

ROSH HASHANAH: REPAIRING THE COSMIC MIX-UP

Creation Begins & Ends W/ Mixture

B'siyata d'shmaya, we are in the month of *Elul*, the month in which the world was created, in preparation for the day of *Rosh Hashanah*.

The first explicit statement in the *Torah* of the ten statements in which the world was created is, "Hashem said, 'Let there be light', and there was light.¹" This is the first occasion that *Hakadosh Boruch Hu's* statement is explicit. But immediately afterwards it says, "Hashem saw the light that it was good, and Hashem separated between the light and the darkness. Hashem called the light - 'day', and the darkness, He called 'night'...²" Our Rabbis taught us, as is well-known, that the light, at its inception, consisted of both light and darkness functioning as a mixture. "And Hashem separated (*vayavdel*) between the light and the darkness," there then became a reality of separation - *havdalah*.

Upon reflection, the first thing that was revealed in the world - light - at its point of revelation, is found to be a mixture. 'Light and darkness functioning as a mixture'³. *Rosh Hashanah* is called "ori" (my light)⁴ - "LeDovid Hashem ori"⁵. The dissolution of that original light, of which was said: "Hashem said, 'Let there be light'" - this is *Rosh Hashanah*, "LeDovid Hashem ori". Nevertheless, the first thing to be revealed in the world was revealed as a mixture (light and darkness functioning as a mixture). Afterwards, Hashem brought about a separation, light by itself and darkness by itself, "Hashem called the light, 'day', and the darkness He called 'night'". But its origin was as a mixture.

The last thing to be created in *ma'aseh bereishis* also shares this same root.

"Hashem said, 'Let us make man'⁶", and afterwards, Hashem cast "a deep sleep upon the man and he slept; and He took one of his sides..."⁷ From the outset, man and woman were created mixed together (according to one opinion - with two faces, and to the other she was his tail⁸). *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* then cast a deep sleep upon him (them) and took one of his sides, separating that mixture. If so, the first thing created in the world (light) started as a mixture, light and darkness functioning as a mixture. The last thing to be created (man) was also created as a kind of mixture. First a mixture was made of man and woman and then they were separated from one another.

Any perceptive person understands that the root of existence that was revealed during the days of *ma'aseh bereishis* is, in essence, the inner depth of all creation. If the first thing to be created was as a mixture, and the last thing was created as a mixture, this means that the reality of all creation was built in the form of a mixture. This is the reality of creation - that even that which was created in the intermediate days was created in the same manner, whose foundation is essentially a mixture.

Let us sharpen this idea further. "And there was evening (*erev*) and there was morning..."⁹ - evening is called "erev", as is well-known, from the lingual root (*ayin-reish-beis*) meaning mixture (*ta'aroves*). "Hashem called the light, 'day', and the darkness He called, 'night'". Is there really complete darkness at night? "The great luminary for dominion over the day, and the small luminary for dominion over the night."¹⁰ Therefore, at night there is not complete darkness. And so, when it is said, "and darkness He called, 'night'" - darkness is night, but there is

still a bit of light in it. This is the meaning of, "And it was evening (*erev*) and it was morning". Day is illumination, but the night, which is darkness, is not a total darkness. Night is a mixture of light and darkness functioning as a mixture, therefore it is called "erev" (from the word *taaruvos*/mixture).

According to this, how do we perceive the Creation? Is it a recurring process of day, night and then day, or is it a process of night, day and then night? Or, in other words (but it is really the same concept): Is it a cycle of morning-evening-morning, or is it evening-morning-evening? For most *halachos*, the order is evening and then morning. "And there was evening and there was morning" - this is the order of the beginning of the day. Where does *Yom Rishon* (the first day) begin? From the night. The same goes for *Yom Sheini* (the second day). For *Yom Rishon*, there is less of a practical difference (though there is of course a practical difference), but the most fundamental example of a day when there is an outright practical difference is *Shabbos Kodesh*. When does *Shabbos* begin? It starts from the evening until the end of the next day. Indeed this applies to many other *halachos*, in fact most *halachos* are built upon evening being first and then morning. So what is the order of the creation at its root? Evening, morning, and then evening. In the language of the *posuk* it is called "from evening to evening"¹¹. This is the perception of time.

