

# “Restoring Wholeness”

By Rabbi David Wolpe

The greatest theme of Judaism is unity. God is One, we proclaim each day. But then we live our lives as fragments.

Each year as Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur approach, we are reminded that sin creates distance. Distance creates factions between people. So we proclaim the unity of God, and the fractures in our community — and in our own souls — widen.

The *Sefat Emeth* teaches that the first tablets were broken by sin, but on Yom Kippur, Moses returned with the second tablets, all in one piece. *Teshuva*, repentance, had created wholeness again.

We create distance when we are afraid, and even more when we are ashamed. As sin is a pushing-away, love is a drawing-close. To believe in God's love is to have faith in the ultimate oneness of the world. For if everything is ultimately one, then all distance, all separation, is temporary. The writer E.M. Forster's famous admonition, “only connect,” is here made into the law of the universe, into God's law: draw close to Me, and you will be healed.

May this year help us find our way back to each other, and back to God.