



Published on www.bilvavi.net

[Home](#) > Tefillah - 098 Praying for Others on Rosh Hashanah

Tefillah - 098 Praying for Others on Rosh Hashanah

ומלוך עלינו וכו' בחסד וברחמים - We ask Hashem to rule over us with *chessed* (kindness) and with *rachamim* (compassion), and that He rule over us alone.

Rosh HaShanah is the *Yom HaDin* (Day of Judgment), and it is the day in which we declare Hashem as King.

The Sages say that one of the reasons we blow *shofar* is to cause a “sweetening of the judgment” (*hamtakas dinim*), whereupon Hashem switches Himself, so to speak, from the “Throne of *middas hadin* (attribute of judgment)” and instead He sits upon the “Throne of *middas harachamim* (attribute of mercy)”. *Rosh HaShanah* is “*Yom HaDin*”; if not for *shofar*, there would be just *din*\judgment – and there would be just “*dina d'malchusa dina*”, “the law of the government is the law”, which would leave us strict judgment and no room for mercy.

These are the words of the Sages. Let us try to understand how this works, and how we can change *din*\judgment to *rachamim*\mercy, how to declare Hashem as King and merit *chessed* and *rachamim* from Him.

Meriting A Good Judgment: Attaching Yourself To The Whole of Klal Yisrael

It is a well-known matter that in order for a person to merit a good judgment, he cannot be self-absorbed in his own life. He has to unify with others; he must do things for others. The more a person attaches himself with the *tzibbur* (the collective whole of the Jewish people), the more he is deserving of miracles.

These are based upon the words of our Sages; they were always well-known, especially in Kelm, where they would work on these matters already before the *Yom HaDin*. But there are levels upon levels to the understanding behind this concept.

To illustrate, there are many layers to our existence. We are made of outer layers and inner layers; there is the physical features of the body, and deeper inside the body is the skin, bones, and sinews. Our blood contains our *nefesh habeheimis* (the “animal layer of the soul”), and deeper within our soul is our *Nefesh Elokus* (the G-dly, Divine part of the soul). Within the *Nefesh Elokus* is the *Shechinah* (Hashem’s Presence)itself.

The deeper a person reflects into himself, the more inner layers he uncovers to his existence. The lesson from this is clear: There is depth within depth to all of Creation.

With regards to our discussion: the advice from our Sages that a person needs to attach himself to the *tzibbur* is also a concept that also has layers upon layers of understanding to it.

The superficial understanding of it is to simply “do” things for the *tzibbur*. However, this is not yet the depth of the matter. We will need to go inward into the understanding behind the concept.

It's not enough to for the individual to declare Hashem as King. There is a rule that “There is no king without a nation”, thus, there must be a collective unit that declares Hashem as King, in order for the Kingship of Hashem to be complete. In our current times, the entire Jewish people needs to declare Hashem as King, and in the future, all of Creation will declare Him as King, even the gentile nations of the world.

Thus, the advice of our Sages to attach ourselves with the *tzibbur* is not just advice to survive the *Yom HaDin*. It is to help us really declare Hashem as King. It is to show that it is not enough to declare Hashem as King on an individual level. The entire *tzibbur* needs to declare Hashem as King; thus, by each of us attaching ourselves to the collective *tzibbur* of *Klal Yisrael*, the national declaration of Hashem's Kingship can be accomplished.

Connecting To The Shofar

To understand this concept deeper, there are two aspects of Rosh HaShanah: the fact that it is *Yom HaDin*, and its aspect of *shofar*, where *din* (judgment) is transformed into *rachamim* (mercy). The fact that shofar transforms *din* into *rachamim* does not mean that a person simply believes that the blowing of the *shofar* will do all the work for him, and that he can just sit there and do nothing. The effect of the *shofar* can only work for the individual based on his person level.

It is explained by our earlier commentators that the two days of Rosh HaShanah are separate judgments: The first day of Rosh HaShanah is to seal the strict judgment for those who are undeserving, while the second day of Rosh HaShanah is the day of sweeter judgments. Thus, some people are judged on the first day, and others are judged on the second day. The general difference is that the soul is judged on the first day while the body is judged on the second day, but the more detailed definition of it is that those who are undeserving are judged strictly on the first day, while those who merit it are judged with a sweeter judgment on the second day. The depth behind this is that those who are judged on the first day are judged by Hashem even before the *shofar* is blown, while those who are judged on the second day are judged after the effects of the *shofar*, which gives them a sweeter judgment.

