



Tehillim 47

Coronating the King of Kings

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

We recite Tehillim 47, seven times before the blowing of the *shofar*. It is an anthem for the coronation of the King of kings. The Rambam explains that at the very beginning all people recognized Hashem as the absolute ruler. Over time they began to worship tangible forces of nature and forgot about the Creator. Some objectified Him and made Him limited either in space or time as in different forces operating on land and sea. There was a devolution of mankind. It became difficult to believe in something that was abstract and this is still a problem for people today.

Am Yisrael came to recognize the kingdom of Hashem. The first time we declared it explicitly was in the Song of the Sea when we saw the force of Hashem overpowering the forces of nature. Then the Jews exclaimed, "*Hashem yimloch lolam voed*." Hashem's power reigns beyond time and space and is not bound by the laws of nature. Later at *Har Sinai* there was a covenant made. Our mission then became to spread awareness of Hashem to the rest of the world. In Sefer

Yeshaya were told that essentially all humanity will bow to Hashem. We also say it every day in *Aleinu*. Rashi says when we declare *Shema Yisrael* we are saying that Hashem who is now our *Elokeinu* will become *Hashem echad*- the one and only Hashem that the entire universe will worship.

Hashem doesn't force himself on humanity. Man of His own free will accepts him. In *Adon Olam* it says when everything was created only then was He called king. Until then, his reign was obscured. When the world will come to its conclusion, He alone will rule. There will be no other illusory forces.

The *mizmor* begins, "*Kol ha'amim tiku kof*- All the people trumpet to the king." There's a singing, celebratory tone here. Some translate *tiku kaf* as applause. There's a halachic concept of *tekiat kaf* where two people come to an agreement with a handshake that has the status of an oath. It can indicate asking people to recognize Hashem by shaking hands and making peace with one another. According

to *Rashi* it means celebrating Hashem as our king, indicating unity. *Redak* notes that this is all a vision of what will occur in the times of *Mashiach* when we will all join together as one to recognize Hashem.

Rav Hirsh explains the word *yidaber* as in herding together sheep so that they stick together. *Tachteinu* is underneath them, indicating that *Am Yisrael* will retain its leadership. *U'lumim tachat ragleinu* -Malbim explains that *am* is a political unit made of many people with various ethnic group who choose to be under one leader. *Am Yisrael* will unify people from all types of backgrounds and bring them to recognize Hashem. Rashi says *yidaber* is an expression of subjugation. After the major cataclysmic war of *Gog U'mogog*, all will recognize Hashem's oneness. It may also mean having them follow us by our example of success. Rav Hirsh explains that Yaakov represents the downtrodden Jew and the pride that Hashem loves is not the pride of might but of moral superiority, that we remain true to who we are.

Days of Judgement Unlike Any Other Part II

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

There's much more going on on *Rosh Hashana* besides the weighing of our deeds. Repeatedly doing good deeds affects a person to a point where he can say that his inner work created something. All the actions we did during the year penetrate our inner core and define who we now are. On *Rosh Hashana* all the deeds a person did during the year come together to become one and they have an affect as a whole. They will define who we are. The difference of what we did and who we are happens on *Rosh Hashana* and we are judged accordingly. It's who we became that defines what we will get in the coming year.

Our deeds also affect creation. All that will happen in the world is defined on this day. Our goal on *Rosh Hashana* is to come to a more elevated level. What does that mean and how do we get there?

Let's examine the *Mussaf* prayer of *Rosh Hashana*. The first section is *Malchiut*. We don't mention our sins. The concentration is on making Hashem king over us. If we come with our deeds before Hashem, according to strict law, there's no chance we'll be acquitted. But if we run to the king and admit our foolishness and accept His authority, there's a chance we'll be forgiven. We look at *Rosh Hashana* as an opportunity for Hashem to give us the tools to accomplish our mission in the coming year. When we express our yearning to be connected to Hashem and to accomplish our purpose, that's *malchiyut*, the elevation of the soul. *Rosh Hashana* is not looking at what I did but what I can be and what will be the ultimate reality when we accomplish our mission. The positive outcome is the very fact that we get more positive energy which changes our life experience and who we are.

Hashem in his kindness gave us 40 days that

enable us to focus on our inner core soul that can never be contaminated. We can work on developing it and making it our dominant force and Hashem will help us. The *shofar* is a call to connect, to focus on what's real in life, and to make Hashem king. *Rosh Hashana* is ohr-light. It gives us the ability to look at reality differently. Our hearts awakens to teshuva. Everyone does it in their own way. It can be through thoughts, feeling, speaking to Hashem, but our focal point shifts. Hashem gives us the opportunity to recognize that there's more to life and He wants us to maximize our potential.