If so, the depth of the matter is that time begins in the evening and ends in the evening. Therefore the order of time is not morning, evening and morning. With *korbanos*, there is such a law. A *korban* is not sacrificed at night. If there are organs that have not been consumed

1 Bereishis 1:3 / 2 Ibid. 1:4-5 / 3 See Rashi's commentary, *ibid.* / 4 *Vayikra Rabbah* ch. 21, 4 / 5 *Tehillim* 27:1 / 6 Bereishis 1:26 / 7 Ibid. 2:21

8 *Gemara Berachos* 61a / 9 Bereishis 1:5 / 10 Ibid. 1:16

in the daytime, then they are sacrificed, but what is the time of the offering of the *korban*? First the morning *tamid*, and then all the other sacrifices - “upon it complete all the other sacrifices”, ending with the afternoon *tamid*, but, they are consumed for a day and night, or two days and a night. This is an opposing example, nevertheless the fundamental order of things is evening, morning and evening. In other words, the perception is that we start with a mixture and end with a mixture. And in between, we have a point of clarification, which is called morning. If so, the **inner** order of creation is that the beginning of everything is built as a mixture.

Where do we find a clear and tangible example of this in man? “Night was only created for sleep,” as the Gemara says¹², but when a person goes to sleep, does he fall asleep immediately? In general, the way in which the world was created is that it is a process. “Asleep yet not asleep, awake yet not awake.”¹³ Even when a person wakes up, does he wake up immediately? It is written explicitly¹⁴ that one should not get up immediately when he wakes up, but should remain in place for a while so that he should not get up in confusion, since a person does not wake up immediately, rather he initially wakes up to a mixed state, and then he wakes up completely. If so, at the beginning of every day, and at the end of every day, it is not that a person passes from a state of sleep to a state of awake, and from a state of awake to a state of sleep, but rather he passes from his initial state to a state of mixture and then to second state and so on and so forth. This is the order of the creation of the world. This example is very fundamental.

Everything in creation follows its beginning. In the language of our Rabbis, as is well known, “The body is drawn after the head.”¹⁵ So if the “head” was morning, then it is the mixture that would be drawn after the morning. But if the beginning is evening, a mixture, then the

whole day, how is it characterized? As a reality of mixture. This is the essential definition of the reality of creation as we recognize it.

The Tree of Knowledge was “mixed good and evil”. How did there come to exist within it both good and evil? There existed in it a mixture, since that is the root of creation: “And there was evening...”. Why were Adam *Harishon* and *Chava* inclined to eat from the Tree of Knowledge? Because at the basis of the beginning of their perception was a reality of mixture. So if they are inclined towards mixture, to which way did they incline, towards the Tree of Life or the Tree of Knowledge? They inclined towards eating from the Tree of Knowledge, because their reality is one of mixture.

Rosh HaShanah When We Are Sifted

Now we can understand clearer what happens when *Rosh Hashanah* arrives. *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* sits and judges the world’s inhabitants. A person did very many deeds throughout the year. There were good deeds and, *Rachmana litzlan*, there were also deeds to the contrary. *Rosh Hashanah* is a day of judgment, it is a day for the “process of *borer*”, a time to sort and sift things out. What does Hashem do on *Rosh Hashanah*? He sorts through all the deeds that were done as a mixture throughout the entire year, to see “where the person is holding” [what the person’s general spiritual level is].

What happens when there is a *ta’aroves* (a mixture)? Of course, there are dry mixtures, there are wet mixtures, and other laws of mixtures such as with *terumah* or *orlah*, but the simple and fundamental dry mixture, what is the *din*? We go after the majority (*rov*). Every mixture (*ta’aroves*) has in it the letters *resh-vav-beis* (*rov*). With which *din* do we judge a mixture? We go after the *rov* (majority). This is the definition of the judgment of *Rosh Hashanah*. How does Hashem judge man on *Rosh Hashanah*? “Three

*books are opened on Rosh Hashanah*¹⁶”, one book for the *tzadikim gemurim*, one book for the *reshoim gemurim*, and a book for the *beinonim*. Are the *tzadikim gemurim* those who are perfectly righteous and have never sinned? It refers to those who have mostly merits, and conversely, the *reshoim* have mostly sins. Man is judged according to his majority.

