

## ROSH HASHANAH – THE TIME OF JUDGMENT FOR THE JEWISH PEOPLE, THE NATIONS, CREATION, AND THE ANGELS

**Parashas** Nitzavim begins with the words, "And you are gathered today, all of you, before Hashem your G-d, your heads, your tribes, your elders and your officers, every man of Yisrael." The Sages expound upon this verse that it is referring to the day of Rosh HaShanah, where all of Klal Yisrael is gathered together before Hashem in judgment.

**The** Sages teach that not only are the Jewish people judged on Rosh HaShanah, but all of the world pass before Him in judgment, like sheep before their master. Even more so, according to some opinions in the Sages (*Rosh HaShanah 16b*), even the wheat, fruit, and water are judged on this day.

**Taking** this further, the judgment on Rosh HaShanah is not only for this lowly World that we dwell on, but even for the higher worlds. The angels tremble from the day of judgment, as we recite in "U'Nesaneh Tokef". In the higher and heavenly realms, the angels are being judged, on Rosh HaShanah.

### SEEKING TRUTH

**We** should know that when we go through Rosh HaShanah this year, it is not simply that we are going through another Rosh HaShanah, and another Rosh HaShanah, and then another Rosh HaShanah, as we go through each year. In the times we live in, there is no Rosh HaShanah that is like the Rosh HaShanah of the year before it. It is an entirely new Rosh HaShanah each year, because each year is so fundamentally different than the year before it; they are light years apart.

**The** "descent of the generations" increases with each passing year, making each year on a much lower spiritual level than the year before it, to the point that we do not know at all if the new year will come upon us for the good.

**The** change which Hashem wants to see from each of us is a fundamental change, to change our life totally, in the whole entire way that we are living our life, on an inward level. We need to clarify to ourselves what our life is about, what we truly want in life; to see if we truly want to become close to Hashem, to see if we truly want a life of Torah – and the emphasis is on if we "truly" want it, as opposed to trying to 'get the best out of both worlds', using various "heterim" (*halachic leniencies*) of all kinds. Instead, we need to really seek truth, to live spiritually, to seek a life of closeness to Hashem.

### IN CONCLUSION

**May** Hashem merit us, together with all of Klal Yisrael, the time when Hashem will come and slaughter the Angel of Death. But if, chas v'shalom, the world continues to exist with the Evil Inclination, where we must choose between following our good inclination versus our Evil Inclination, then the true power of choice lays before us – and when such is the case, may we merit to choose the truth. We should then understand that the Rosh HaShanah of the year 5777 will force each of us to make a deep, internal choice. That is where the depth of our life shall lie.

**The** various resolutions that we take upon ourselves for the coming year may be small changes, but the root of the changes in our soul must be awesome and profound. May we merit to make that proper root of change, and as all of our souls gather in front of Hashem and beseech Him, may we all merit to be written in the book of the completely righteous, for a good year, in which we will seek closeness with Hashem, as it is written, "And as for me, closeness to Hashem is good."

# Q&A

## QUESTION: Why Hasn't Moshiach Come Yet?

**ANSWER:** Chazal say, "Why hasn't Ben Dovid yet come yet – why didn't he come today, yesterday, or the day before it?"

**It** is because nothing has changed. Just like we were the same yesterday and the day before it, and we didn't change - that is why Moshiach didn't come yet.

**We** are in a situation which is not good. We can't say it's totally bad, but it is not good either. I don't think there's anyone here who thinks that he has a good situation.

**We** only have one hope: we must change. If we remain the same, we have no hope.

**What** hope can we have? That each person should say "I need to change"? That's not enough that just you should change, because it's not just about you. The world was not created for us to be self-absorbed and only worry for ourselves. We need to unify with each other.

**We** are in one giant slumber. We are in a total slumber.

**Anyone** with a little sensitivity to the inner spiritual reality that exists, when he walks in the street, can feel like the world is Gehinnom.

**I** am not talking about even bad places. I am talking about a regular street you walk in. It's Gehinnom. Why is it Gehinnom? Because we are in a world that lives so far from a life of truth. The lifestyle of today is totally upside-down.

**There** is almost no one who worries for others; each person lives for himself and worries for himself, like how he will make money, and he also worries a little for his spirituality. But if someone else's child gets sick, does anyone go to the hospital to visit him...?

**We** live today in one giant slumber.

## QUESTION: What is wrong today?

**ANSWER:** People are wondering: "There is Torah everywhere, there are thousands of shiurim going on. What's the problem??" The problem is very clear. The problem is that we are in a world where truth has no bearing on a person's life.

**People** who run after This World run only after This World, and people who are spiritual only care for themselves; there is almost no one who is truthful. What hope is there that reality will change...?

**The** average person doesn't feel responsibility even for himself, and surely he doesn't feel responsible for this generation. "Who am I, what can I do?" he thinks. And the less people think and reflect, the more they get 'buried' into their desires - "Kivros HaTaavah".

**We** must know what Hashem wants from us in this situation we are in. We are not merely in a situation in which we have certain kinds of problems; rather, there is one huge problem enveloping us today. A frum person keeps Shabbos and keeps kosher; he doesn't have problems with that. The problem is that a frum Jew these days doesn't know what it means to be a Jew! He identifies himself, deep down, as a non-Jew. He knows that he dresses like a Jew, but deep down, he feels disconnected from his own Yiddishkeit, rachmana litzlan. Even without coming to such a decision openly, that is the attitude deep down in himself.

**There** are Jews who aren't observant at all, as well as those who are a little observant. But we must know what the problem really is. The problem is that just like a sick person needs a doctor, so are we spiritually sick, and we don't know that there is an inner kind

of life. We don't see it.

