

## “Why Me?”

By Rabbi David Wolpe

The most Jewish of American holidays is surely Thanksgiving. Apart from the family meal (food and family — what could be more Jewish?) the theme of gratitude animates Judaism.

In his marvelous new book, *You Shall be Holy*, our recent Roz and Abner Goldstine scholar-in-residence Joseph Telushkin begins a section on gratitude with a quote from the midrash: "For every breath that a person takes, he should praise his Creator." Quick to complain of our wrongs, we are less quick to thank God for our blessings.

In my experience as a Rabbi, when someone says "Why me?" they mean "why has this bad thing happened to me?" But how many people go into the Rabbi's office and say "I was born in a nation where I never went without food — why me?" "I have a family that loves me — why me?" "I was given a mind that works — tell me Rabbi, why me?" "My life has been blessed each day in thousands of ways — I just don't understand — why me?"

We are too quick to single out our suffering and discount the endless ways in which we are fortunate. The world is unfair, to be sure. But it is often unfair to our benefit.

On this Thanksgiving, as we sit down to a table groaning with food, surrounded by people who care for us, in a nation filled with blessing, it is worth asking "why me?" And thanking God for every breath we take.