If so, what then is the entire definition of *Rosh Hashanah*? What does it come to define? Although “there is no righteous man who will do good in the land and will not sin¹⁷”, if he repents he can be a *tzadik gamur*, but for the vast majority of human beings, what is their reality? It is a reality of mixture. The majority is what defines which way the point of the mixture inclines. If it inclines towards good, he is a *tzadik*. If, Heaven forbid, it inclines towards bad, he is a *rasha*. The entire foundation of *Rosh Hashanah* is built upon the perception that when a person arrives at judgment, usually he is coming from a reality of mixture. It is from within that mixture that they come to judge the person. They decide his judgment, by rule of majority, to which side he belongs, to this side or to the other side.

If we have understood up to this point, that everything at its inception is a majority, a mixture, and the end of everything is also a mixture, how therefore does the year start? It starts by way of clarifying this mixture, nonetheless it starts from a mixture. And the end of the year is also evident as a reality of mixture.

According to this, what we have said about the beginning of the world, and what we have said about *Rosh Hashanah* of each year, so too one can say with regards to an encompassing view of all of history.

Let us refine this point. There are two perspectives that a person should have when he comes to view *Rosh Hashanah*: There is a lower perspective, and a higher perspective. The smaller perspective

12 Erwin 65a / 13 Gemara Ta’anis 12b / 14 Gemara Gittin 70a / 15 Gemara Erwin 41a / 16 Gemara Rosh Hashanah 16b / 17 Koheles 7:20

is a person's own self-accounting. "Who relates the end from the beginning..."¹⁸ "A land that... the eyes of Hashem you G-d are on it, from the beginning of the year to the end of the year."¹⁹ So when man reckons his soul's accounting (and likewise they reckon for him from above), what is the perspective? "From the beginning of the year to the end of the year" - what he did from the beginning of the year until the end of year. This is one perspective of *Rosh Hashanah*.

What is the second perspective of *Rosh Hashanah*? A perspective from the beginning of days to the end of days. Where is this perspective written? We declare on *Rosh Hashanah* the *Malchuyos*, *Zichronos* and *Shofaros*. What are the *Zichronos*? "You remember all deeds, and also none of the creations are hidden from you."²⁰ We begin to mention from the beginning of days. Hashem remembered *Noach*, and so on and so forth, from the beginning of days until where we find ourselves. If so, when we mention *Zichronos* on *Rosh Hashanah*, what is the definition of the remembrance? "You remember **all deeds**", everything. From the beginning of days to the end of days. As for *Shofaros*, our Rabbis have said, as is explained by Rav Saadia Ga'on, that there are ten reasons for blowing the *shofar*. One of the reasons is to remind us of the *shofar* of the end of days: "It will be on that day the great *shofar* will be blown."²¹ So what does the *shofar* evoke for us? The end of all the world's days. What will be then? "On that day Hashem will be one, and His name will be one."²² Then His kingship will be revealed in its entirety.

Consequently, each and every year that we work to accept *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* as King over us, there are two perspectives. One perspective: We accept Him as King in relation to the situation we are

in now. The King sits on the throne of law and judgment over what happened with each person this past year. This is one judgment, one perspective.

The second perspective is that, as our Rabbis say and is brought in the *Rishonim* and also in the *Gr'a*, man is judged about the next world, as *Tosafos* states²³. In other words, it is a judgment on the whole entire creation, on who will be a *ben olam haba* (destined for the World To Come) due to the entirety of his deeds, and not necessarily this year specifically. Consequently, when we accept His kingship, it is a form of acceptance of the kingship that will be at the end of the days of the world, "On that day Hashem will be one and His name one". The *Zichronos* bring to mind all the days of the world, whereas the *Shofaros* evoke the light of the end: "On that day the great *shofar* will be blown".

If so, *Rosh Hashanah* presents us with two ways of seeing things. One way is a perspective of this year, for each and every individual there is a judgment on this year. And there is also a deeper, more encompassing way, a second way, which is the more complete understanding: A perspective of all the days of the world, from beginning to end. And when it is understood this way, then if at the beginning of the creation of the world and at the end of the days of *ma'aseh Bereishis*, at the beginning of every day and at the end of every day, and so too at the essence of *Rosh Hashanah*, the foundation is a mixture - then likewise, there is the great mixture of all the days of the world.

