PARSHA PERSPECTIVE 2 MIN READ

Wake Up and Pay Attention

A reflection on listening, learning, and beginning again

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"Not necessarily to have all the answers. Just to wake up and pay attention."

Shana Tova, everyone.

Since we're right at the beginning of the school year and also right before Rosh Hashanah, I thought it would be nice to take a minute to connect the two.

One of the things we do on Rosh Hashanah is listen to the shofar. And the Rambam has this really interesting explanation of what the shofar is supposed to do. Basically, it's a wake-up call.

It's saying: Stop. Pay attention. Take a look at what you're doing. Think about what you want to change.

And I actually think that's a pretty good message for a school board meeting at the beginning of a new school year.

Because every year, we get this opportunity to kind of hit the reset button.

We have new students, new teachers, new families, new challenges—and hopefully, some new ideas.

But it's also a chance to look back at the year before and ask some pretty simple questions.

What worked?

What didn't?

What did we learn?

And what can we do a little bit better this year?

I think that's especially important in education because we're not just making decisions for ourselves. The decisions we make affect our kids, our teachers, and our families.

And sometimes the biggest impact comes from really small things. Listening to someone who has a different perspective. Asking another question before making a decision. Being willing to change our minds when we learn something new. Or just noticing when something isn't working and being willing to say, "Okay, let's figure out how to do this differently."

To me, that's really what the shofar is asking us to do.

Not necessarily to have all the answers.

Just to wake up and pay attention.

And I think that's a pretty good goal for all of us as we start a new year.

So as we begin this school year and enter a new Jewish year, I hope we can bring that mindset to the work we're doing here: listening, learning, being open to new ideas, and always keeping the kids at the center of what we're doing.

And hopefully, when we're sitting here a year from now, we can look back and say, "We learned a lot, we made some good changes, and we made our school a little bit better."

Wishing everyone a Shana Tova—a year of health, happiness, learning, and lots of good things for our students, our teachers, our families, and our whole school community.

Shana Tova!

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