**Not** only don't we see it in Jews who aren't frum. Even in observant Jews, we can't see an inner kind of life going on. Even when people pursue spirituality, they are self-absorbed in their own spiritual concerns.

**We** were created to reveal Hashem upon the world – not just in ourselves, but to the world. That is what we should get up for in the morning! If not, one is disconnected from the purpose of living.

**It** is very painful, these words. Why are they painful? I will give a simple example why.

**In** America, there are many chessed organizations. Baruch Hashem, people help each other. But how many places are there in the world where a person can be guided in what the truth about life is? When it comes to physical help, there is a lot of assistance being offered. There are even organizations that help a person go on vacation he needs so that he can relax. But why is there no organization that can help a person have emes (*truth*) in his life? There is very little truth in the world.

**People** will respond to this, “But there are many organizations that help a person become a baal teshuvah.” This has nothing to do with it. Doing teshuvah is not just for people who aren't wearing a kippah. We daven every day that Hashem return us to have Teshuvah Shelaimah (*complete repentance*). Why aren't people crying out when they daven for this? Why are people only crying out for their physical needs? Why aren't people who keep mitzvos being helped to return to Teshuvah Shelaimah...?

**What** does Hashem want from us? He wants us to search for the truth and not be able to fall asleep from it at night, just like a person can't fall asleep at night when he owes money. But the truth of what life is about doesn't bother us!

**You** can understand that it took time for me to come here and speak and to go back. What is the reason that I came here? I did not come here to say words of inspiration. Other speakers will come after me and do that. I came here for a whole different point: You should know that your life as it was until now, must end.

**We** all know one day we will die; you should know that from now on, starting today, you have no more of your previous life. Turn over a whole new page in your life, of how you live life.

**Understand** that there is a deep problem with the whole lifestyle of today. Just as we see that people who are not frum are living their life wrong, so too must we look at ourselves and realize that we are living our life wrong.

**Although** a person can look like a good person, someone who does chessed and helps people, if he takes away families for vacations for Shabbos (*there are organizations that do this!*), although he has a good heart, it is his actions that are incorrect.

**When** we examine ourselves, we all know that there are things we have to improve; true. But we have to be aware that there is a bigger problem we have: we are missing the whole point of life, because we are disconnected from living a truthful kind of life. Our whole life is based on erroneous beliefs.

**QUESTION:** What really is our situation today?

**ANSWER:** But we must understand that there is a problem. We hear inspiring lectures, we come to the lectures, but of what help is it for us? We all go back to routine afterwards. We don't think we can escape the routine.

I always hear the question: “In a time like this, if I have to stop working to make a living [*so that I can dedicate my life to pursuing only truth*], how will I eat?” But compare this to the following. Imagine if one's child is hospitalized, and he has to keep going to the hospital to be with his child. He can't be at work. He takes shifts with his wife in visiting his child. How come they don't wonder about the question, “How will we get by the month if we aren't going to work? How will we eat?” It's because their child needs them. They realize that they have no choice; they have to take off from work and be with their child, even though that means

they won't be getting paid that month.

**So** why don't people realize that their spiritual situation is sick? If people would know how ill they are in their spiritual situation, they would immediately leave work so they can dedicate themselves more to searching for truth, because they would see that they have no other choice. Why can't one feel that his spiritual situation is devoid, and then go seclude himself for three hours and concentrate on this, and realize the truth?

**We** must realize that we are in a situation in which materialism is where we are getting our whole life from. It won't help to speak about spiritual matters; we can speak about *ruchniyus (spirituality)* for an hour, for 2 hours, 10 hours, 100 hours, even 1000 hours, but it won't help at all! I can't say that it's pointless; maybe a little bit it will help. But it won't give a person hope to really change.

**The** only thing we can do is: decide to change.

**It's** not easy to live your hometown that you've been living in for 30 years. You are comfortable here and you have a firm livelihood and schools for your children. But if you realize that the place you live in is not a truthful place, you can indeed leave it, even though you have no idea what will be.

**True**, maybe you won't have livelihood and maybe you will have to find new schools for your children, but it's better than the alternative, because if you stay in the untruthful place you are living in, your spiritual situation is doomed. When you realize that you need truth in your life and that you must leave the place you are in, it will be easier for you to leave it all behind, and instead search for the G-dly truth about life .

**In** the world we live in today, it doesn't seem like we need to make extreme changes. We know that we need to better and improve ourselves, but we don't see why extreme changes need to be made. But it's much worse than what we think. Just like a person in a false kind of community must leave it - because he has no choice - so must a person know. that even if he lives in a place which seems truthful, he knows good and well that his life is empty! How much truth do we have in throughout our 24 hours a day...?

**One** must clearly recognize why he lives, and once he is clear in that, he must charter a new life for himself. The new life must be a life in which truth is the central priority to him, and it's not enough to pursue truth for a half hour in the morning and an hour at night – it means that truth must be constantly be pursued throughout the entire day. The truth demands that.

**Is** there anyone who thinks that the words here are not true?

**If** you agree with the words here, then who here is willing to do something about this, practically?

*(One person said, "We will try". But if your son is sick, would you just "try" to go to the doctor, or would you actually do something about it?)* What is the point of me speaking here? Will it help for me to keep speaking again and again? *(Naaseh V'Nishmah? Don't say Naaseh V'Nishmah to me and accept the words here because I'm saying it. Say Naaseh V'Nishmah to Hashem!)*

**If** people are taught and taught what they have to do but they don't practically change, and they go back to routine, it's a waste of time for them to hear all that they heard.

**Know that Hashem is the One who created us, and the One whom we must serve is Hashem.**

ראש השנה 005 - התמקדות באחרים