Mixture At The End of Time: The Erev Rav

What is the great mixture of all the days of the world? To understand clearly: At the beginning of time, in whom

was revealed the element of mixture? The Serpent tempted Chavah to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil, where good and evil were mixed with one another. So what is the power of the Serpent? What is its seduction? Its power is to connect human beings with mixture. This was at the beginning of the world.

At the end of days, as our Rabbis have taught us, as is well-known and is much explained by the *Gr'a*, and is evident and tangible to anyone observant, there will be the ascendancy of the *Erev Rav* (the Mixed Multitude) that will rule over the entire generation. What is the depth of the matter that the *Erev Rav* rules at the end of days? The *Erev Rav* rules at the end of days because the *Erev Rav* is means "mixture". The translation of the word *Erev Rav* literally means "great mixture".

There is a small *Erev* - a small mixture (called *Erev Zeir*), and there is also a great *Erev*, a great mixture (called *Erev Rabbah*, or *Erev Rav*). Just as in the beginning of days, the day *Adam* was created, the Serpent's seduction was to eat from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil mixed with each other, a mixture - thus began the order of creation, as was explained *besiyata d'shmaya* until now - so too, the end of days is also built in the same way. The end of days is built in the manner of, "From evening to evening." The world began with a mixture, and what will be the end of the world? It too will be by way of a mixture.

But just as we blow the *shofar* now, but the *shofar* that we will blow at the end of days will be a great *shofar*, "And it will be on that day the **great** *shofar* will be blown"; so too the mixture that will be at the end of days is not a small mixture, it is a **great** mixture. What is the

18 *Yeshayahu* 46:10

19 *Devarim* 11:12

20 From *Rosh Hashanah Mussaf*

21 *Yeshayahu* 27:13

22 *Zechariah* 14:9

23 *Rosh Hashanah* 16b ד"ה ונחתמין

difference between a small mixture and a great mixture? The meaning of a small mixture is that it starts in the “evening” and ends in the “evening”, begins with a mixture and ends in a mixture. What is a great mixture? That even everything in between becomes a reality of mixture.

This is the force of the great mixture that exists. If only the beginning and end are a mixture but the middle is not a mixture, then is the majority a mixture or not a mixture? The majority is not a mixture. But if the force of the mixture applies to the whole scope of existence, then the mixture includes its entirety. This is the force called the *Erev Rav*.

These matters are the clear and fundamental understanding. When a person makes an accounting of his soul for the whole year, each person according to his standing, he must first understand: What is the existence in which we live in? We live, according to our Rabbis, in an existence called *Erev Rav*.

It is not only that there are people who are *Erev Rav*, the leaders of the shirkers who are the *Erev Rav*, though certainly this is true, as stated by our Rabbis. But what is the deeper definition? That through them, since they control the deep, inner helm of the leadership, then everything is in a form of mixture. What type of mixture? Not a small mixture, but a large mixture. As a result of this, man's deeds are **all mingled in the mixture**. The deepness of the mixture surrounds reality from all sides, every aspect of it is impacted by the existence of mixture.

How The Erev Rav Affects All The consequence of this and the practical difference to us, is that when man comes to think about the deeds he has done throughout the year, each man according to his soul's accounting, there is of course the first and fundamental perspective: Is what he has done a *mitzvah*? Is what he did an *aveirah*? What are his deeds? This is the first step.

The second stage, which is our focus,

at present: The things that we do, each and every thing we do, does it consist of a mixture? This is not a question of either right or left, of positive or negative, rather this is a question of the things that we have done, are they done in the form of a mixture? Certainly this was true for all the days of the world, the beginning is mixed and the end is mixed. But, in depth, as has been explained, the force of the mixture encompasses everything. And so everything is mixed with one another in a mixture of majority. Everything turns into a mixed reality. And therefore each and every act that we do, and in more precise language, most of the deeds - and the majority defines the entirety - in what way are they done? They are done in the form of an act that a person does that contains a reality of mixture. A reality of a mixture means that the act is not clean, is not pure, but instead it consists of a mixture.

