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## Rosh HaShanah - 062 Avoiding Self-Absorption

*“May We Be Like The Head, And Not Like The Tail”*

*Rosh HaShanah* contains the word “*rosh*”, a hint to the concept of *koived rosh*, “seriousness”. Almost everyone approaches Rosh HaShanah with some level of *koived rosh*, a sense of seriousness; each on his own level.

In childhood, Rosh HaShanah is experienced as a time to taste sweet foods and to get candies in shul. When you get a bit older, Rosh HaShanah is more about niggunim, singing, and the sounds of the shofar. The Satan becomes confused on Rosh HaShanah by the shofar; and in the same way, so are there souls who are also “confused” from the shofar – they are confused about what Rosh HaShanah is all about.

We say on Rosh HaShanah, when eating the *simanim*, “May we be like a head, and not like a tail.” If a person doesn’t merit to become like a head, and instead he becomes like the tail, it means that he becomes confused from these days, because he is lives in a state of *katnus* (small-mindedness and immaturity). He may be simply terrified from Rosh HaShanah because it is the *Yom HaDin* (Day of Judgment), but he doesn’t approach it with seriousness, with *koived rosh*.

On Rosh HaShanah, we are meant to become elevated over the level of our physical body, and to rise to the level of “*rosh*”, the “head” – which refers to our beginning point (*raishis*), which is our *neshamah* (Divine soul), our Divine true, inner essence. That is what it means to become like a “head”, and to not become like a tail.

*How Our Neshamah Views Rosh HaShanah*

Thus, on Rosh HaShanah, we are meant to access the view from our *neshamah*, towards this day.

The view of the *neshamah* towards Rosh HaShanah contains two major parts: it sees Rosh HaShanah as a day of *malchiyus*, to recognize and declare Hashem’s dominion over the world; and it sees Rosh HaShanah as the *Yom HaDin*.

Let us consider first how we should view the “*Yom HaDin*” aspect of Rosh HaShanah and what this should evoke in us.

*Yom HaDin – Being Afraid For The Fate Of All Other Jews*

The *Yom HaDin* means that we are all examined by Hashem; as we say in the tefillos of Rosh

HaShanah, "like sheep passing before their Master, in one sweep." There is a personal judgment for each person, and there is also a general judgment for the Jewish people, on Rosh HaShanah.

Any person on Rosh HaShanah who has a little fear of this day will have a fear of the *Yom HaDin*; he is afraid to die before his time, he is afraid of his fate this year, and he worries for his needs, of the difficulties of this world. Any sensible person feels fear on this day.

But this fear is only about one's own private life. A person might also fear for his spiritual needs; and for his family members, and for those whom he loves and is close to. But if this his entire fear on Rosh HaShanah, he is really just being self-absorbed!

The more inner fear to have on Rosh HaShanah is not a kind of self-focused worry, but to think about others and to feel concerned for them. One must think that everyone is being judged on Rosh HaShanah, not just him.

If each person is only thinking about himself and worrying for himself, he is then judged individually, because he is only concerned for himself, so the judgment will become more focused on him....

On Rosh HaShanah, one needs to access a more inner part of his soul, where a person recognizes that he does not live for himself, but for others. This is true both when it comes to physical matters and spiritual matters. Such a person will merit a higher judgment, a judgment towards the general whole of *Klal Yisrael* [which is not focused individually on him and which will be far more meritorious for him.]

There is a verse, "*HaYoitzer Yachad Libam*" - "He created their hearts to be together." This refers to the "one heart" in every Jew's soul which is united for the same purpose, a point where all hearts are connected to. When one is concerned about the fate of others from this place in himself, this is a higher fear, not a self-absorbed kind of fear. It means to be concerned for the generation - both in their physical situation, and in their spiritual situation.

#### *The Self-Introspection On Rosh HaShanah*

Every person needs to become aware of what his fears are on Rosh HaShanah. One needs to ask himself: "Am I mainly concerned for the fate of myself, and my own family? Or do I also feel concern for the fate of others, on Rosh HaShanah?"

If a person is self-absorbed (whether about his physical situation or his spiritual situation), he cannot be concerned about the "*malchiyus*" aspect of Rosh HaShanah either. Even if he does, it is only for his own self-gain, and not because he is really interested in recognizing the *malchus* of Hashem. himself. A person living in such a state is not able to go beyond himself, so why should he care about Hashem's *malchus*, for its own sake? It would only interest him if there is somehow a gain for him from it. That is why it is necessary for a person to go beyond his own self-concern, if he is to feel the main, inner *avodah* of this day - which is to recognize and declare Hashem's *malchus*.

#### *Rosh HaShanah - A Reminder of The Future Day of Judgment*

Shabbos is called a resemblance of *Olam HaBa* (the World To Come). In the same way, so is Rosh HaShanah, the *Yom HaDin*, a resemblance of the great day of judgment that will be in the future, which is called the "*Yom HaDin HaGadol HaGibor V'HaNora*" - the "Great, Mighty, and Awesome Day of Judgment."<sup>[1]</sup> If a person on Shabbos does not feel that Shabbos is a resemblance of *Olam HaBa*, that means he does not 'live' what Shabbos is. So too, if a person on Rosh HaShanah does not feel that it resembles the future *Yom HaDin*, that means he does not experience Rosh HaShanah.

Therefore, the judgment that takes place on Rosh HaShanah is not just about this year's fate. The entire judgment on Rosh HaShanah is there to give us some idea of what the future *Yom HaDin* will be like. The Satan becomes confused by the shofar on Rosh HaShanah because he thinks that the sound of the shofar is heralding the future *Yom HaDin*, which is the state of the redemption, so it becomes confused, thinking that we have merited the redemption and so he doesn't accuse. Thus, the essence of Rosh HaShanah is for us to think about the great day of judgment of the future, the *Yom HaDin HaGadol HaGibor V'HaNora*.

