

Chaim is plural

The word for life Chaim in Hebrew is plural, because each of us lives an inner life and an outer life. Judaism never promises us that we will have a rich upper class life if we learn & practice its teachings. It, though, does promise that we will have a richer inner, spiritual life if we learn & practice its teachings. Our lives will be elevated spiritually and we will be better able to form better relationships and be better able to contend with life's problems. We are now in the middle of the 10 days of Repentance. Repentance in Hebrew has two meanings in Hebrew. The first means to turn and the second to reply. First we need to feel sorry for all the sins we have committed in the past year and to turn from them. And second it means that we must feel sorry for not replying to all the spiritual challenges that have come our way. We haven't committed any overt sins but we will feel empty inside because we haven't responded to the spiritual challenges facing us. In the Torah portion Nitzaveem we learn about this second type of repentance. This repentance is a two-stage repentance. In the first stage we are to return to our heart and in the second stage we are to return to Hashem. What does it mean to return to your heart? It means that we have to realize that something is missing in our life and then when we realize this, to search for what we're missing. Usually what's missing is a vibrant inner spiritual life. It is for this reason that

studying our traditions and having a Shabbos experience is so important. So many people have found a new spiritual basis for their life, which has allowed them to feel so much more joy, hope and spiritual fulfillment in their lives by studying our traditions and having a Shabbos experience. May all of us continue to thrive and grow spiritually in the coming year because we will have returned to our hearts so we can then return to Hashem.