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## Essence of the Month - 009 Tishrei | Tangible Spirituality

### *Tishrei - The Month of Spiritual "Touch"*

We are now with *siyata d'shmaya* in the *Yamim Noraim*, in the month of *Tishrei*, which is called *Yerach Aisanim*, "the month of giants", due to the many festivals in this month - Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, Succos, Simchas Torah. [1] [1] There is surely one point, however, that connects all of this together, which describes the very essence of all these days.

Our Sages teach us that each month contains a special power, and that the month of *Tishrei* especially contains the power of *mishush*, the sense of "spiritual" touch. [2] [2]

We have five senses, and according to the Vilna Gaon, it really extends into twelve senses. The five senses are sight, hearing, smell, speech, and touch. When we see something from in front or behind us, we do not come into actual contact with what we are seeing. When we hear something or when we smell something, we also are not coming into actual contact with it. But when we touch something, we can feel its very existence. Thus, the sense of touch puts us into direct contact with the essence of something.

Our body can feel things by touching them, and our emotions can feel things. If we get even more specific, touch is mainly accessed through our fingers, especially through the very endpoints of the fingers. On a more subtle level, the sense of touch is represented by the *Bris Kodesh*, [3] [3] which enables man to achieve connection. Touch enables man to connect outward; not only does he touch what he is touching - he can connect to it. Touch enables a person to feel the essence of something, and this enables a person to connect to the essence of something.

Being that the Ten Days of *Teshuvah* are in the month of *Tishrei*, it follows that *teshuvah* is connected to the concept of touch, the ability to feel the essence of something. Thus, when we embark upon doing *teshuvah*, we must come to feel the essence of our actions - and this is what enables us to do *teshuvah*.

Physical touch enables us to feel and touch things that are outside of us, but the soul's power of touch feels things that are within the soul. The eyes, ears, and nose can sense things from the outside, whereas the soul's power of touch is the power to feel things from within ourselves. When one feels something from within himself, he is enabled to feel the essence of that which he comes across.

### **"Aisan" - Sensing The Spiritual**

The month of *Tishrei* is called "*Yerach Aisanim*". The word "*aisan*" (giant) connotes "might". The

simple understanding of why it is called *Yerach Aisanim* is because these are days of judgment, *middas hadin* (the attribute of justice). But this is just the external meaning.

The inner implication of “*aisan*” is that there is a power in the soul to be strong and mighty; it is in fact the strongest and innermost power of the soul.<sup>[4]</sup> [4] The Sages describe a concept of the “*aisan*” in the soul as being the inner power in the soul which all other powers in the soul stem from. *Aisan* exists both in the planes of time and soul. In time, it is found in the month of *Tishrei*: the month of “*Yerach Aisanim*”. In the soul, it is the power of “*Aisan*” in the soul. The power of “*Aisan*” in a Jew’s soul is essentially the power to feel the essence of something. The word for touch is *mishush*, similar to the word *mamash*, actual, because when a person feels something, he can feel how it is tangible and actual.

### *Using The Soul’s Sense of Touch To Feel Our Beginning State*

Everything in time also exists in the soul. If there is a beginning of time, there is also a beginning of the soul. What is the beginning of the soul? It is the ability to feel something, tangibly.

Rosh HaShanah is called *HaYom Haras Olam*, the birth of the world. It is a day which reveals beginnings, a power to reach the beginning of everything. Hashem created the world, and in the beginning of Creation, there was no man yet. First He created the heavens, earth, the skies, etc. Man was created on the sixth day and was given the power to reach the beginning of Creation even though he wasn’t there. That is the power of touch in the soul – the power to actually feel a spiritual reality, to feel the reality that one came from, which was his very beginning state on the sixth day of Creation, when it was before the sin and man fully sensed the Creator.

It was for this reason that Hashem gave man the power of touch in his soul. All other powers in the soul are meant to help a person tangibly feel the Reality, that there is a Creator, Who is the Root of all reality.

