an important gemara in 

9. תלמודו בבל מסכת גיטין דף כ עמוד א
תנוי רבן: נל מレイ והבארה. ב”ש אמרים: מלקיעה כל המידה콜 המידה מפוריש מإنتاجו, ו’ах אמרים: אין לא מירי מיריש בבד, משם הכתוב השבח.

10. רשה”" מסכת גיטין דף כ עמוד א
משלפ הכותל השב״ד - שם אתה מצרייכי הקטניא בברית הלוחות מ.fromJsonוים יפה פלאים מלפשים השבח.

You stole a beam and used it to build your house. One day you wake up and decide – you know – it really wasn’t right. I shouldn’t have stolen that beam. I want to make it up to the person from whom I stole it.

What’s the halacha? On the most practical level – how do you move forward? What do you do?

Beis Shammai wants you to go back and break down the house. Literally and figuratively. His is a hard line approach. It’s literalist. The beam must be returned – whatever it takes to get there. It’s result-oriented. It’s not about the penitent, it’s about the victim. Beis Shammai requires the full measure of justice. The victim has been violated and must be made whole once again.

Beis Hillel, on the other hand, surely understands the need for justice, but subscribes to this notion of הקטנה תשב״ד: If you dis-incentivize teshuva – if you make the bar too high – no one’s going to do it. You have to make teshuvah possible – you have to make it realistic.

So Beis Hillel tells him: You don’t have to demolish your house. You don’t have to re-open the whole mess. You want to do teshuva – start by thinking about the future. Pay back what you owe and move on!

It’s this ethic of הקטנה תשב״ד, I believe, that animates the entire Rambam in כלב ב הלכו בה הטב״ד. Let’s look at it one more time. Turn back with me to source #3.

You see what the Rambam is saying? If you want to be realistic about teshuva, start by thinking about the future rather than dwelling on the past.

This is how Rav Moshe Shternach reads the Rambam:
Rav Shternbach is saying it’s a kind of internal t'hina. If a person had to start the teshuvah process retrospectively, he would surely become despondent and paralyzed. So the Rambam provides a magnificent solution: Begin with the resolve for the future. Know that there can be a new you. Once you’ve come to appreciate this, you will have the strength to look back upon the past.

It’s what the Rambam writes in the beginning of פָּרָק ב — there is a notion of complete teshuva — and then there’s just plain teshuvah. It’s true — you should maintain an aspiration for that comprehensive notion of teshuvah that takes you back to the scene of the crime — that kind of teshuvah where you have to break the dice and tear up the instruments of sin. There will come a time for that. But that’s not how to begin.

Notice how precise the Rambam’s words are: "אחרי שיבר התומים. Regret only comes after the teshuvah process! We didn’t pay much attention to it when we first read it, but the Rambam is predicking the entire approach of this section on this pasuk from רימא. It’s only after the teshuvah has occurred — only after you’ve looked forward — that one is compelled to look to the past.

We miss this crucial point. Going back is worthwhile — but not today. First become a penitent — or as the Rambam would say: become an אוש אראנה.

Think about it. Dream about it. And you’ll become it. Then you can go back and open up all the hard stuff. But don’t start there. Start with Kapparah — which is the teshuvah described in 2:2 — teshuvah that’s future-oriented. We should all aspire to the higher form of teshuvah — we should think about real purification — but I would submit that, for most of us — this can come later.

Now we can go back to Macbeth. You know what happens between the beginning of the play and Act II? Act I, scene III. It all goes back to the scene of the three witches on the heath:

