

טיב הקהילה

בס"ד

יו"לע"י קהילת שנת בנית ד'

בנשיאות מורנו הרה"צ ר' גמליאל רבינוביץ שליט"א

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טיב המערכת

יום הדין או יום טוב – Judgment Day or holiday?

We are now in the judgment days – the days of Rosh Hashanah. What is the essence of these days? On the one hand, these are judgment days and everyone is trembling from their awe. On the other hand, we acknowledge the posuk about this day (Nechemia 8:10) 'לכו אכלו משמנים ושתו' – 'Go, eat rich foods and drink sweet beverages... for today is sacred to our L-ord. Do not be sad, the enjoyment of Hashem is your strength'. Apparently, this posuk is telling us to be happy and certainly not to be sad, then what is the proper approach to this day?

It is told regarding one of the distinguished in Yerushalayim, that right in the middle of Yom Kippur his grandson came to him and happily said, "Saba, there are only three hours left until the fast is over." His grandfather replied, "How sad that there are only three hours left to this holy and exalted day!"

It is brought down in 'Sfas Emes' that on Rosh Hashanah we must be very happy, more than the rest of the year, since HaKadosh Baruch Hu judges the world and a person cannot be judged unless he is present. If so, then it is as if HaKadosh Baruch Hu is found at our side. We say this in *Unesaneh Tokef*, 'וכל באי עולם יעברון לפניך כבני מרון' – 'all mankind will pass before you like members of the flock', and because of this we hardly request material things, for one who is close to the King lacks nothing.

The holy Baal Shem Tov says that the holiday of Rosh Hashanah is a day of joy, therefore we recite '*shehechyanu*'. It is also brought down in his name that when why cries on this day it is a cry of joy that He kept us alive and we reached this time.

It emerges from these words that Rosh Hashanah is truly a day of joy, but together with this we remember that this day is also Judgment Day, but we put our trust in our Father Who judges us, that our judgment will come to light. The main thing to remember is that our focus should be to continue to serve Him wholeheartedly, and all that we want and ask for is to be able to fulfill the will of Yisbarach Shemo. May it be the will to serve with pure service, with joy and a good heart, and our *tefillos* should be accepted with mercy.

- Tiv HaMoadim – Rosh Hashanah

טיב ההשגחה

טיב התחזקות

חדות ה' היא מעוזכם

The enjoyment of Hashem is your strength

ומלאכים יחפזון וחיל ורעדה יאחזון

Angels will hasten, a trembling and terror will seize them

Whose heart does not shudder and whose soul is not afraid as this great and holy day approaches? The day in which all creations pass before Him like members of the flock and they are all marked with one mark. The books of life and death are open before Him, who will get the rod and who will get kindness? Everything that the person did throughout the year rise up and stand before Him, the good and the bad, all thoughts, nothing is hidden, even the things that the person has already forgotten about, there is nothing forgotten before Him. We say in the Musaf Shemona Esrei 'You remember the deeds done in the universe and You recall all the creatures fashioned since earliest times. Before You all hidden things are revealed and the multitude of mysteries since the beginning of Creation, for there is no forgetfulness before Your Throne of Glory and nothing is hidden from before Your eyes'.

But when we look at the meaning of the words in '*Unesaneh Tokef*' we are jolted with fear, 'Let us now relate the power of the holiness of the day, for it is awesome and frightening. On it Your Kingship will be exalted, Your throne will be firm with kindness and You will sit upon it in truth. It is true that You alone are the One Who judges, proves, knows, and bears witness; Who writes and seals, counts and calculates; Who remembers all that was forgotten. You will open the Book of Remembrances – it will read itself, and everyone's signature is in it. The great shofar will be sounded and a still, thin sound will be heard. Angels will hasten, a trembling and terror will seize them, and they will say, "Behold, it is the Judgment Day, to muster the heavenly host for judgment." – for they cannot be vindicated in Your eyes in judgment. All mankind will pass before You like members of the flock.'

All of creation stands in judgment on this day, speechless, all of them, even the angels above are shuddering on this day, even though they have no free will at all, other than the will of their Maker they do nothing at all. Still, when this great and holy day arrives, they too are filled with awe and fear and tremble from judgment on this day.

מה אנו מה חיינו? – Who are we, what is our lives?

What can we answer and what can we say, humans formed from clay? Does the heart not know the bitterness of the soul because of all the sins that we stumbled with? Even the mitzvos that we did, who can testify about himself that they were all done properly? Everyone comes today for true judgment and even goes on the scales. How do we calm our souls from the great fear that our lives are hanging in the balance?

We just have to think about the events of the last year to understand the depths of judgment on this day. How many people were with us last year and now are not among the living? Harsh troubles and severe illness that happened to many of our brothers, *Bnei Yisrael*, both in Israel and outside of it.

Yeshivas were in lockdown for long months. Children could not go to school to acquire Torah and *yirah*. Young and old were confined to home, they could not even go to shul to daven. What about the livelihood of our brothers of Israel? How many incomes were diminished or completely wiped out? The whole world swayed from end to end. All this happened and was decreed on the previous Rosh Hashanah, how can we remain calm at this Rosh Hashanah?

We are all broken and shattered, hoping that the new year will be good and blessed, a year when we will no longer know pain and suffering. A year filled with good news, salvations, and consolations. All this is dependent on the upcoming Rosh Hashanah. Who can't be afraid and shudder from a day like this? This is are only consolation – HaKadosh Baruch Hu is a merciful and compassionate King, and through His abundant mercy and kindness He will watch over us, accept our *teshuvah* with mercy and He will save us. As R' Amnon of Mainz continues, 'For Your Name signifies Your praise; hard to anger and easy to appease, for You do not wish the death of one deserving death, but that he repent from his way and live. Until the day of his death You await him, if he repents You will accept him immediately.'