How can man connect to this Reality? There are many ways, but it not only about praying to Him, crying to Him, or learning His wisdom [Torah]. The depth of connecting to the Reality of the Creator is for one to **feel this reality, in his heart**. The month of *Tishrei*, the beginning from which the world was created, contains the power to feel reality. One can feel closeness to Hashem where He is found, meaning, Hashem is found with one who feel Him as reality, in his soul.

The soul’s power of touch is given to a Jew so that he can feel the essence of reality, which is our complete *emunah* that there is only One Reality. We can all say it with our mouths, but the true, complete *emunah* is to feel this reality in our heart, to feel it absolutely and tangibly. We can only feel it in our heart, not with our hands. The month of *Tishrei* is a month of spiritual touch, because without this ability to feel, we wouldn’t be able to become close to Hashem. Our purpose on this world is become attached to the Creator, and for this, we need to feel a closeness to Him.

We may all able to say this and think about this, but we must feel it, in order for our *emunah* to be complete. The intellect of man cannot grasp the Creator, but our hearts can feel Him very strongly. That is the soul’s power of touch. Any person can feel that his feet are standing on the ground, even though the feet are the least feeling part of the body. In the soul, in the heart, a person can feel as well, the reality. This is a gift from Hashem given to man, as soon as he was created, on the first day of *Tishrei* – the power to feel the reality. It is a very part of his creation to feel this reality.

If one doesn’t merit it, his power of touch can only feel the sensory and the fantasies, which remove him from the spiritual. But one merits to touch holiness, and he sanctifies his senses, he can then always feel Hashem, at all times.

To all of us, it was given the soul's power of touch. Why is it that we naturally don't feel Hashem, if this is such a simple reality? Why is this so difficult to attain, if it is such a simple truth? Ever since Adam and Chavah touched from the *Eitz HaDaas* and ate from it, the sense of touch has been damaged, and it cannot always feel the truth, that there is only one Reality, Hashem. The sense of touch became callous to the spiritual, and ever since, it can only feel physical things. It doesn't easily feel the spiritual, matters of the soul, and certainly it doesn't feel *HaKadosh Baruch Hu*.

### *The Depth of Teshuvah In The Month of Tishrei – Returning To Our Simple Sense For Hashem*

Each person on his own level can reflect what the root all ruination is, so that he can properly do *teshuvah*. Surely each person needs to do *teshuvah* over his various sins, but the main *teshuvah* should be over the root of all sin, when Adam ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*. We all ate from the *Eitz HaDaas*; we all lost our spiritual sense for touch. We each have our own private sins which we need to do *teshuvah*. But there is a root, general *teshuvah* which applies to every Jew – we all need to do *teshuvah* over the root of all sin, which is that we ate from the *Eitz HaDaas* and thereby lost our spiritual touch.

Our *avodah* now is to return to a clean, pure state where we only feel the Reality of Hashem. We cannot reach it completely, because we currently found after the sin. Before the sin, Adam could naturally feel Hashem's reality, without any deep thinking or feeling. Currently, this has become very concealed from our awareness. It is written, "And you will know today, and you settle the matter your heart"<sup>[5]</sup> [5] - we have an *avodah* to internalize our mind's knowledge of Hashem into our hearts, because our hearts cannot naturally feel it in our current state, and it takes a lot of reflection until it sinks into our hearts and internalizes.

One of our principles of faith is that we believe in the coming of *Mashiach*, even though he tarries. This can only be possible if a person acquires a simple sense of feeling the Presence of the Creator. *Mashiach* is from the word *masiach*, as in the term *masiach l'fi tumo* (conversing casually), which is when talks naturally and simply.

It certainly takes effort to reach this simplicity. But our point here is to know where we must return to, when we do *teshuvah*. We lost our simple sense for Hashem ever since the first sin, and our *avodah* to find Hashem in these days is mainly to return to this simple sense, through the soul's power of touch. That is the holy sense of touch in the soul.

One who guards this ability in his soul, making sure to sanctify his ability of touch, both through guarding his speech and guarding his *Bris Kodesh* – his senses become safeguarded and sanctified, and he will feel spiritual realities, such as the difference between truth and falsity is. Such a person will clearly sense that only Hashem is the true Reality. All of the *tzaddikim* throughout the generations had a clear sense of Hashem and that was how they were able to reach all of their high levels.