In *Zichronot* we speak about the beginning of creation. On *Rosh Hashana*, we stand in judgment, but it is before our loving father who wants only the best for us. Hashem created the world for our benefit. It's a long process, there may be many ups and downs, but it's all leading to ultimate good. We awaken the

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chesed Hashem expressed when He created the world and this causes Him to judge us favorably.

We blow the *shofar* when we appoint a king or when he comes to a place and we want to

announce him. Harav Bloch explains that on *Rosh Hashana* we have to move away from the mundane to create a festive environment. It's a day of judgement, but it's also festive and promising, and the *shofar* creates that aura of elevation, of being in a different sphere. The

Midrash says- "Happy is the person that is higher than his sins." Let us not let ourselves be drowned by sin but rather let us elevate ourselves above it to reach our ultimate purpose.

Rosh Hashana in Times of Covid

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Tziporah Heller

We're about to experience *Rosh Hashana* as it was last year and as it will be next year, but were at a different point in the cycle of years. The word *gezeira* is related to the word *gizra* which means a pattern. A *gezeira* fits our needs spiritually like a glove fits a hand. Everything that happens is part of a bigger picture. When Hashem created the world he designed it so that each day would parallel a thousand years of history. *Mashiach* must come by the last millennium. We are getting closer to the end. Certain things must happen to move us forward. And everything that we are experiencing is part of a greater plan. The root word for *nisayon* (test) is *nes* which means a flag. A flag lets us know the identity of a nation. So too, a challenge puts us in contact with our identity. Hashem wanted us to encounter ourselves and this is why were challenged this year. We need to ask- What did we do with the opportunities Hashem sent us? How did we respond?

Let's focus on the prayers of *Rosh Hashana*. What we ask for should be what we want on a deep level.

The first blessing of *shemone esrei* ends with Magen Avraham and awakens the *chesed* within us. Avraham brought an awareness of Hashem's presence into the world which is the ultimate *chesed*. Hashem remembers that and remembers that this is what we want to be. We praise Hashem that He's only good and that wherever he's taking us is *chesed*. The second blessing is about the revival of

the dead. Our spiritual choices can take us towards death or life. The Baal Haleshem says *teshuva* is *techiat hemeisim*. You can take every negative choice that leads to death and let it lead you to life through *teshuva*. The third blessing of *Ata Kadosh* speaks about Hashem's transcendent power. We have some of Hashem's holiness within us and he's our king leading us where we ultimately want to be.

The next of several *brachot* start with *U'vechen* and tell us what *Rosh Hashana* is about and how we can interpret the year. "And therefore let your name be sanctified..." *Kedusha* means separation from everything that is limited. It's elevating the spiritual possibilities that are hidden in the physical world. This is unique to man. We ask Hashem to let us see holiness within ourselves and within every Jew, to see the spiritual excellence in *Yerushalayim* and in *Eretz Yisrael*. We ask Hashem to bring something of His holiness into the world and to give us the ability to be more. We ask Him to help us choose life, to see spiritual reality, to see clearly how to bring His attributes into the world, to know how to respond well to *nisyanot*.

In the second request we ask for fear. The rule is greater fear extinguishes lesser fear. Ideally, we should recognize that there are many challenges in life but the only one that deserves our real inner trembling is Hashem. When the Lubavicher Rebbe was imprisoned, he told his interrogator, "The difference between you and me is that you have no

Hashem and one world, so you're afraid of everything. I have one Hashem and two worlds so nothing can scare me."

The Likutei Mahran says the true sign of giving honor to Hashem is when you hear yourself being humiliated and remain silent. You don't need people to honor you, you only want honor from Hashem. We ask Hashem to put His fear upon us so that we are no longer afraid of each other. We will then be one group serving Hashem. Everything we encounter is meant to bring forth something that we want brought forth. Let us not be afraid of life. In the third request we ask for *kavod*. *Kavod* means having a sense of your own significance. If you're able to feel significant by doing the right thing that's *kavod*. We have a unique mission to bring Hashem's presence into the world. We are meant to spread moral reality and higher consciousness. Yitzchak's sense of significance came from his surrender to Hashem's will. Another way to develop our relationship with Hashem is through giving over our soul to Hashem. It could be small like holding back from eating a non- Kosher candy bar or huge like people who sacrificed their life in the Holocaust. We ask Hashem to open people's eyes so that they see what really deserves respect. Being a *yarei shamayim* is about being in a state of *simcha* with Hashem for having created us and given us the *Torah*. The most important thing that Covid was meant to teach us is not just surrendering control to Hashem but discovering our own *kavod*.