



*“Words from the Heart  
Enter the Heart”*

# ROSH HASHANA 5773 • 2012

By Rabbi Simon Jacobson

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September 17-18, 2012  
Rosh Hashana Day 2

**Revolutionary Jews**



# Meaningful Sermons

By Rabbi Simon Jacobson

"Words from the Heart  
Enter the Heart"

5773

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**Revolutionary Jew: The Secret Of Thinking Different**

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## ABSTRACT

What do these individuals have in common: Abraham. Moses. Galileo, Columbus (?), Karl Marx, Albert Einstein. Niels Bohr. Sigmund Freud, Jonas Salk, Albert Sabin, Bela Schick, Adolf von Baeyer, Oscar Minkowski, Georges-Fernand-Isidor Widal, Baruch Blumberg, G. Edelman, Briton Epstein, Maria Meyer, Julius Mayer, Isaac Singer, Mark Zuckerberg, Larry Page, Sergei Brin. The list goes on.

They are all revolutionaries that changed the world in some way. They are also all... Jews.

Coincidence? Hardly. Jews have been at the forefront of so many of history's junctures, in numbers disproportionate to that of any other nation of the world.

A recent book by Steven Gimbel, entitled *Einstein's Jewish Science: Physics at the Intersection of Politics and Religion*, brings to mind the unique contributions Jews have brought to the world, especially in changing the nature of science. The Nazis ironically tried to denigrate Einstein's revolutionary theory by calling it "Jewish science," sensing the power of Jews to always foment a revolution.

But what is the secret behind the uniqueness of the Jew? Why are Jews such revolutionaries? Rosh Hashana carries the answer to this timeless question. Indeed, the Jewish New Year is the greatest of all revolutions, for it gave birth and spawned all the ground-breaking discoveries that would change the face of this planet and the course of history.

Above all, Rosh Hashana empowers us to become revolutionaries in our own right, to defy the status-quo and transcend the confines of our lives ... to discover how we can become part of the solution instead of being part of the problem ... to create a paradigm shift.

## PODIUM NOTES

1. Good news about being Jewish: Opening Joke – Read anti-Semitic literature how Jews control the world.
2. Jewish revolutionaries. Is there something unique about Jews that endows them with special innovative powers?
3. Einstein's Jewish Physics.
4. Even the Nazis recognized Jewish power.
5. Healthy Troublemakers: Jews do not bow to any man or man-made institution. They worship only God who is beyond existence.
6. Rosh Hashana is the mother of all revolutions: Being created in the divine image and outside the system they have the power to change the system and defy the status-quo of the natural order.
7. Are you a revolutionary: Call to action – do something different.
8. Revolution is in the details. Change is qualitative not quantitative. Even a small shift that goes beyond your nature creates a paradigm shift.
9. Inspiring Story
10. Conclusion: Rise to the occasion: Change something!

## REVOLUTIONARY JEWS THE SECRET OF THINKING DIFFERENT

### 1. Shana Tova

Shana Tova!

As we enter the New Year and we beseech heaven to grant us blessings for health, love, prosperity and *nachas* for ourselves and our families, we surely have many things on our minds. Each of us has our particular challenges and concerns, and our unique needs and requests.

But we must also remember that Rosh Hashana is a Yom Tov, a day of celebration – a time when we are confident that God will answer our prayers and bless us with a sweet and good year.

As we celebrate Rosh Hashana, we deserve to step back and appreciate our unique standing as Jews.

### 2. Good Things About Jews (Humor)

Ikey is reading a newspaper on a park bench. His friend Mo sees him and says:

“Ikey, why are you reading that anti-Semitic newspaper?”

“Mo, I like to read good things about the Jews.”

“Good things?!”

“Certainly. When I read Jewish newspapers I hear all the critique and gossip about Jews. How this one doesn’t like a certain Jewish group. And how that one despises his partner. And on and on. But when I read the anti-Semitic paper it makes me feel good: It says right here that Jews control the banks, Jews control the newspapers, Jews control Hollywood, Jews control the government and Jews are rich. So what could be bad?”

