



Rosh Hashana Like Never Before
LET'S GET REAL

Rosh Hashana 5781

Dear Klal Yisroel,

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We have gone through almost two thousand years of Rosh Hashanos in this galus and the Geula hasn't come yet. How many tekios have been blown? How many tefillos have been poured out on these holy days? How many kabbalos were made on these days? There have been so many feelings of yearning to come close to Hashem... The pachad of Yom Hadin along with a strong dose of emuna and bitachon keeps our holy nation strong. So the question is where do we stand, and what can we do at this point of time to hasten the geula at a time like this?

I would like to give a few suggestions that will shed a whole new light for this coming year. I can imagine that most people are thinking that after such a difficult year especially with Corona virus which is currently still raging in the world and many more tragedies, we have to storm the heavens to bring back tranquility once again. We will daven for parnasa, gezunt and for life like never before. Obviously, we must daven with utmost intensity for these gifts. However, permit me quote a Zohar Hakadosh.

The Zohar has complaints against Yidden on Rosh Hashana (and Yom Kippur) שצועקים ככלבים ואומרים הב הב. "They scream like dogs and ask for more and more materialism". The Meforshim are very puzzled by this statement, because the tefillos that ask for parnasa were instituted by our holy Chachamim. So what's the problem? There are different answers and I'm about to give you a real fascinating peshat.

The Gemara in Rosh Hashana (16) says a huge chiddush. Even after Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur pass and one's fate has been sealed, there is still a way to break the decree, and that's through צעקה. It's a form of tefilla that comes from the depth of one's heart and arouses Hashem's mercy of חנון, like it says in the pasuk ושמעתי כי חנון אני.

Therefore we can say that of course a person should daven intensely for materialism on Rosh Hashana like Chazal have instituted. However, צעקה should be reserved for Kavod Shamayim, for Malchus Shomayim and צער השכינה. That's what the Zohar is saying שצועקים ככלבים ואומרים הב הב. They are using tzaka for their personal requests

Now if we are going to storm the heavens this Rosh Hashana with צעקה and cry out to Hashem מנחלתך, מנע מגפה מנחלתך, there's no question that our tefillos will be answered and

things will resume like before. However, this does not resolve the greater problem--that Hashem is in pain. He longs to reunite with his children who are all so far away. Some of his children are a bit closer, but others don't even know about Yiddishkeit altogether. Some of them don't even know that they have a father, r"l. If we really work on loving Hashem and we connect to him, then we would overlook our own troubles and yearn for Malchus Hashem, when the whole world will realize that Hashem is the King. That is what Hashem wants and therefore that's what we should want with all our heart.

Some people are not waiting simply because they have cheshbonos (maybe even subconsciously). For example, "I'm comfortable where I am; it's too hard to move." Some people are scared of change. Some people think that maybe it's a bit too extreme compared to what they're used to.

מורי ורבותי, I know of people who for some reason, whether for a sick child or wife or some other serious situation, dropped everything and everyone and moved to a different state. In some instances, they moved to a different country. The reasoning is simple "אהבה מקלקלת את השורה". In other words, "When you love someone there is no room for cheshbonos." That's what we see clearly by the Akeida. Even though there were so many questions Avraham could have had, he did not ask because there is no room for cheshbonos, because of his great love for Hashem.

In order to love Hashem, one first must acknowledge that everything we have in this world comes from Hashem. This includes our bodies and our neshamos. Then we must believe with all our heart and soul that every breath and movement is also a gift from Hashem. We must start talking to Hashem and thanking Him with all our hearts. This is what we are doing in the days of Elul and from Rosh Hashana to Yom Kippur. This is the way to build a relationship. After we internalize this, then our love starts growing, and then we are ready to give that צעקה from the depth of our soul and cry out מלוך על כל העולם כולו. This brings a person to the ultimate מלכות.

The Gemara in Rosh Hashana says the following. למה הן תוקעין כשהם יושבין ותוקעין. כשהם עומדין כדי לערבב את השטן. Why do we blow two times? To confuse the Satan. There's quite a few explanations on the Gemara, but Tosafos explains that when the Satan hears the Shofar the first time, he gets a bit scared as he's unsure about the purpose of the blasts. But when he hears the shofar a second time, he says, "It's certainly the shofar of Moshiach," and he's frightened off.

I have a simple question. If he realizes that the first תקיעות are for Rosh Hashana, why does he get scared? If he thinks that perhaps it's the shofar of Moshiach, so what is it in the second shofar blasts that confirms his fears?

I believe that the answer is that the Satan knows that we blow on Rosh Hashana. However, he realizes the power of the shofer. The shofer is like a צעקה that comes from the depth of our soul. It can bring out the צעקה that's hidden deep down in the Jewish heart which can lead a Yid to the ultimate מלכיות where every fiber of his body and soul cry out מלוך על כל העולם כולו. This is the height of the עבודה of Rosh Hashana.

