

# “Sparks in the Darkness”

By Rabbi David Wolpe

The Rabbis tell a stirring tale of Adam's first night on earth. Having known only one day, he had never experienced a sunset. When the world went dark, Adam feared it was the end of everything. His hand alighted on two stones, one named *afelah*, darkness, and the other *maveth*, death. He rubbed the stones together and created a spark that illuminated the darkness until, miraculously, the morning came and the sun rose.

As we enter the darkest time of year we understand that the darkness in the world sometimes parallels or even evokes darkness in our own souls. The year that has passed has seen much cruelty, unkindness, violence and death. The planet that sustains us is groaning under our relentless drive for both creation and comfort. At times it is easy to despair of the future of humanity.

We learn from Adam's fears that foreboding is not new. From the beginning of time human beings wondered if the sun would rise tomorrow. So God taught a truth that needs to be rediscovered in each generation: From the elements of despair, of darkness and death, we can generate a spark of light and of life. God, says Solomon, is found in a dark cloud. (2 Chron. 6:1) As Adam learned, it is in our power to transform the darkness if we strike the spark.