Our enemies think we control the world. Little do they know that we can’t even control our own Synagogues...

An anti-Semite walks into a bar and sees a Jew sitting there. So he walks over to the bartender and says give the most expensive drink to everyone besides for the Jew.

He sees the Jew smiling. So the anti-Semite, desperate to denigrate the Jew, tells the bartender give another round to everyone besides for the Jew. Once again the Jew smiles. The anti -Semite does it again. At this point the Jew has a massive grin.

The anti-Semite asks the bartender what's wrong with the Jew that he is smiling so much?

The bartender answers: He is the owner of the bar.

So hey, what better time than Rosh Hashana to speak about the virtues of the Jewish people, and feeling a bit good about ourselves?

### 3. What's Up With These Jews?

What do these individuals have in common: Abraham. Moses. Galileo, Christopher Columbus (?), Karl Marx, Albert Einstein. Niels Bohr. Sigmund Freud, Jonas Salk, Albert Sabin, Bela Schick, Adolf von Baeyer, Oscar Minkowski, Georges-Fernand-Isidor Widal, Baruch Blumberg, G. Edelman, Briton Epstein, Maria Meyer, Julius Mayer, Isaac Singer, Levi Strauss. Mark Zuckerberg, Larry Page, Sergei Brin. Some would add: Bob Dylan and Leonard Cohen? The list goes on. [Feel free to add to this list any names you see fit].

They are all revolutionaries that changed the world in some way. They are also all... Jews.

Coincidence? Hardly. Jews have been at the forefront of so many of history's junctures, in numbers disproportionate to that of any other nation of the world.

Mark Twain said it well: "If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race ... Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of ... His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also away out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers."<sup>1</sup>

Look at any cause – whether great or misguided (and there have been plenty of the latter) – and if it wasn't founded by Jews, it was dominated or heavily populated by them.

We see this in the Jewish involvement in the Russian Revolution and all the socialist movements of Europe. We see this in the Jewish involvement in American Black Civil Rights and the Anti-Apartheid Movement in South Africa. We see this in the Jewish involvement in the American Student Movement and Anti-War Movement of the 1960's. We see this in the Jewish involvement in Worker's Rights and Women's Rights. We see this in the Jewish involvement in animal rights.<sup>2</sup>

And we see this in Jewish involvement in science – the most revolutionary of fronts. For it is through science and the advances in medicine that we have lowered the overall mortality rate of humanity ... but, even more than that, science has made us all see the entire universe with fresh eyes.

But before we get too arrogant, let's not forget that Jews are not great at everything. Take wrestling, stock car racing, and this...

A Warsaw Jew once translated Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* into Yiddish. On the title page he wrote this in Yiddish: *Romeoh and Tzhuliet fun Villiam Shayksper. Ebergezetzt und farbresert by Yankel Rosenberg. "Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespear. Trnalstaed [misspelled] and enhanced by Yankel Rosenberg."*

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Twain, Concerning the Jews, Harpers Magazine, March 1898.

<sup>2</sup> For names, details and documentation see *Destiny: Why the Smallest of Nations Has the Biggest Role in History* by Ken Spiro, ch. 8.

#### 4. The Jewish Mystique

Many scholars have been fascinated with this Jewish trait of pushing the envelope – of extending the limits of what is possible.

Notable among them is the Dutch-American sociologist Ernest van den Haag, who wrote the well-known treatise entitled *The Jewish Mystique*, in which he poses the following question:

Asked to make a list of men who have most dominated the thinking of the modern world, many educated people would name Freud, Einstein, Marx and Darwin. Of these four, only Darwin was not Jewish. In a world where Jews are only a tiny percentage of the population, what is the secret of the disproportionate importance the Jews have had in the history of Western culture?<sup>3</sup>

A Jewish joke goes, “Of the four most impactful thinkers, three were Jewish and one was wrong,” but, of course, by now Karl Marx – the originator of communist ideology – has been proven wrong as well, and it is questionable just how right Sigmund Freud was when he said at the bottom of every sub-conscious problem lies a sexual conflict. At least Albert Einstein is still holding up.

