



## Rosh HaShanah - 049 Examining Our Hearts Before Rosh HaShanah

### *Hashem Sees Into Our Hearts*

"לבוּחַן לִבְנוֹת בְּיוֹם דִּין" - We recite in the *piyutim* of Rosh HaShanah that Hashem sees into our hearts as He judges us; nothing is hidden from Him. Hashem sees straight into the person's heart, as it is written, "וְהוּא יִרְאֶה לְלִבְבֵי הָאָדָם יִרְאֶה לְעֵינָיִם", "*Man sees with his eyes, [but] Hashem sees the heart*".

Hashem sees what's in a person's heart, and judges Him accordingly, based on what He sees there. He sees all the layers of the heart, both the external layers and the inner layers.

Being that this is so, we must know what is going on in our heart.

If we were being judged for just our actions alone, then we must examine our deeds and then we are fine. But Hashem is looking into our heart - this shows us that we also need to discover what is in our hearts, when we examine ourselves. If one does not figure out what is going on in his heart, he is like a person who comes to court without preparing what he will say, because he has no idea what is going on with himself.

One cannot know this superficially. In order for one to prepare himself for the "court case" on Rosh HaShanah, he must reveal the deepest layers of his heart - and then he can know what is in his heart.

This has to be done *before* Rosh HaShanah, because it is how one prepares for Rosh HaShanah. One needs to reveal the depths of his heart, and prepare it for Hashem - and that is how he becomes prepared for Rosh HaShanah.

"*Man sees with his eyes, but Hashem sees into the heart*" - Hashem sees the heart of a person, whereas people cannot see into each other's hearts. But there are many people who do not even see what is in their *own* heart!

How, indeed, do we check our hearts?

### **Getting To Know Your Desires**

The heart is the seat of our desires. The *yetzer tov*<sup>[1]</sup> and the *yetzer hora*<sup>[2]</sup> are in there. The word *yetzer* (inclination) is from the word *ratzon* (will), because both of our inclinations are present in our *ratzon*\will; the *yetzer tov* is present in our good desires, and the *yetzer hora* lies in our evil desires.

The *yetzer tov* in us is essentially the good desires which we want; the *yetzer hora* in us is the evil desires which we also want. We want both of these desires. When we are checking into our hearts, we must discover those things that we want - both the good and the bad.

Each of us has many, many things that we want. We have things we want which are holy, and some things which are mundane, and some things which are not good at all. Either way, we must get to

know what is going on in our heart.

To apply this practically, take a pen and paper and write them all down. Sit and think, and wonder what you want in life - and write it down. Make two rows. On one row, write down your good desires, which may include your desires to learn Torah, do mitzvos, daven, to do chessed, etc. You may also want holiness and purity, and also comfort, livelihood, and health. Whatever you want, write it all down - all of it.

In one row, write down the desires which you attribute to your *yetzer tov*, and in the other row, write down the desires which you think come from your *yetzer hora*.

This is not about writing down your deeds; that is something else entirely. In this list, write down just what you *want* - not what you *did* this year. Only the *Beis Din* in Heaven knows what you did this year; all you can know about yourself is what you want.

It is explained that there are two different judgments - one judgment is meted by the Heavenly Court with Hashem at the head, and the other judgment is meted out by Hashem Himself. During the rest of the year, we are judged by the Heavenly court, for our actions. On Rosh Hashanah, we are judged by Hashem Himself - on what we want. Hashem sees into our hearts on Rosh HaShanah and He sees what we really want, and judges us accordingly, as we say in the *piyutim*: **לבוחן לבבות ביום דין**.

Our Sages state, "When there is *din* (judgment) below, there is no judgment above; if there is no judgment below, there is judgment above." The meaning of this is that if a person makes sure to be a judge over himself down here on this earth - by examining his heart's desire - then he is saved from being judged in Heaven. But if he doesn't examine himself here on this world, then there is no judgment here on this world, so he is judged above in Heaven, *chas v'shalom*.

### **Writing It Down**

Preparing for Rosh HaShanah, simply, is by discovering what you really want. Make a list and write down what you want - the good and the bad. Write down also the things you want which are in-between good and bad. Write down *what you really want* - and not what you know Hashem wants from you. We all know what Hashem wants from us; write down what *you* want. Be honest with yourself.

Write it in order of preference: What you want the most, what you want second-to-most, then third-to-most, and so forth. This takes at least one entire learning *seder* (learning session) to figure out.

Examine your heart, in-depth, like a *sugya* that you learn in-depth. As long as a person only examines his deeds alone and he doesn't know what is in his heart, he does not know himself at all. The Sages say that he *yetzer hora* hides in the heart of man<sup>[3]</sup>. A person does not know about his desires until he examines them; that is how the *yetzer hora* is initially hidden. It is hidden until one discovers it and thinks into it.

One should know what his desires are, in order of preference. Then, he should make a *cheshbon hanefesh* (soul-accounting) and ask himself if the order of his desires are in line with the order that it should be, or if perhaps he is only doing what's comfortable.

For example, does a person feel more of a desire to do a mitzvah than to learn Torah? Chazal say that Torah is more prominent than mitzvos, for "Torah brings one to good deeds". If so, a desire for Torah must precede a desire for doing mitzvos. If a person discovers that he desires to do mitzvos than to learn Torah, he has just discovered that he needs to give proper order to his desires and re-valuate his priorities.

Then, write down all the bad things you want. Don't deny any of them. Then write down what you want for the next year.

Doing this will help you become aware of what you really want. Remember that the *yetzer hora* that resides in our heart stays there as long as we never figure out what we desire.

After listing our good desires and our bad desires, in order of preference, we have checked our hearts. But this is not yet the goal; it is only a means to a greater goal. The goal is to have an order of *avodah* for the rest of the year, now that we have given some kind of order to what our desires should be.

### ***In Conclusion***

The average person will say that he does not need to figure this out at all, and he will say that of course, he wants to learn Torah and do mitzvos. But the question is: Is he uprooting the evil desires in his heart from all his learning Torah and doing the mitzvos? Not always. Only Dovid HaMelech erased his *yetzer hora* entirely.

Of course, we are not on Dovid HaMelech's level, but on our own level, we can also work to lessen the evil present in our heart, and increase the amount of good.

One should enter Rosh Hashanah after examining himself like this, becoming aware of his heart's desires, and then he will have a lot easier of a time with his *yetzer hora* during the rest of the year.

An ignoramus does *teshuvah* on his basic level; a Torah scholar needs to do *teshuvah* in-depth, just like he learns the Torah in-depth. He should examine his heart in-depth, and he should examine the *seder* (ideal order) of what his *avodah* will be this year, and he should think about this in-depth.

May we merit to reveal the depths of our heart to ourselves, and through this, to merit to be written for a good year.

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[1] good inclination

[2] evil inclination

[3] Sukkah 52a

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**Source:** <https://bilvavi.us/english/rosh-hashanah-049-examining-our-hearts-rosh-hashanah>