This year we seem to have a problem. On the first day of ר"ה which is the מצות תקיעת מצות התורה, we don't have תקיעת שופר. How could the Chachamim take away such a crucial mitzva when so much depends on it (ע' משך חכמה)? One can answer perhaps that the תקיעות on the second day can accomplish this for us. However, I would like to present a novel peshat.

The Gemara in Rosh Hashana says אמרו לפני מלכיות כדי שתמליכוני עליכם וכו' ובמה בשופר. The Gemara is teaching us that the shofar is the way to be ממליך ה'. The main avoda of Rosh Hashana is מלכיות and this is achieved through the shofar.

Going further and deeper: We all know as Rabbi Akiva taught us, that the world itself testifies that there is a בורא ומנהיג. The animals sing their shira and the rest of the world sings their shira, all testifying on the בורא. However, what's still missing in this world is that knowledge that Hashem is the King of all kings and surely the King of simple people. This is especially so in the world we live in today. Even the people who believe in Hashem still think they can do whatever they want.

Our job as Jews in this world is to teach the world that Hashem is the King. The more we are מבטל ourselves and are מוסר נפש to Hashem, especially in front of other people, the more people understand and acknowledge that Hashem is the King. That is part of Kiddush Hashem. Every Yid has to think these thoughts when he does any action. Does Hashem want me to do this? Is this gonna bring Kevod Shomayim or the opposite r"l.

I once heard from a friend of mine who spoke to a non-Jew who never really met up with religious Jews in his life. Somehow it came up that on the seventh day Jews refrain from 39 types of work, in addition to many more restrictions. This person was shocked to no end. What? Every seven days, for one full day, the Jews don't work, don't smoke,

for people addicted to smoking, and don't drive cars. He was so stunned he didn't know what to say.

My friends, we ourselves don't realize the full intensity what we are doing every seven days. We get used to it and we say, "What's the big deal?" Someone might want to call that humility, but we know that is called "false humility". When a person goes through a Shabbos, he is testifying about בריאת העולם, as Chazal say. Additionally, he is also testifying that Hashem is the King and we are His עבדים. When we abstain from almost any action and we don't even talk about things that are related to the weekday and even more than that we don't even think certain מחשבות, that is the pinnacle of מלכיות. We must realize the full magnitude of what we are doing on Shabbos.

Now we can understand why the Chachamim were able to withhold this crucial mitzva when Rosh Hashana falls out on Shabbos. It's because Shabbos is the tool to be ממליך ה', like the shofar. Interestingly, for those who say כגומא Friday night know that Shabbos has the power to get rid of all the דינים and the whole סטרא אחרא because Shabbos is all about מלכיות.

We also see in Chazal that if we would keep Shabbos with all its halachos, it would bring the Geula. According to what we're saying, a new and beautiful understanding of Shabbos emerges. Just like the shofar that has the power to bring the Geula through מלכיות, Shabbos is no different.

However, keeping Shabbos has two parts: עשייה--which is honoring Shabbos as much as possible, as if an esteemed guest was coming to your home. You would prepare with excitement. You would make the house perfectly clean and prepare many delicacies. On Shabbos, there's a Mitzva of One Shabbos which includes eating food לכבוד שבת. This also represents that it's all about Hashem. We are giving ourselves up totally for Hashem.

Then there is שמירה--which is keeping all the התורה ומדרבנן מלאכות. Like the Chofetz Chaim would reiterate-- the only way to keep Shabbos properly is to make a seder and learn the halachos. It's almost impossible not to be מחלל שבת if we don't know the Halachos well.

מורי ורבותי, I think having said all this, we know that the בעלי מוסר teach us that "the secret to success in Torah in mitzvos is with a קבלה" like it says בפיו ובלבבו לעשותו that

one should verbalize a kabbala בפּיך, with one's whole heart-- ובלבבך, and then we will be zoche לעשותו.

There is a famous Rabbeinu Yona in Avos (and other places as well) that says that immediately upon making a kabbala it's as if you did it already. That's very powerful. So let's be מקבל together ובלבבך בפּיך to learn Hilchos Shabbos, either daily or at least weekly (on Friday and Shabbos) for at least fifteen minutes or whatever you decide will work for you. There are many wonderful books out there that simplify the halachos so that anyone can get at least the basics. (More complex shailos should be addressed to a Rav.)

The Maharsha says unequivocally that we pasken like Reb Eliezer that בתשרי נברא העולם, but he continues that we also pasken like him that "בתשרי עתידין לגאל". Let's be מקבל to learn Hilchos Shabbos and try to do our utmost to honor Shabbos, especially this Shabbos Rosh Hashana. We should be zoche to internalize that Hashem is the king and we will try to show the world this. How by bringing Hashem into every step of our life. If we do this then we will be zoche to hear the תקיעה גדולה that will bring the נבואה that we say so many times a day,

"והיה ה' למלך על כל הארץ ביום ההוא יהיה ה' אחד ושמו אחד" במהרה בימינו, אמן!

כתיבה וחתימה טובה

פינחס הלוי דאפפעלט