

Rabbi Jacob Pressman

MY NEW YEAR WISHES 2007, 5768

As we begin this solemn season of self-examination and facing our shortcomings during the past year, we seek forgiveness at the throne of the Almighty judge. But first we must seek forgiveness from those we may have offended on earth.

Let me begin with myself. If at any time during the past year anything I may have said, or anything I may have done has hurt you or offended you; or anything I may not have said, or anything I may not have done may have hurt you or offended you; then I say, "You are just too sensitive."

I greet one and all with love and good wishes for this new year.

May there be a decrease in your weight, your cholesterol, your blood pressure, your taxes, your gasoline and electricity bills, and the junk in your e-mail and your snail mail, your mortgage payments and the solicitation calls during your dinners. May your income, your stocks, your dividends, and your popularity, increase; and may your smoke alarm, your refrigerator, your computer, your trusted friends and your automobile tires never fail you.

May your lottery ticket win, but, remember, you have the same chance of winning whether you buy a ticket or not.

May you often hear the two most beautiful words in the English language: "Check enclosed."

May your neighborhood be blessed with alert and plentiful policemen, quick to respond when summoned, and with skilled paramedics just a 911 away, and may you never need them

May the words: "You know, like, I mean, Ummm, it's so fun, you guys, and that meaningless, apathetic word, "Whatever!" be banished from polite conversation.

And those old-fashioned expressions: "Please, thank you, pardon me, after you," and "you look marvelous" be heard in the land.

May you forgive your enemies. Nothing annoys them more.

May we sing songs again with lyrics which tell romantic stories, with melodies we can sing without clapping our hands, and music we can enjoy without losing our hearing.

May the world enjoy a year finally free of hurricanes, typhoons, floods, earthquakes, wild fires, drought, and political oratory, the windiest of them all.

May we have the strength to live through the coming national elections, and the tolerance to forgive the candidates for the lies they tell about one another. Remember: nobody is as perfect as he claims, or as horrible as his opponents paint him. And forget the promises they make...they will.

May the day come when our candidates won't have to kiss the feet of Oprah, Leno, Letterman, Regis, and Larry King to convince us that they are really plain, humble, ordinary folks just like us - we can see that!

May we never forget how fortunate we are that men and women will submit themselves to the merciless spotlight, grueling schedules, baby kissing, ethnic foods and vicious cartoon caricatures campaigning includes, so that ordinary people may rise to the heights which office brings in this most envied of all lands.

May you learn to keep yourself healthy by eating that you don't want, drinking what you don't like, and doing what you would rather

not.

May you become fluent in Spanish, Russian, Farsi, Arabic and Hebrew so that you can read our election ballots and greet our new neighbors without being apologetic about speaking English.

May Subway open up their glatt kosher restaurants on Pico and Ventura, so that we get our fill of mayonnaise and have the joy of having a *sheiner bocher* in a yarmulke ask us, "Pickle?"

May you live to see universal agreement on a secure State of Israel, with an undivided Jerusalem at its heart, so that holiness may replace hatefulness. May Israel be blessed with peace, so that, we, too, may know peace, in our home, in our hearts, peace for our fellow Jews, and peace among all peoples...for never forget, unless there is peace for everyone there is true peace for no-one.

May you have at least one person who loves you unconditionally, one mate, one child, one friend who cares if you live or die. May you learn that giving love away freely and without strings is the surest way to receive it in return. Your age doesn't matter; because, as I have told you, there is always time to find that one special person, because the older you are the easier it is to make a life long friend.

And in the darkest moments of loneliness, and they do happen, remember you are never really alone. God is always with you, and God loves you, and wants you to have a beautiful new year, and so do I. Amen.