Let us give the most fundamental and clear example of *Rosh Hashanah*. We have two fundamental approaches to *Rosh Hashanah*. One approach is to accept *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* as King over us. The second approach is that *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* judges us and decides for everyone what will happen in the coming year. To accept *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* over us as King, is an *avodah* for the sake of Heaven. The aspect of *din* and of judgment that He metes out to us, this is for our sake, in that it relates to us, each one according to his portion.

When man is found on *Rosh Hashanah* and *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* judges him, each according to his standing, is *Rosh Hashanah* itself a mixture - or does it have one root point that is purely for Heaven's sake? Whoever wants to come out *zakai* (vindicated) in his judgment, *zakai* from the word *zach* (pure), what does he need to have? Of course, there is the first test - his actual deeds. The **second** test: Is there a part of him that is pure, that is clean, that is not mixed? Does he have one deed, one word, one

thought that is pure?

Our Rabbis have said that if it is clear to a person that he has done one clean thing in this world he already has cause to feel at ease. Why? This is the place where there is no mixture, there is no “evening”. There is one clean reality, which is solely for *Hashem* alone. One thing that is clean. If he has one clean thing, then in this thing *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* can dwell.

This is the depth of the well-known words of *Chazal*, “Open for me an opening like the tip of a needle and I will open an opening for you like the opening of a hall,” or “like an opening that carts and carriages can enter²⁴”, and other variants in the words of *Chazal*. What is an opening like the tip of a needle? An opening like the tip of a needle means, one clean thing for *Hashem* alone. One thing, like the tip of a needle. One small thing, but it is one small thing for *Hashem* alone.

Now let us understand deeply, whoever does not achieve one thing for the sake of Heaven, does not know *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. Why? *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* is entirely good, and that person, what is he? He is a mixture. Where does *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* reveal himself? “Open for me an opening like the point of a needle,” at the point of a needle is the point of revelation of *Hakadosh Boruch Hu*. A person may do many good deeds, but if the context of his deed is a mixture, then for this mixture, of course he will be rewarded, and he also has a spiritual illumination from it, but the revelation of *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* within his deeds he will not have, because his reality is that of mixture.

This is the depth of why the revelation of the *Shechinah* that is found in our generation is far from being what it was in its most exalted state. Why is this the case to such an extent? Sure, there is a lot of Torah, there are a lot of acts of charity and a lot of good deeds, but everything is mixed, almost everything is a mixture of things, an actual mixture of good and

evil, a mixture of jealousy, physical desire and the craving for honor that encompasses everything. Even if it belongs to the world of Torah, jealousy, physical desire and the craving for honor can apply there also.

In order for there to exist a true revelation, one must have one clean point.

The Ultimate Soul-Repair: To Do One Act That Is Completely Pure

Let us now illustrate this practically. If a person really wants to make *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* King over him, of course the first stage is accepting the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven, the actual observance of the commandments. The second stage that we have been discussing is, that he should take one deed for the coming year – either a deed, a word or a thought – and one will strive to do that deed, word or thought from the utmost purity that exists, for the sake of Heaven, without any other consideration. Not for the sake of good in this world and not for the sake of good in the next world, neither for reward in this world nor for reward in the next world, but simply to please the Creator!

One such point is the root from which the whole soul is illuminated! This is called, “Accept upon yourselves my Kingship,²⁵” to accept His kingship, may His name be blessed. “You shall surely place a king over yourself²⁶”, to accept the kingship of the Creator, may His name be blessed. That there should be one thing in which He, so to speak, and His kingship should be revealed in the most complete way. A person who conducts himself in this way, attains one point in his soul that is not part of a mixture. It is upon this point in the soul, that it is revealed to him, “*leDavid Hashem ori*” – this is the source of his light in his soul.

More broadly, we are in a generation that is entirely *Erev Rav*. Whoever has a

clean point such as this, by doing this he distinguishes himself from the *Erev Rav*, and he is a *ben olam haba*, and he has attained a prominent degree of self-nullification. Such a person may of course have other parts of his soul that are far from being unmixed, yet he is connected and tied to a separate reality, a reality that is unmixed – one clean and pure point.