And sure enough he is.

#### 5. Einstein

A recent book by Steven Gimbel, entitled *Einstein's Jewish Science: Physics at the Intersection of Politics and Religion*, brings to mind the unique contributions Jews have brought to the world, especially in changing the nature of science.

By-the-way, the benchmark of excellence in the Western World is the Nobel Prize. And the most startling statistic is that, since the Nobel Prize originated in 1901, some 22 percent of all recipients have been Jewish. When we look at the categories in science, it is absolutely remarkable: in medicine – 27 percent; in physics – 26 percent; in chemistry – 20 percent.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>The *Jewish Mystique* by Ernest Van den Haag, p. 13.

<sup>4</sup>[www.jinfo.org](http://www.jinfo.org)

All this stands out in glaring contrast to the tiny numbers of Jewish people in the world. In fact, if we were to chart the Nobel Prizes proportionally to population, the Jews would fly right off the scale, as they have received 80 percent more Nobel Prizes than they proportionately should have.

Now Gimbel does not say that Einstein (or any other Jewish scientist) was deeply religious or that his ideas originated from any direct Jewish sources. What he does say is that there were elements of Jewish thinking that gave rise to what is now recognized as one of the deepest insights of all time.

What gives Einstein's work a Jewish flavor, Gimbel believes, is an approach to the universe that reminds him of the way a Talmudic scholar seeks to understand God's truth.

For example, "You shall not steal" may seem clear enough. But the Talmudic scholar asks: Are you stealing if you keep a \$100 bill you find on the ground? And he ponders: Did you see the person who might have dropped it? Was it found on a busy street or in a friend's backyard? Was it found in a hotel lobby with a lost and found?

"The heart of the Talmudic view is that there is an absolute truth, but this truth is not directly and completely available to us," Gimbel writes, and he concludes: "It turns out that exactly the same style of thinking occurs in the relativity theory and in some of Einstein's other research."

## 6. Talmudic Approach (Humor)

A young man in his mid-twenties knocks on the door of the noted scholar, Rabbi Schwartz.

- "I've come to you," he announces, "because I want to study the Talmud."

- "Do you know Aramaic?" the rabbi asks.

- "No."

- "Hebrew?"

- "No."

-“Have you studied any Torah?”

-“No. But I have a doctorate degree in Socratic logic from Harvard, and I’d like to round out my education by studying a little Talmud.”

-“I seriously doubt,” the rabbi says, “that you are ready to study Talmud. It is the deepest book of our people. If you wish, however, I am willing to examine you in logic, and if you pass the test I will teach you Talmud.”

-The young man agrees.

-“Okay, pay careful attention now,” says the rabbi. “Two men fall down the chimney. One comes out with a dirty face, the other comes out with a clean face, which one of them goes to wash?”

-The young man stares at the rabbi. “Is that your test in logic?”

-The rabbi nods.

-“Well, of course, the one with the dirty face goes to wash.”

-“*Wrong!*” says the rabbi. “The one with the clean face goes to wash. It’s logical. The one with the dirty face looks at the one with the clean face and thinks his face is clean. So he does not go to wash. But the one with the clean face looks at the one with the dirty face and thinks his face is dirty. So he goes to wash.”

-“That’s very clever. I should have thought of that,” says the young man. “Test me again.”

-“Okay ... Two men fall down the chimney. One comes out with a dirty face, the other comes out with a clean face, which one of them goes to wash?”

-“Well, we already established that. The one with the clean face goes to wash.”