The *shofar* mitigates the judgment as follows: The sound of the *shofar*, which is called “*teruah*”, hints to the words “*teruas melech*” (a sound in declaration of the King). Rav Saadya Gaon states that one of the reasons we blow *shofar* on Rosh HaShanah is because the *shofar* declares Hashem as King, and this is what sweetens the judgment. Therefore, blowing the *shofar* contains a declaration of Hashem's Kingship, and that is how it sweetens the judgment. But this can only happen if the nation is unified in declaring Hashem as King. If the souls of the Jewish people are split apart from one another and there is a lack of collectedness, they cannot come together in unison to declare Hashem as King.

Now we can understand better why a person needs to attach himself to the *tzibbur* in order to merit a good judgment. It is because we must all be unified together, in love, in order to declare Hashem as King on the national level; if not, we aren't able to have the “*teruas melech*” of the *shofar* which is needed to mitigate the judgment. “There is no King without a nation” - when the nation of the Jewish people is disparate and they are unified together, they can't come together in unison to declare Hashem as King, and there is no “nation” then to declare Him as King.

Declaring Hashem as King can only happen on its true level when there is unity and friendship amongst the Jewish people. As we say in *davening*, “They **all** accept themselves the yoke of Heaven.” There must be unity amongst the Jewish people in order to declare Hashem together as King.

Thus, *shofar* doesn't come and sweeten the judgment for someone who isn't unified with others. Of course, a person always fulfills the mitzvah of *shofar* as long as hears it correctly, no matter what level he is on. But if he doesn't unify with the *tzibbur*, although he fulfills the mitzvah of *shofar* on a purely Halachic level, he will not merit the special sweetening of the judgment that the *shofar* can cause - because he isn't connected to the concept of the *shofar*.

Wishing Good Upon Others

Every person declares Hashem as King on Rosh HaShanah, and we ask Hashem to judge us with *chessed* and *rachamim*. But whom are we *davening* for, when we ask for *chessed* and *rachamim*...?

If we are apart from each other in our hearts, if all we think about on Rosh HaShanah is ourselves - whether it's our physical situation or our spiritual situation, each to his own - then all our *tefillos* on Rosh HaShanah are totally self-centered! Even if a person *davens* for his family on Rosh HaShanah, if he doesn't *daven* for others, he's still self-absorbed. His declaration of Hashem as King will only be on his private and individual level, and he is lacking it on the national level; his declaration of Hashem's Kingship is thus incomplete.

If one wants Hashem's *chessed* and *rachamim* solely for himself and his family, he is really removing himself from the entire concept of the *malchiyos*, of declaring Hashem as King. The entire world must to declare Hashem as King on Rosh HaShanah; if a person is entirely concerned on Rosh HaShanah for his own verdict, and he's crying to Hashem to be written in the Book of Life and this is all he thinks about, and he's asking Hashem for more *ruchniyus* this year, he can still be totally self-absorbed in his needs. He is asking Hashem for *chessed* and *rachamim* entirely for himself! This is not the meaning of declaring Hashem as King and to wish that He would extend His *chessed* and *rachamim* upon the world.

The true way to go about it, the advice of Chazal to merit the good judgment we mentioned, is by connecting oneself with the *tzibbur*. This is not by *davening* for yourself, and this is not either accomplished by “using the *tzibbur*” as a way for a person to save himself. That's missing the whole point. The point is for a person **to nullify himself** to the *tzibbur* - and not to do so purely for his own merits, which would defeat the whole purpose of attaching oneself to the *tzibbur*.

When a person doesn't reflect into this concept, he will attempt do both at once: to *daven* entirely for himself on Rosh HaShanah, and to attach himself with the *tzibbur*, entirely so he can build his own merits. But this won't work, because it's a contradiction.

In order to attach oneself with the *tzibbur*, a person to go beyond himself and not think about himself. Elul is about being on a higher level; such as the stringency during Elul that we don't eat *Pas Akum* (bread baked by a gentile). The depth behind is that a person goes above himself, which is the true meaning of declaring Hashem as King. It is by leaving the self-absorption so we can declare Hashem as King and feel nullified to Him. One who can't transcend his ego during these days of Elul is someone who is far removed from the concept of declaring Hashem as King.