However, in order to achieve what has just been said, it is not merely a matter of acceptance, of a person accepting to do something for the sake of Heaven. It requires that “He who *examines the kidneys and heart*,²⁷” will testify about him that this is his intention in his mind”, this is his intention in his emotions, and that he is wholehearted in doing so, truly for the sake of His name, may it be blessed, with love. When it is an act that *Hakadosh Boruch Hu* testifies about this person that his intentions were completely pure, this is called that the person came out *zakai* in his judgment – that is, such a person has the inner *zoch* (purity), from which comes the root of all illumination.

Let us refine this point and reiterate it. It is not just that he has done one small thing that was done in cleanliness and unmixed purity. Rather, that this one small thing is the source of the root of illumination through which the whole soul will be illuminated. It is the “*opening like the tip of a needle*,” by means of which there can be a root for accepting His kingship, may His name be blessed, that will illuminate the full scope of the entire year and all the days of the world.

Obviously, as a person progresses further and further and increases, so does this point need to be expanded more and more – “*Expand the place of your tent...*”²⁸ But the basis for a true acceptance of the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven, besides accepting the boundaries of law, which is the clear first stage, the second stage

which we have been talking about is to accept upon oneself one clean point in its full purity, to break free from the context of mixture.

On the day of *Rosh Hashanah*, *Adam HaRishon* ate from the Tree of Knowledge of good and evil mixed with each other, thereby imputing this day with a perception of sin in which everything is revealed to be a reality of mixture. On this very day, our work is to correct that sin. How, according to what we have explained? It is by revealing one point from within us that is not mixed, but completely clean and pure.

When this point is discovered in our souls and our souls connect together and these points will join together also, this will be the root of the light of *Moshiach*. This is the root of, “*It will be on that day the great shofar will be blown*,” – the antithesis of the force of the *Erev Rav* that rules almost without straits – the opposite point of this phenomenon will be revealed. Through this, there can be a root source of true illumination for one’s soul.

In Conclusion

I hope these matters were understood with the appropriate subtlety that they contain. This is not to be defined as a small piece of advice, or just a small resolution. It is a small resolution, but it is very, very, very deep. And it touches the depths of a person’s *pnimiyus*, at the purest point within him, by means of which he emanates and becomes attached to Hashem, may He be blessed. He will be able to feel tangibly that Hashem is so close, an utter closeness and attachment, to Him.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL HEBREW SHIUR

ראש השנה 076 ערב רב תערוכת תשע"ט

25 Gemara Rosh Hashanah 16a

26 Devarim 17:15

27 Yirmiyahu 11:20

28 Yeshayahu 54:2

Q&A

QUESTION What are the main thoughts to think about on Rosh HaShanah and during the davening on Rosh HaShanah?

ANSWER Rosh HaShanah is the beginning, and on this day, the beginning point becomes revealed. So it is upon a person to connect himself to the very first, beginning point in the soul, which is called p'shitus (*simplicity*). As a hint, it is better when a shofar is pashut, extended. From becoming connected to one's p'shitus, one becomes connected to Hashem in p'shitus. Thus the inner aspect of the avodah of this day is to become connected in the depths of the soul to a simple sense of Hashem, which is above all logic. One must go back and forth between his higher mode of p'shitus, his simple connection with Hashem, and then to his lower mode, thinking complex thoughts of Who created the world and for what purpose, so that we can accept His rules.

QUESTION What is the difference between the judgment on the first day of Rosh HaShanah and the second day of Rosh HaShanah? And on which day of Rosh HaShanah is Klal Yisrael judged collectively, i.e. if the Beis HaMikdash will be rebuilt this year?

ANSWER As is known, the first day of Rosh HaShanah is called dina kashya, "strong judgment", it is the judgment on one's spiritual situation for the coming year, it is the day of judgment for the tzaddikim. The second day of Rosh

HaShanah is called dina rafya, "weak judgment", it is the judgment over one's physical situation and it is the judgment day for those who aren't tzaddikim.

The first day of Rosh HaShanah is the judgment for anything collective, while the second day of Rosh HaShanah is for anything specific.

QUESTION I have listened to all of the Rav's shiurim on the topic of "Rosh Chodesh", including the series on Avodah of Rosh Chodesh, Mazal of Rosh Chodesh, and Mahus (*Essence*) of Rosh Chodesh, and most of the shiurim on "Shevet" (*Tribe*) of Rosh Chodesh. I want to know what the Rav's purpose was in giving these shiurim. I also want to know if these shiurim are offering an alternative ladder of growth (*which seems to begin from the month of Nissan, the beginning of the months*).