יודעין שהקב"ה יעשה להם נס

They know that HaKadosh Baruch Hu will perform a miracle for them

Aside from the fear and awe that rules this day, we must not forget this day is a holiday to Hashem, our G-d. Woe to us if we are lazy regarding this. We are children to Hashem, our G-d, forever. All we have to do is toss our love on Hashem, our G-d, and be reliant and dependent that He will decree good decrees, salvations, and consolations. What is there to be afraid of when the Judge is no other than our Father, our Shepherd, Himself in His Glory? There is no doubt that He only wants good for us.

There are amazing words in the *sefer* 'Seder HaYom' (on Rosh Hashanah), after he describes at length the great and holy day of Rosh Hashanah, and the order of the lofty Tefillos that *Klal Yisrael* recites on this day, he adds the following:

"When he leaves shul, he should go home joyous and confident in Hashem Yisbarach. He should make Kiddush wholeheartedly and with broad spirit. All worry and sighing should be distant from him, so as not to give an opening to the accuser, for it is only there where there is worry and sighing, fighting and discord. It is written in Kabbalah, 'קדוש היום לאדנינו ואל תעצבו כי' – 'Today is sacred to our L-rd, do not be sad, the enjoyment of Hashem is your strength' (Nechemia 8:10).

One must be joyous in his heart and show everyone that he is happy in order to avert the eye of the Satan. He should set his table and eat, send gifts of food to the poor and indigent as it says 'אכלו משמנים... ושלו מנות לאין נכון לו' – 'eat rich foods... send portions to those who have nothing'.

The person is warned, however, not to overeat or drink. He concludes: "It seems to me that in these days it is not appropriate to over indulge in food and drink, rather, eat less than usual so that you not get lightheaded from eating, and lose focus of the awe and fear of judgment and calculation.

Similarly, the Tur wrote (Siman 581) in the name of the Rabbis (Yerushalmi Rosh Hashanah 7b) and explains the great joy that must rule in these days: "we bathe and cut our hair based on the Midrash, 'R' Symon said, it is written (Devorim 4:7) 'כי מי גוי גדול' – 'For which is a great nation that has a G-d that is close to it',



R' Chanina and R' Yehoshua say, 'What nation is like this one that knows where its G-d is?'

Meaning, its customs and laws. When the nations of the world are judged, they dress in dark clothing since they do not know how the trial will turn out. But Israel is not like this, we wear white, and eat and drink and rejoice on Rosh Hashanah since they know that HaKadosh Baruch Hu will perform a miracle for them. Therefore, they take haircuts and bathe Erev Rosh Hashanah and increase the portions on Rosh Hashanah.

The Tur continues (Siman 597): "We eat, drink, and rejoice – and we do not fast at all, Rabeinu Hai wrote, 'It is good not to fast, since the early sustainers of Israel said, "Eat fine food and drink sweet drinks"' They encouraged Israel to eat and drink and enjoy the holiday of Rosh Hashanah quoting the posuk from Nechemia, "Go, eat rich foods and drink sweet drinks and send portions to those who have nothing prepared, for the day is sacred to our L-rd. Do not be sad, the enjoyment of Hashem is your strength."

The 'Yismach Yisrael' of Alexandria explains in the name of the holy Tzaddikim of Lekovich and Morocco, that the great joy of Rosh Hashanah stems from the faith of *Bnei Yisrael* in HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and they are confident that they will be judged with kindness and mercy. Even though their past deeds do not make them worthy for this, as they do not have enough mitzvos and good deeds to assure them of the judgment, still, they rely on Hashem Yisbarach to have mercy on them like a father on his children. This faith stirs great joy in the heavens above and this is the enjoyment of Hashem is your strength, that is, the faith that *Bnei Yisrael* has in Hashem Yisbarach causes this great joy.

כי קדוש היום לאדונינו – For the day is sacred to our L-rd

The holy *sefer* 'Ohr Hameir' explains by quoting the holy Baal Shem Tov who explains the posuk (Tehillim 121:5) 'ה' צלך' – 'Hashem is your shadow' – that Hashem leads the person in the way he wants to be led, like a shadow outlines a person, therefore, the 'Ohr Hameir' writes that on Rosh Hashanah the person is prohibited from being sad, rather just happy and joyful. When a person is happy, then HaKadosh Baruch Hu will also be happy with him and he will be granted a good year filled with blessing.

Particularly because this is the day we coronate HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and it is not proper to be sad before Yisbarach on the day of His coronation. Just the opposite, if he is happy and rejoicing in Hashem Yisbarach on this day that His Great Name is glorified and sanctified and we crown Him King, then surely HaKadosh Baruch Hu will rejoice.

This is why Nechemia commanded *Bnei Yisrael* to be happy on Rosh Hashanah and he told them, 'Go, eat rich foods and drink sweet drinks and give portions to those who have nothing prepared'. Why? 'For the day is sacred to our L-rd', this day is great and holy to Hashem Yisbarach since He is made King and His Kingdom is renewed, therefore, 'do not be sad' do not be sad or worried at all, 'for the enjoyment of Hashem is your strength', for the joy before HaKadosh Baruch Hu is from you, from the power of joy that you arouse in the world, then surely you will be happy on this day.

לשנה טובה תכתבו ותחתמו – You shall be written and sealed for a good year

Hashem Yisbarach should us merit to truly have a good blessed year. To be written and sealed in the books of the completely righteous together with all of Israel, great and small, a year of redemption and salvation, livelihood and sustenance, we should be written for a good life, a year when plague and destruction is removed from us and the entire *Am Yisrael*. The main thing is that we constantly rely on HaKadosh Baruch Hu, and He will redeem us. All will hear from afar and will come and crown Him King.