

SPECIAL DAYS OF EIS RATZON: ASERES YEMEI TESHUVAH (REPENTANCE)

There are times when God's "ear," so to speak, is far more inclined toward us. By way of analogy, think of the sun. It shines from its spot in the heavens every day, but in mid-summer we experience its rays far more powerfully than we do in mid-winter. It's the same sun, baring at the same intensity, and yet at certain times, we are able to access far more of its heat and light.

The ten days between Yom Teruah and Yom Kippur – known as the Ten Days of Repentance (*Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*) – are a kind of "summer solstice." They are designated as an *eis ratzon* for forging a connection with God. Our prayers during this time carry a power and impact that we would have to work far harder to achieve during the rest of the year, and that is because God is, figuratively speaking, leaning so much closer to us.

The Prophet Isaiah advises us in Isaiah 55:6: "*Seek the Lord when He can be found; call upon Him when He is near.*" During the ten Days of Awe it is a time of closeness that we are able to arouse the Almighty's Fatherly compassion as we come before Him to plead for all that is most important to us, especially our desire for continued life.

This plea for a renewed lease on life is not limited to simply keeping our heartbeat and breathing going for another year. One sage writes: "The prayer, *Zachreinu l'chaim*, is not just a request for life itself; it encompasses everything. That which is connected to life is also called life – health, sustenance, removing obstacles and hardships are all included in (our request for) life."

With so much at stake, we cannot afford to "stand in the shade" during this crucial *eis ratzon*, when the Almighty's radiance is at its peak.

POINTS TO PONDER

The Aseres Yemei Teshuvah are a time when the Almighty's presence is felt more strongly.

This is a special time to draw Divine compassion into one's life.

The quality of a person's prayers during these days has a life-and-death significance.

Psalm 42:9 By day may the LORD commands His faithful care, so that at night a song to Him may be with me, a prayer to the God of my life. (TNK)