-“*Wrong!*” says the rabbi. “The clean one looks into the mirror, sees that he is clean and, therefore, does not go to wash. The dirty one looks into the mirror, sees that he is dirty and goes to wash.”

-“But you didn’t tell me there was a mirror there.”

-“You didn’t ask.”

-“Please give me another chance rabbi. I am sure that I can pass this time.”

-“Suit yourself ... Two men fall down the chimney. One comes out with a dirty face, the other comes out with a clean face, which one of them goes to wash?”

-The young doctor in philosophy has no idea, but one thing he is sure of is that none of the previous answers will apply. So he takes a stab at it: “Maybe they both go to wash.”

-“Wrong! Now you see why Socratic logic is insufficient preparation for studying the Talmud? The first question you should have asked is: How is it possible for two men to fall down the chimney and one come out clean and the other dirty?”

That’s Talmudic logic and nowhere does it apply more clearly than to our perception of space and time...

## 7. Space and Time

From our blinkered perspective we see qualities called space and time. But in relativity theory, the two can be combined mathematically into something more fundamental: a four-dimensional abstraction called the space-time interval. Time and space vary according to the motion of the observer. But from any vantage point, an object’s space-time interval would be the same – the higher truth that can be approached only from different angles.

Heard the Jewish relativity theory? Three hairs on your head is not much. But three hairs in your soup...<sup>5</sup>

The same kind of thinking, Gimbel says, also led to Einstein’s thought experiments. With the elevator showing that when we feel the pull of gravity from the earth or the push of acceleration from the takeoff of a jet, we are experiencing the same underlying phenomenon.

Gimbel isn’t saying that only a Jew could have discovered these things but that being Jewish just might have given Einstein an edge.

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<sup>5</sup>Or as Einstein put it: “When you are courting a nice girl an hour seems like a second. When you sit on a red-hot cinder a second seems like an hour. That’s relativity.”

## 8. The Nazi Point of View (Optional)

Now, it just so happens that the Nazis also thought that Einstein's ideas were "Jewish." They tried to denigrate his revolutionary theory by calling it "Jewish science."

But then again, to them, the entire world order – as Western Civilization understands it – was a "Jewish invention" and a "false vision." Hitler said it best:

Providence has ordained that I should be the greatest liberator of humanity. I am freeing man from the restraints of an intelligence that has taken charge, from the dirty and degrading self-mortifications of a false vision called conscience and morality, and from the demands of a freedom and personal independence which only a very few can bear.<sup>6</sup>

And who is most responsible for that "false vision" which permits the weak to be equal to the strong? The Jews, of course.

The Ten Commandments have lost their validity. Conscience is a Jewish invention; it is a blemish like circumcision.<sup>7</sup>

Hitler saw morality so ingrained in the Jewish people that to eradicate Judaism would not be enough to "save the world" from the Jewish influence. He had to kill every Jew:

If only one country, for whatever reason, tolerates a Jewish family in it, that family will become the germ center for fresh sedition ... If one little Jewish boy survives without any Jewish education, with no synagogue and no Hebrew school; it's in his soul. Even if there had never been a synagogue or a Jewish school in the Old Testament, the Jewish spirit would still exist and exert its influence. It has been there from the beginning, and there is no Jew, not a single one, who does not personify it.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> *Hitler Speaks* by Hermann Rauschning, p. 222.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

<sup>8</sup> *Hitler's Apocalypse* by Robert Wistrich, p. 122.

Hitler clearly understood the Jewish personality which, in order to be at peace, needs to always be striving to make the world a better, a more moral, a more just place. He understood the drive that was a unique and intrinsic to the Jews, and which made them a power to be constantly reckoned with. Hitler understood that, historically, even when the Jews were detached from their Judaism, they continued to spread Jewish ideals in some form, somehow.<sup>9</sup>

## 9. Jewish Revolutionaries

No matter where they are, Jews are always fomenting a revolution.