Also, if someone was born in a certain month, does that mean this personal avodah is closer to the avodah described in the shiurim about the essence, mazal, and tribe of that month? For example, if someone was born in the month of Sivan, does that mean his avodah is more connected with the mazal of "twins" in the month of Sivan, and with all that this implies? And is such a person's avodah more relevant to the personal correction which that "tribe" of that month (*such as the tribe of "Reuven" in the month of Sivan*)? Also, are these shiurim a step-by-step program of growth, or is there no particular order

to go in, when trying to practically implement these shiurim? Meaning to say, for example, that the avodah of the month of Sivan doesn't necessarily need to be done before the avodah of the month of Tamuz?

ANSWER There is a mazal for each day as well as a mazal for each hour of the day, and a mazal for the month. Each mazal is a "garment" of one's soul. There is a way to serve Hashem based upon one's very soul, and this is the primary service of the Jewish people, who are above mazal. There is also a way to serve Hashem through the "garments" of the soul, such as through the mazalos. The "Rosh Chodesh" series (*Essence, Mazal, Tribe, and Avodah*) were given according to the order of the months, but this is not a specific order. Rather, it is a possible order to go in for one who wants to serve Hashem based on the order of the months, which correspond to the order of the mazalos. This is because there are many different orderly systems within Creation, and that means that there are many different corresponding orderly systems of avodah. The orderly system described in the classes of the Rosh Chodesh series is one of those orderly systems.

QUESTION Can the Rav offer some guidance on what our main thoughts should be throughout the day and the tefillos on Rosh HaShanah? And, is it proper if one davens for personal requests on Rosh HaShanah?

ANSWER

PART 1: (1) "Hayom Haras Olam" – Rosh HaShanah is the day when the primary creation, the human being, was created.

(2) Who created all of this? It is the Blessed One, Whom there is none other besides.

(3) For what did He create it all for? What is the purpose of it all? So that we become close to Hashem, and thereby reveal Hashem in His creation. This is the intention behind the concept of "Malchiyos" on Rosh HaShanah [*declaring Hashem's dominion over the entire Creation.*]

(4) The intention behind "Zichronos" on Rosh HaShanah is that one should try as much as he can to remember all of the different deeds he committed this year.

(5) The intention behind "Shofaros" is that one should improve his deeds, by doing complete repentance. Included in this is for one to clarify his aspirations and his purpose in life, and to take upon oneself a resolution for the coming year.

PART 2: "Rosh HaShanah" contains the word "rosh", "head", from the word "raishis", the beginning point. On this day, a new start is revealed. It is the revelation of a beginning point. Therefore a person should connect himself to the "beginning point" of the soul, which is called peshitus, the "simple point" of the soul. As a hint, the Gemara says that the more pashut (*smoother*) a shofar is, the better the

shofar is. From connecting to peshitus, a person becomes connected to HaKadosh Baruch Hu, amidst this peshitus-simplicity. Therefore, the inner avodah on this day is to become connected, in the depths of one's soul, to a simple sense of the Creator, which is above all reasoning and logic.

One needs to progress and regress, back and forth, between two different states [*as follows*]. For part of the time, one should be connected with this simplicity, by "running" towards the Creator with simplicity. For the other part of one's time, one should retreat back into his thoughts, by thinking of the fact that Rosh HaShanah is the day when the world was created, and that there is a Creator, and that He created it for a purpose, which is for His creations to accept upon themselves His dominion. One should also remember his deeds and repent over them, and to once again accept Hashem's rule over him.

PART 3: It is customary to recite the piyutim (*liturgies*), of which a large part describes the greatness of the Creator. When one's soul feels opened to this, one can feel a pleasure in reflecting on the Creator's greatness, verbally expressing this greatness with words of praise to the Creator. This is an additional part of the closeness to Hashem which is revealed on this day. There is a way of connecting to Hashem on this day though simplicity, as explained earlier, by thinking of the One who created the world, and there is also a way of connecting to Hashem on this day by speaking of His greatness, which is

revealed through His creations. This is the implication of HaYom Haras Olam, on this day the world was created.