FIRST WITCH All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!
SECOND WITCH All hail, Macbeth! Hail to thee, Thane of Cawdor!
THIRD WITCH All hail, Macbeth, that shalt be king hereafter!
BANQUO Good sir, why do you start and seem to fear
  Things that do sound so fair?—I' th' name of truth,
  Are ye fantastical or that indeed
  Which outwardly ye show? My noble partner
  You greet with present grace and great prediction
  Of noble having and of royal hope
  That he seems rapt withal. To me you speak not.
  If you can look into the seeds of time,
  And say which grain will grow and which will not,
  Speak then to me, who neither beg nor fear
  Your favors nor your hate.
FIRST WITCH Hail!
SECOND WITCH Hail!
THIRD WITCH Hail!
FIRST WITCH Lesser than Macbeth, and greater.
SECOND WITCH Not so happy, yet much happier.
THIRD WITCH Thou shalt get kings, though thou be none.
  So all hail, Macbeth and Banquo!
FIRST WITCH Banquo and Macbeth, all hail!
MACBETH Stay, you imperfect speakers, tell me more.
  By Fianel's death I know I am Thane of Glamis,
  But how of Cawdor? The Thane of Cawdor lives,
  A prosperous gentleman, and to be king
  Stands not within the prospect of belief,
  No more than to be Cawdor. Say from whence
  You owe this strange intelligence, or why
  Upon this blasted heath you stop our way
  With such prophetic greeting. Speak, I charge you.
Witches vanish.

BANQUO The earth hath bubbles, as the water has,
  And these are of them. Whither are they vanished?
MACBETH Into the air. And what seemed corporal
  Melted as breath into the wind. Would they had stayed.
BANQUO Were such things here as we do speak about?
  Or have we eaten on the insane root
  That takes the reason prisoner?
MACBETH Your children shall be kings.
BANQUO You shall be king.
MACBETH And Thane of Cawdor too. Went it not so?
BANQUO To the selfsame tune and words.—Who's here?

It was the witches! They fed him the image of Macbeth as king. Once he dreamed that he was destined for greatness, there was no stopping him.

14. Rabbi Norman Lamm: 1964 Sermon 8th day of Pesach, The Jewish Center
One of the most important factors in determining [the] future is — what we think of that future itself, how we visualize it, what we expect of it. What we consider the future will often determine what it will turn out to be. Our estimate of the future is frequently, in itself, an influence on that future.... Things happen often because we expect them to
happen; the vision of the future is at least as powerful as the facts of the past in shaping our own destinies.

In the case of Macbeth, his vision of his own future takes him down a path that leads to tragedy. Used to positive effect, the self-same principle can be not only salutary, but ennobling as well.

Think of Yosef – the Torah’s great paradigm of a dreamer. He’s been sold into slavery in Egypt. He’s working in the house of Potiphar and everyday pressures him – and finally one day, he almost gives in. What ultimately saves him from sinning?

According to one opinion, he was ready to go down that path – he was ready to sleep with a married woman! And then he saw a visage of his father, Yaakov – and he ran away.

What does this mean? I think on the most basic level it means that he wouldn’t sin because if his father were present, Yosef would surely be too ashamed to commit such a transgression.

But on a deeper level, it means something more. Yosef is the paradigmatic dreamer. His mind is always filled with visions of grandeur. Remember his adolescence? In his mind, he’s always at the center. In his dreams, someone is always bowing to him.

So I would argue that here, too, if he’s thinking of his father, if he’s dreaming of his father, it’s because he aspires to be his father. He longs to occupy his rightful place as the spiritual heir to his father’s legacy.

By dreaming of that destiny – by envisioning an image of his future – he’s able to escape the bonds of his oppressive present and write his own story. In his mind’s eye is a vision of the זכרין he wants to be. Once the image is there, it’s only a small step from becoming reality.

If you dream of greatness, you’ll have already taken the first step toward actually being great.
Now, we’ve just come out of two days of Rosh Hashana without a single parable about a king and his son – so I feel compelled to share the following story from the Sanzer Rebbe, R. Chaim Halberstam:

Once a king’s son sinned against his father, the king. His father expelled him from the house. As long as he was near his home, people knew he was a king’s son and befriended him and gave him food and drink. But as the days passed, and he got farther into his father’s realm, no one knew him, and he had nothing to eat. He began to sell his clothing to buy food. When he had nothing left to sell, he hired out as a shepherd. He would sit on the hills, tending his flocks and singing like the other shepherds, and he forgot that he was a king’s son and all the pleasures that he had been used to.
Now, it was the custom of the shepherds to make themselves small roofs of straw to keep out the rain. The king’s son wanted to make such a roof, too, but he could not afford one, so he was deeply grieved.
Once the king happened to be passing through the province. It was a common practice in that kingdom for those who had petitions to the king to write out their petitions and throw them into the king’s chariot. The king’s son came with the other petitioners and threw his note, in which he petitioned for a small straw roof such as shepherds have. The king recognized his son’s handwriting and was saddened to think how low his son had fallen that he had forgotten he was a king’s son, and felt only the lack of a straw roof.