From Abraham to Moses, from Mordechai to Rabbi Akiva, from Rashi to the Rambam, from Rabbi Saadi Gaon to the Arizal, from the Maharal to the Baal Shem Tov [add any Rabbis you see fit] – Jewish leaders have personified vision.

From Abraham defying his pagan world to Mordechai refusing to bow to Haman, Jews have always challenged the status quo, countered conformity and refused to worship any men and man-made institutions.

The Jew – as so aptly captured in the theme of Rosh Hashana – always had and worshipped only One King: The One and Only *Hashem Echod*.

As such, the Jews have always sought to transcend human conventions and accepted norms. This in turn allowed them to generate new and revolutionary ideas, which transformed the entire world.

## 10. Jewish Radicals (Optional)

Sometimes this took the shape of revolutions that we are not so proud of, even ones that were anarchistic and destructive. Let's face it: no one can be more radical atheist than a Jew.

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<sup>9</sup> *Destiny* by Ken Spiro, ch. 12.

They tell the story of a certain Jewish family with two sons, Yankel and Shmerel, who were known throughout the town for their mischief. When anything untoward happened, when anything disappeared, there was one address ... Naturally, their parents suffered greatly and they sought the means to properly educate them.

One day a great rabbi appeared in town, who was known as a famous educator. The devoted mother rushed to where the rabbi was staying and presented her problems with her boys to him. The rabbi asked to speak with each of the boys separately.

Yankel was the first one to speak to the rabbi. He sat down and the rabbi asked him, "Tell me Yankel, where is God?"

Yankel turned pale. He sprang up and dashed out of the room. He ran all the way home and found his brother Shmerel. "Shmerel! You're not going to believe what happened! God is missing, and they think we did it!"

Indeed, Jews have been troublemakers. They upset the status-quo. Thankfully, more often for the good than not.

Many writers (mostly non-Jewish) have extolled the unique virtues and ground-breaking contributions of the Jews. As one example let me quote the scholar and author Thomas Cahill, in his bestselling book *The Gifts of the Jews*:

The Jew gave us the Outside and the Inside - our outlook and our inner life. We can hardly get up in the morning or cross the street without being Jewish. We dream Jewish dreams and hope Jewish hopes. Most of our best words, in fact - new, adventure, surprise, unique, individual, person, vocation, time, history, future, freedom, progress, spirit, faith, hope, justice - are the gifts of the Jews.<sup>10</sup>

## 11. A Personal Question

As we stand on Rosh Hashana, the birthday of the world, it is a good time to remind ourselves of the great contributions the Jews have made to society. But above all - to ask ourselves: What revolutionary contribution am I making?

Indeed, Rosh Hashana itself teaches us perhaps the most revolutionary concept of all (which is the root of all revolutions): With the creation of the human being in the Divine Image on the first Rosh Hashana, we were imbued with an indispensable mission and role.

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<sup>10</sup> Feel free to add the following:

I also cannot help but read Mark Twain's memorable words:

If the statistics are right, the Jews constitute but one percent of the human race. It suggests a nebulous dim puff of star dust lost in the blaze of the Milky Way. Properly the Jew ought hardly to be heard of, but he is heard of, has always been heard of. He is as prominent on the planet as any other people, and his commercial importance is extravagantly out of proportion to the smallness of his bulk. His contributions to the world's list of great names in literature, science, art, music, finance, medicine, and abstruse learning are also away out of proportion to the weakness of his numbers. He has made a marvellous fight in the world, in all the ages; and has done it with his hands tied behind him. He could be vain of himself, and be excused for it. The Egyptian, the Babylonian, and the Persian rose, filled the planet with sound and splendor, then faded to dream-stuff and passed away; the Greek and the Roman followed, and made a vast noise, and they are gone; other peoples have sprung up and held their torch high for a time, but it burned out, and they sit in twilight now, or have vanished. The Jew saw them all, beat them all, and is now what he always was, exhibiting no decadence, no infirmities of age, no weakening of his parts, no slowing of his energies, no dulling of his alert and aggressive mind. All things are mortal but the Jew; all other forces pass, but he remains. What is the secret of his immortality? (Mark Twain, Concerning the Jews, Harpers Magazine, March 1898).