PART 4 [*REGARDING PERSONAL REQUESTS*]:

Each person should act according to his current level. If one is at the level in which he feels a need to daven for personal requests on Rosh HaShanah, than it is proper for him to do so. This, however, should only be done in addition to what was said earlier, because davening for personal requests should not become the main part of Rosh HaShanah.

QUESTION What are we supposed to be learning from the Rav's many shiurim on the festivals [*i.e. the Rav's shiurim on Rosh HaShanah, Yom Kippur, Succos, Chanukah, Tu B'Shevat, Purim, Pesach, Lag B'Omer, Shavuos, Bein HaMitzarim, etc.*]?

ANSWER The purpose of these shiurim [*on the festivals*] is to give an inner, deep perspective on each of the festivals. This deep analysis and perspective of the festival helps a person connect to and enter within, to some degree, the very essence of the festival. It can be compared to a person entering a perfume store, who enjoys the fragrant aroma there.

On a practical level, each person needs to be aware of his current avodah, according to his current level, before the festival arrives. One needs to know what his current avodah is right now, and how the coming festival can further illuminate one's personal avodah as of

now. However, one should not digress from one's current avodah and begin a different avodah.

QUESTION After listening a lot to different shiurim of the Rav, and due to personal experiences I had from previous years, when trying to prepare for the Yom HaDin [*Rosh HaShanah*], I have come to the following conclusion. Although it is commonly accepted practice that a person should take on a "resolution" of improvement for the coming year, and those on a higher level make cheshbon hanefesh [*self-accounting*], I realized that none of this involves working on my middos and on balancing my "four elements." This year, I am accepting upon myself to learn about the "four elements", with their practical applications in my life. This will be in place of taking on specific resolutions of certain actions to do or any specific kind of self-accounting. As I explained, this is because from my personal experience, I am seeing that problems with middos can prevent a person from truly growing at this time of the year.

I want to hear from the Rav if my thinking is correct, or if the Rav doesn't agree with this. These thoughts are particularly on my mind during my avodah at this time of the year of the Yomim Noraim.

ANSWER 1. For any sins committed this year, you need to write down a self-accounting on them, and see how

you can fix those sins. You cannot wait to do this until you understand yourself better [*rather, you need to do this even if you have not reached deep self-recognition of yourself*].

2. In addition to learning about the "four elements" and how you can apply them practically in your life – which is a very good direction to take – you should also take upon yourself a small resolution to do a certain action of improvement, according to your current level. Pick something that is currently appropriate for you to improve on. This is because you also need to implement the power of "action", even if it is only a little.

So there are three parts for you to do: Make a self-accounting about any sins you committed this year, and write down how you can repair them. Learn about the "four elements" and how they can apply to your practically. Accept upon yourself to do a small action of improvement, which you are able to do on your current level.

QUESTION Why do we daven throughout the year, if everything that will happen this was anyways decreed on Rosh HaShanah and sealed on Yom Kippur? When I daven, I always tell myself, "What will this help? It was already decreed on me what will happen, so nothing will help."

ANSWER The Gemara says that a person is judged on Rosh HaShanah, and according to one view, one is judged

every day of the year. Even more so, a person is judged every moment. This means that any good decreed on Rosh HaShanah can be held back from a person due to sins. We find this concept by Yaakov Avinu, who was concerned that his sins will hold him back from receiving Hashem's blessings of protection. It is the same vice versa: The Gemara teaches that if anything harsh was decreed on a person chas v'shalom that Rosh HaShanah, the decree can be removed, when a lot of people daven for that person.

The tefillah of an individual can also remove a bad decree on a person, when one's prayers are accompanied with complete teshuvah. This access the spiritual light of Yom Kippur [*which removes any harsh decrees from Rosh HaShanah*]. This is especially the case when a person davens with tears, which has the power to tear up any harsh decree. This is even more effective when a person davens at special opportune times of the year (*an eis ratzon*). That is why our tefillos can always help eliminate any harsh decrees on a person and merit us to receive our due portion.

Even more so, if a person is close to Hashem and has an earnest relationship with Him, his tefillos can enable him to receive any blessing that wasn't decreed on him on Rosh HaShanah, because such a person is above the dimension of time.