### *Rosh HaShanah – The Yearly Return To Man's Original State of Simply Sensing Hashem*

Rosh HaShanah is the first day of the Ten Days of Repentance, it is the day of judgment, but why is it also the first of the days of *teshuvah*?

It was the day Adam sinned, and it was the day where *teshuvah* first took root. (On a subtler note, the moon was the first to sin, and the earth also sinned. But here we are talking about the first sin of man). It is a day of *teshuvah*, of seeking closeness to Hashem, of declaring Hashem as the King, and it is the day of judgment. These are not four separate aspects of our *avodah* on Rosh HaShanah – rather, they are all one. There is only one point on this day of Rosh HaShanah: it is the day when Hashem made man, and the Sages<sup>[6]</sup> [6] explained that Adam fully sensed Hashem until he sinned.

Every day on Rosh HaShanah, this point in time returns, where he can simply feel Hashem. During the rest of the year, this sense of Hashem comes only through exertion to most people (some rare individuals can sense Him simply, because they acquired this ability through *mesirus nefesh*, an intense level of devotion to Him). But on Rosh HaShanah, every person can feel simply the reality of Hashem, as a natural ability, just as one can feel something with his body, as long as he has opened his soul even a bit.

“One cannot come to the king in sackcloth” – how must we come before Hashem on Rosh HaShanah, when we declare Him as our King? It will not suffice by declaring Him as King with our mouths alone, or with our minds alone, but with our heart - from a simple sense that He is the King. Only from that depth, can we truly accept Him as our King.

This is the depth of the judgment on Rosh HaShanah, besides for the simple meaning that all is written and sealed for a good year. One is judged on how much he has accepted Hashem as King, from a simple sense of the heart.

### *The Depth of Being Sealed For A Good Life – A Life of D’veykus In Hashem*

Three books are opened on Rosh HaShanah, and the *tzaddikim* are written in the book of life.<sup>[7]</sup> [7] What is the meaning of a *tzaddik*? Is it someone who doesn’t commit sins? The depth of this matter is that a *tzaddik* is one who has *d’veykus* in Hashem. The spiritual sense of touch is the natural level of *tzaddikim*, who feel the reality of Hashem.

This is the secret of the “personal *Beis HaMikdash*” which one can build in his heart.<sup>[8]</sup> [8] It means to “see” and sense, palpably, the Reality that is Hashem.

This is what “seals” one in the book of life. The word “seal” is the word *techum* (domain, or boundary), which implies that one needs to “stay in the *techum*” of Hashem, permanently, where one becomes part of that *havayah* (reality), of being connected to Hashem all day, amidst *d’veykus*. That is the deeper meaning of being “sealed for a good life”.

### *In Conclusion*

We are far from the birth of the world. But we see from the concept of the exodus that one must view himself as if he is leaving Egypt, as if he is there. So too, each and every one of us must try, as much as he can, to feel what he was like at the time of the birth of the world, when he did not know of any reality other than Hashem, and he felt this simply. The more we draw ourselves closer to this inner place, of our very beginning - we cannot reach it completely, but we can reach it to some level, of our beginning – in turn, we merit to be signed for a good year.

May Hashem merit us that we should feel, for at least one moment of our life, to feel simply the Presence of Hashem. And may we merit to submit all our actions, feelings and thoughts to this simple recognition. Then we will merit to be written - whether we are like “sons, or like servants” - permanently, for a good year.

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<sup>[1]</sup> [9] Rosh HaShanah 11a and Rashi ibid

<sup>[2]</sup> [10] Sefer Yetzirah 5:3

[3] [11] Bris Kodesh – the male reproductive organ, the sign representing the guarding of the Holy Covenant

[4] [12] See **Tefillah #0149 - The Source of Your Strength**

[5] [13] Devarim 4:39

[6] [14] Sanhedrin 38a

[7] [15] Rosh HaShanah 17a

[8] [16] Editor's Note: Refer to Nefesh HaChaim 1:6

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