If someone is a bit in touch with his soul, these days of Elul are able to uplift him beyond the ego and to connect himself with the collective whole of the Jewish people. Becoming more uplifted during Elul shouldn't be just limited to practicing more *dikduk hadin* (becoming more careful with *Halacha*). It is more about leaving your individual aspect behind, which cares and worries only for yourself, and to

instead enter into the collective aspect of the Jewish people.

The Depth Behind Malchiyos\Declaring Hashem As King

This is whole concept behind “*malchiyos*” (declaring Hashem as King). The whole concept of “*malchiyos*” is based entirely on this idea that a person has to be able to leave his ego and instead connect himself with the Jewish people. The only way to really declare “*malchiyos*” is to declare it together with the Jewish people, and this can only happen if one connects himself with the Jewish people and leaves his ego.

How does a person connect himself more with others and leave his ego? It doesn't happen just by giving out *tzedakah* on Erev Rosh HaShanah and by accepting upon oneself that he will do more things for the *tzibbur*, basing this on the concept that as long as the *tzibbur* needs him, he will merit a good year. These are “*segulos*” (spiritual charms) that only work if the person has the basis. Without the basis, there is no energy that can actively be drawn forth from any of these *segulos*. The basis is: that a person has to uplift himself beyond his self-interests.

Thus, when a person gives *tzedakah* to others before Rosh HaShanah in order to accrue merits for the *Yom HaDin*, he has to ask himself if he really wants that Hashem should have *chessed* and *rachamim* upon others. The point is that I have to want that others, besides for me, should also merit *chessed* and *rachamim* from Hashem.

This is the depth behind the *Yom HaDin*. The more I have compassion on others and the more I wish that others merit a compassionate judgment from Hashem - herein lays the concept of *malchiyos*, and it is this attitude which really declares Hashem as King.

Aspirations In Elul

This concept, “*malchiyos*”, is far removed from most people. This is because the entire concept of declaring Hashem as King is really something that is above our level; in fact, these days of Elul are really days that are above our normal level. But even though Elul is above our actual level, there are two ways how a person can go about it this.

A person is apt to feel, “These days of Elul are anyways too high of a level for me to be on.” He basically buries his head in the sand on the 27th of Elul and remains that way on Rosh HaShanah, devoid of any aspiration to grow.

But the other attitude a person can have is, “It is true that these days of Yomim Noraim are way above my actual level. But there is a *segulas hazeman* (special time of opportunity) now, and therefore, I can go now a little above my current level.” It is for a person to **believe**, through *emunah*, that there is a place in his soul in which he can go above his current level, a little bit. Even though a person knows he isn't actually on a high level, he can yearn for it during these days of Yomim Noraim, and that is how we will be able to get there. After all, Elul are days in which we can realize the possuk, “*Seek Hashem, where He is found.*”

Elul and Yomim Noraim are a time in which we can a little above our normal level. But we must yearn to be on that level during the entire year as well! It's not about entering this higher place in our soul during Elul and then leaving it. It is about entering it with the intention that it will affect us for the rest of the year. It is by desiring that Hashem should be King over the world, and that is how the high level we reach in Elul can affect us for the rest of the year as well.

Making This Practical

On Rosh HaShanah, a person inevitably *davens* for his needs. Indeed, Chazal say that one should one daven for his needs on Rosh HaShanah. But one's personal needs should not be taking up his entire prayers. That being the case, a person should at least devote some of his prayers to *davening* about someone else.

To work on this practically, find someone to *daven* about on Rosh HaShanah. It should not be someone who is family or someone you feel dependent on in any way. Instead, *daven* on Rosh HaShanah a little bit for someone else who is not involved in your family life, and *daven* for that person from the depths of your heart, as much as you *daven* for your own needs. Think about another Jew, and what he needs, and what *rachamim* he needs, and *daven* for him that Hashem should judge him with *rachamim*.

Each person *davens* differently on Rosh HaShanah and has different things to *daven* about. But the common denominator between all Jews is that we all have to devote some of our prayers to others, and not to *daven* for our own selves. And this is what lays behind the entire concept of *malchiyos* to declare Hashem as King.

May we all merit together to be written for a good year, and that His Name be fully revealed. *Amen, amen, v'amen.*

Source: <https://bilvavi.net/english/tefillah-098-praying-others-rosh-hashanah>