

# The Weekly 'Hi All' by Rabbi Jeff Bienenfeld

## *Shabbat Shuva 5783*

There is an important insight from Rav Yitzchok Brietowitz which provides a needed reflection as we approach Shabbat Shuva.

One of the many problems that discourages us from during teshuva is the feeling that expresses itself in this gloomy reflection: "I am who I am, and I'm not all that great. To change and improve? Been there, done that. But, if I could only be like ..., behave like ..., learn like ...; if I only had more money ..., fewer problems ..., nicer friends, family ..., then everything would be wonderful and there'd be a chance for me."

When Moshe beheld the Burning Bush, he heard Gd declare, "...remove your shoes ... for the ground upon which you are standing is holy ground (Sh'mot 3:5). On this verse, the saintly Chafetz Chayim makes an amazing statement. HaShem told Moshe, in anticipation of Moshe's feelings of inadequacy in being Gd's messenger to Pharoah, that Moshe would indeed be successful. How so? Because the ground upon which he was standing was holy. Here's the message: The "ground" is your present reality, the person you are now with all your talents, potentials, strengths and weaknesses. And that irreplaceable you, is HOLY! That "you" is special, singular and of infinite significance. To wish to be

someone else is nothing short of a betrayal of your purpose in having been created in the first place.

Here's an interesting offer. Imagine if Gd offered you the chance to be the Patriarch Avraham, would you accept the offer? Now, as tempting as it would be, it would be a terrible mistake. Why? Because there can only be one Avraham Avinu, and if you replace Avraham, the world would be irreparably deficient. Why? Because "you" would be missing and that "you" is as important to Gd's grand scheme of things as is the existence of Avraham. Quite astonishing!

What teshuva is about then is taking the raw material of "self" and reconfiguring its elements, turning failures into greater discoveries, using mistakes as a springboard to a finer human being. Each person is challenged to work that "self", transform that "self" into something better. And HaShem promises each of us that we have indeed been created with the capacity and will to do just that. Not by foolishly aspiring to be someone we are not, but by embracing ourselves and reminding ourselves that "the ground upon which we are standing is indeed HOLY!"

**G'mar Chatima Tova  
and Shabbat Shalom**