We get so preoccupied with the day-to-day, that we often fail to make time to dream, to aspire, to create a vision of ourselves living the lives of which we’re capable.

As the Rav himself writes:
18. Halakhic Man, Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, pages 113ff

The desire to be another person, to be different than I am now, is the central motif of repentance. Man cancels the law of identity and continuity which prevails in the “I” awareness by engaging in the wondrous, creative act of repentance. A person is creative; he was endowed with the power to create at his very inception. When he finds himself in a situation of sin, he takes advantage of his creative capacity, returns to God, and becomes a creator and self-fashioner. Man, through repentance, creates himself, his own “I.”

Here there comes to the fore the primary difference between the concept of repentance in Halakhah and the concept of repentance held by homo religiosus. The latter views repentance only from the perspective of atonement, only as a guard against punishment, as an empty regret which does not create anything, does not bring into being anything new. A deep melancholy afflicts his spirit. He mourns for the yesterdays that are irretrievably past, the times that have long since sunk into the abyss of oblivion, the deeds that have vanished like shadows, facts that he will never be able to change. Therefore, for homo religiosus, repentance is a wholly miraculous phenomenon made possible by the endless grace of the Almighty.

But such is not the case with halakhic man! Halakhic man does not indulge in weeping and despair, does not lacerate his flesh or flail away at himself. He does not afflict himself with penitential rites and forgoes all mortification of body and soul. Halakhic man is engaged in self-creation, in creating a new “I.” He does not regret an irretrievably lost past but a past still in existence, one that stretches into and interpenetrates with the present and the future. He does not fight the shadows of a dead past, nor does he grapple with deeds that have faded away into the distance. Similarly, his resolve is not some vacuous decision made with regard to an obscure, distant future that has not as yet arrived. Halakhic man is concerned with the image of the past that is alive and active in the center of his present tempestuous and clamorous life and with a pulsating, throbbing future that has already been “created.” There is a

The Halakhah declares that the person who returns to his Maker creates himself in the context of a living, enduring past while facing a bright and welcoming future. Repentance, by definition, means (1) a retrospective reflection upon the past, separating out that which is living in it from that which is dead; (2) a vision of the future in which one distinguishes between a future that is already present and one that has not as yet been “created”; (3) an examination of the cause located in the past in light of the future, determining its direction and destination. The main principle of repentance is that the future dominates the past and there reign over it in unbounded fashion. Sin, as a cause and as the beginning of a lengthy causal chain of destruc-
In the end, by dreaming of the future, man returns to his great role as creator. He’s fashioning and re-fashioning his own identity. And once you’re there – once you’ve recreated yourself, rest assured there will plenty of opportunities to go back and crack open old issues. Moments of crisis or opportunity will arise when those openings may present themselves. But today – as we’re standing between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur and our fates are hanging in the balance – is the time for us to be realists and pragmatists.

It’s what Beis Hillel is saying, too. Remember the stolen beam? Beis Hillel said you don’t have knock down the house. You don’t have dig up the whole foundation and unbury the past. Deal with the present and the future. But there’s a profound subtext to Beis Hillel, too. Because when it’s all built – when he’s well into that future – he’ll be in a position to look back. He’ll have to recognize that his house is built on an ill-gotten foundation. And he’ll have to live with it. The chiddush of Beis Hillel is that this new person – this penitent – the person who has actually taken practical steps to make things better – will be in a position where that will now be possible.

- Maybe this past year you weren’t a great davener. But if davening is something that’s important to you, then before you can be great at it – you have to have an image in your head of what you as a great davener would look like.
- Maybe this past year you weren’t a great daughter or great husband. Maybe you know it unconsciously. Or maybe you’re totally aware of it and you even talk about it. But the way to start doing something about it isn’t by looking backward; it’s by looking forward and creating an image in your mind of what you as a great daughter or great husband would really look like.