The future *Yom HaDin* will not be about the three books that are opened on Rosh HaShanah, but about the judgment of each person all at once - as we say in the tefillos of Rosh HaShanah, "They all pass like sheep before their Master, in one full sweep." Everyone will be judged, each person, all at once - it will be the sum totality of everything, which includes every single Jew.

Thus, if a person is afraid on Rosh HaShanah only for his own personal life, and not for others, he is not living the future *Yom HaDin* on Rosh HaShanah. The future *Yom HaDin* is about the collective judgment of every Jew, all at once; this is the unified level of the Jewish people, and Rosh HaShanah is therefore a time to think about this unified level of the Jewish people.

So if a person only is concerned for the judgment of this year on Rosh HaShanah, of what will happen in the coming year, he is barely scratching the surface. That is only the external part of Rosh HaShanah - this year's fate - and its purpose is to be used in order to get to the inner layer of Rosh HaShanah, which is, the all-inclusive judgment that will be in the future.

#### *How Malchiyos, Zichronos, Shofaros Remind Us Of The Future Day of Judgment*

Declaring the verses of *Malchiyos*, *zichronos* and *shofaros* are all about this concept. It is all describing the future *Yom HaDin*.

The concept of *malchiyus* is clearly describing the complete dominion of Hashem in the future, which will be the revelation of the future *Yom HaDin*.

The verses of *zichronos* are not just about remembering the past, but for Hashem to remember all that will happen, even the future; and to spare us in the merit of His kingship that will be revealed in the future. If one doesn't get reminded about the future *Yom HaDin* as he says *zichronos*, and instead he only thinks about the past merits of the Jewish people, he has missed the whole point of reciting these verses. The point is to be reminded of the future *Yom HaDin*.

*Shofaros* as well are meant to remind us of the future *Yom HaDin*. The *shofar* we have today is a semblance of the great *shofar* that will be in the future, which will be sounded on the great *Yom HaDin* of the future.

#### *Feeling The Collectiveness of the Jewish People*

If a person is only concerned about himself and his own needs, he cannot think about any of these things. He lives in a state of *katnus* (small-mindedness and immaturity).

But when one becomes afraid of the future *Yom HaDin*, he won't think only about himself. He will have a more inclusive perspective, because he will see that he does not only live for himself, but that he is part of a greater whole. One can view himself as a soul that is part of the collective soul of Adam HaRishon. Rosh HaShanah can remind a person of the collective soul of the Jewish people, reminding a person of the beginning of creation, when all souls were part of Adam's soul.

Therefore, without revealing a true *ahavas Yisrael*, a person's heart feels separate and apart from

other Jews. Without feeling a love for the collective whole of the Jewish people, one will instead be self-absorbed, because he cannot feel the collective existence of the Jewish people, and all he can feel is his own private soul.

One of the aspects of Rosh HaShanah is that it remembers the thundering sound of the *shofaros* at Har Sinai, which was when everyone stood as one and their hearts were one. So the essence of Rosh HaShanah is to access the deep point in the soul of being unified with the entire Jewish people, where all hearts are connected as one.

Thus, the depth of the palpable fear on the day of Rosh HaShanah is really rooted in the endless love that binds together all of Creation. The *yirah* (fear) on Rosh HaShanah is therefore not just about the *yirah*, but about the *ahavah* (love) underneath it.

As long as a person lives only for himself, he misses the *avodah* on Rosh HaShanah. The inner *avodah* of a person on Rosh HaShanah is to enter into his "*rosh*" (head), his *raishis* (beginning point) - where all Jewish souls are connected in one unit, under the Throne of Glory.

That is the inner *avodah* contained in the *yirah* \fear on Rosh HaShanah. To live and worry only for oneself and for one's own needs, physical or spiritual, is all a form of self-absorption. Only from being connected to everyone else's hearts on Rosh HaShanah can we feel the true fear of the judgment on this day. There must be a revealed love for all Jews on this day, and on a deeper level, for all of the creations. That is the inner essence of Rosh HaShanah.

#### *Ahavas Yisrael: Caution and Distance On The Outside, Love On The Inside*

When it comes to actually revealing the love for all other Jews, one must be cautious about this point. One must be friends with certain people, who are safe to be around spiritually, and keep a distance from others, who are of negative spiritual influence to bond with.

But all of that is only in the external part of the soul and in our external behavior towards others. On the inside, one must feel connected to every kind of Jew, no matter what his spiritual level is, and to worry and be concerned for every Jew - to feel positive towards them, and to not see any sin in them<sup>[2]</sup>, as Bilaam said, "*I do not see sin in Yaakov.*" On Rosh HaShanah, one must feel connected to the collective whole of the Jewish people.

#### *In Conclusion*

That is the depth of the *yirah* (fear) on Rosh HaShanah- it is not a fear for oneself, but a fear for everyone else's situation, and to thereby feel connected to everyone else in the Jewish people. Such *yirah* is holy, true *yirah*, because it is not entirely self-focused.

May Hashem merit all creations to be written and sealed for a good year, and that our desire should be that the entire collective whole should be written and sealed for a good year.

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<sup>[1]</sup> For more about the "Great, Mighty, and Awesome Day of The Future", refer to ***Tefillah\_033\_The Final Judgment***

<sup>[2]</sup> See The ***Weekly Shmuess\_033\_Balak - Viewing Others With A Positive Eye***

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**Source:** <https://bilvavi.net/english/rosh-hashanah-062-avoiding-self-absorption>