Take away this unique Divine Image, and one could argue that we are mere mortals subject to the laws of nature and the conventions of existence ... we are trapped in our self-interest driven realities and pre-disposed destinies ... we are not unlike any creature on earth, with no more hope of changing anything than a leopard can change its spots.

Rosh Hashana declares that this fatalism is unequivocally false. We are not locked into our habits and routines. We are not confined by our nature and dependencies. We are a piece of the divine. We are outside of the system, and therefore we can change the system.<sup>11</sup>

Rosh Hashana launched the first revolution, which is the origin of all revolutions – the revolution of the human being endowed with divine powers to alter the course and destiny of the natural order.

This revolution – this vision – in turn spawned a series of fundamental revolutions, which radically changed the way we understand ourselves and the world, giving human life the dignity of a purpose – which we celebrate on Rosh Hashana.

## 12. Where Are We?

So now let us all ask ourselves: Where are we?

In this great revolution, where do we find ourselves this Rosh Hashana?

Are we the heroes, the villains, the victims, or just bystanders? Are we part of the solution or part of the problem? Are we making the world a better place or just watching others do it?

“Before I die I mean to make a pilgrimage to the Holy Land,” a nineteenth century industrial baron once said to Mark Twain. “I will travel to the desert, climb to the top of Mount Sinai and read the Ten Commandments aloud.”

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<sup>11</sup> As Einstein said: “We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them. The world as we have created it is a process of our thinking. It cannot be changed without changing our thinking.”  
A variation of this is attributed to W. Edward Deming: “Knowledge required to change the existing system to a better system must come from outside the existing system.”

"Why don't you stay home and keep them?" replied Twain.

For revolution is not just about words. It is all about actions. What are we doing to create a positive revolution in our lives, in our communities, in our world?

### 13. Esther's Example (Optional)

The Book of Esther records an amazing statement by Mordechai, Esther's uncle.

Esther is Jewish, as we all know, but she has kept her identity hidden. She has gone out shopping with the best of them, got the cutest outfit at Bloomingdale's, and nobody can tell her apart. And she got herself married to the king of the realm, the notorious Ahasuerus.

But then the sky caves in.

Through the various machinations of the wicked Haman, the Jews are about to be slaughtered. And now it is up to Esther to save them.

Her uncle Mordechai implores her to go to the king. But she balks at first. She says this could get her killed. And then Mordechai speaks these immortal words: "Esther if you don't do it, somebody else will."<sup>12</sup>

Not, "Esther if you don't do it, *nobody* else will." But "Esther, if you don't do it *somebody* else."

In other words, Esther you could be the heroine of this story, but if you don't take up your mantle as the revolutionary Jew of your age, you might end up the bystander or the victim, while somebody else is the hero.

And Esther jumps up and says, "I'll do it."

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<sup>12</sup> Book of Esther 4:13-14. The exact translation is this: "For if you will remain silent at this time, relief and salvation will come to the Jews from another source, and you and the house of your father will be lost. And who knows if it is not for just such a time that you reached this royal position."

## 14. Will You Do It?

Now here is the question of the moment:

Will you do it?

It is Rosh Hashana! What role will you play?

The play is written, the die is cast. The Messianic Age is upon us and we have Divine assurance that there will be a happy ending. But we still have to decide what role we will play in the grand scheme of things. Will we be the victim, the villain, the bystander, or the hero?

As the children of Abraham, the hero of all time, as the descendants of Esther, who showed us the way, and as the inheritors of Einstein's fame, it behooves us to take up the mantle of the revolutionary Jew – to go forth and do our part.

But are we ready?