If you take home one message from Shabbos Shuvah, take home this: We can live with the highest aspirations and a firm belief in our capacity for complete teshuvah tomorrow, even as we operate as arch pragmatists and merely commit to beginning the process today. All you need to do is a little dreaming. All you need to do is create the vision for what your life could look like, and you’ll already be on your way to actualizing that vision.

So the next time you see someone nodding off during davening or during the drasha, don’t wake them up. Maybe they’re hard at work dreaming of teshuvah.

So now we’re in a position to answer the questions with which we began:
1. Macbeth’s great transformation occurs the moment he sees a vision of the future. It’s the glimpse into a crystal ball that sets off an entire chain of emotional and worldly events and ultimately leads to Macbeth’s undoing.
2. נמייה לזר – making resolutions about the future – is the Rambam’s code for dreaming. As soon we have a vision of what our future can look like, that future has already begun to come to fruition.
3. We asked about the value in a little teshuvah. It’s not an all-or-nothing proposition. Our sages tell us. If you bite off more than you
can chew, you’ll surely be disappointed. Small steps – beginning with the promise of all that you can accomplish today – create the path to the new person you’re in the process of creating.

4. And the Rambam’s of course we’ve dealt with at length.

Concluding thoughts:
There’s just one last question remaining and with this we’ll conclude. Go back to חונת הב.

What is peshat in Rambam’s cryptic line? What does it mean that God will testify that he shall not sin again? What’s this quotation from Hoshea? What is the Rambam telling us?

(2) Return, O Israel, unto the Lord your God, for you have fallen because of your sin.
(3) Take with you words, and return to the Lord; say to Him: “Forgive all iniquity, and accept that which is good; instead of bulls we will pay [the offering of] our lips.
(4) Assyria shall not save us; we will not ride upon horses; neither will we call any more the work of our hands our god; for in You alone orphans find pity.”
(5) I will heal their affliction. Generously will I take them back in love; for my anger has turned away from them.

It’s stunning. The Rambam is telling you the extraordinary power of גמרהלכם. Hashem is going to help you! It’s not the line the Rambam quotes that is the proof – but the next line. In Hoshea, the people haven’t done anything. All they’ve done is articulate a vision of teshuva – a vision in which they stop considering their own creations as divine. And as soon as they do – zap! Hashem immediately embraces them.

What the Rambam is adding is that Hashem, as it were, is testifying that you’ve earned the status of a penitent as soon as you’ve resolved never to commit that sin again. It’s so powerful. Of course we know there’s backsliding and people slip up and make the same mistakes all over again. But the Rambam just wants you to take that noble first step. Imagine what change might look like – and you’ll have accomplished more than you know.
It doesn’t have to be a dream of earth-shattering change – in fact in probably shouldn’t be.

- It could be a vision about the way we’re going to speak or the kinds of words we’re going to use.
- It could be a vision about the time we’re going to make to spend with the people we care about the most.
- It could be a vision about the kinds of relationships we want to have with our spouses and our families.

It begins with a mental image. What follows though is crucial.

Give it a voice. Say it aloud. “This is what I want to be. This is who I want to become. This is what I want my days to look like, my voice to sound like, my relationships to feel like.”

Thinking about and talking about the past isn’t our area weakness. We go to therapy, we talk to our friends. We make lots of time to think about what’s already happened in our lives. But when do we make the time to stop and dream about the future?

We have one week until Yom Kippur. One week to fantasize about what our lives could really look like. Let your mind wander. Let your fantasies percolate and simmer. And then have the conversation. Tell someone about your goals. Say the words quietly to yourself during davening.

I’m not sure if humankind has ever lived through an epoch more dominated by the present. In the age of texting and instant messaging, the message of shabbos shuvah is that it really is possible to see the world beyond this instant. We find it such a challenge to think about what life will look like later on today – let alone six or twelve months from now. But this, I would argue, is precisely the opportunity of the shuvah. It’s the chance for each of us to dream. Take advantage of the opportunity. I think you’ll discover that when you awake, you’ll find a world brimming with possibility.

I wish each of you a Shana Tova U’metuka – a year filled with sweet waking hours, and even sweeter dreams.