## 15. Getting Ready

I would think that each one of us here wants to be hero or heroine? But how to prepare for such a feat?

Rabbi Boruch Leff, a vice-principal in Baltimore, tells a story of how he figured this out.<sup>13</sup>

While on vacation with his family, he decided to take a dare and drive up Mount Washington, the highest mountain in Northeastern United States at nearly 6,300 feet. Driving up this mountain – and coming down again – was the scariest moment of his life, especially since he had to do it in rain and fog with no guardrails on the snake path. At any moment he could have plunged to his death as many before him have done!

Yet he made it. "At that moment, I felt a personal sensation of glory," he recalls.

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<sup>13</sup> See <http://www.aish.com/sp/pg/Climbing-Mount-Washington.html>

Now, am I about to tell you to do the same to learn how to be a hero?

Hardly.

Because this is what happened to Rabbi Leff next:

He pulled into the parking garage of his hotel and negligently clipped off the luggage carrier off the roof of car, smashing it to smithereens and destroying most of his personal belongings contained within it.

Writes Rabbi Leff:

In a matter of minutes, I had gone from feeling like a hero to feeling like a fool. After dealing with the massive clean-up ... the thought occurred to me: I was able to accomplish the "big deal" feat today but I failed at a routine activity.

That's one of the big problems we face in life. We can muster up the spiritual adrenaline to succeed at "big things," but how do we do in the simple "small stuff"?

Our Sages tell us that God does not bring greatness upon a person until He tests him in a small matter.<sup>14</sup> And this is where greatness is truly found – where the greatest revolutionaries are incubated.

Not in the larger-than-life feats, but in the routine acts of kindness, the smiles of encouragement to others, the daily decisions to set aside our own needs to help someone in trouble.

## 16. Quantity vs. Quality

Revolution is not about quantity but quality. Revolution is about not accepting the status quo, not being trapped, always thinking "out of the box," and above all – having the courage to act in unexpected ways.

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<sup>14</sup> *Shemot* Rabbah 2:2.

The *Tanya* explains<sup>15</sup> that serving God means going beyond your natural habits (even if they are good ones). It explains an odd Talmud<sup>16</sup> which states that “one who reviews his studies one hundred times” is described as one who “does not” serve God! Because “in those Talmudic days, it was customary to review each lesson one hundred times. Thus, to review one hundred times did not require any effort; it was second nature. Only the 101st revision, which required effort beyond the student’s normal custom, could gain him the appellation of ‘he who serves God’... [and] is equivalent to all the previous one hundred revisions combined. In fact its quality surpasses them.”

Every time you defy conventional wisdom, every time you go against the grain of popular and political correct thinking, every time you challenge yourself and your natural tendencies, every time you dream and imagine,<sup>18</sup> every time you act on this “going against the grain” attitude – you are creating revolution.

When you spend an extra moment in the morning with your child, instead of rushing off to work as you do every day ... when you give an extra amount to charity, going beyond your comfort zone ... when you say no to your narcissistic drives and selfish desires – you are a hero, generating a paradigm shift that ripples through all of existence.

## 17. Conclusion

This Rosh Hashana begin a new – a truly new – year.

Revolution and change happens when you change something. If you think what you thought (last year), say what you said, do what you did – what will you have? What you had...

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<sup>15</sup> Chapter 15.

<sup>16</sup> Chagigah 9b.

<sup>17</sup> “Common sense is the collection of prejudices acquired by age eighteen” (Einstein).

<sup>18</sup> Another appropriate Einstein quote: Logic will get you from A to Z; imagination will get you everywhere.

If you want something new and different – think different. Speak different. Act different.

So, be a revolutionary Jew today – do one small thing that the Torah asks of you and do it well. Your one act can very well be the one that – after all the accumulative good deeds, mitzvahs and sacrifices of all prior generations – tips the scales and causes the eruption of abundant goodness and light to pour out and saturate the universe, with the coming of Mashiach speedily in our days. Amen.