

לזכות הרה״ת ר׳ **מנחם מענדל** הלוי וזוגתו מרת **שולמית** ומשפחתם שיחיו **גערבער** להתברך בכל מילי דמיטב בגשמיות וברוחניות גם יחד



Joyous Tremble

The Avodah of Rosh Hashanah

עיקר ענין קבלת עול מלכות שמים הוא בראש השנה, והיא בפנימיות נפשו ממש, שנותן א"ע בכל עצמותו בהתגלות ממש. ולכן הנה בב' הימים דר"ה צ"ל בזהירות יתירה בכל הענינים . . לפי שבר"ה הוא המסירה ונתינה לאלקות בכל עצמותו בהתגלות ממש, אז עס איז גארניט פאראן קיין אנדער ענין.

Kabbalas ol malchus Shamayim, accepting the yoke of Heaven, is primarily done on Rosh Hashanah. It should come from the depths of one's soul, giving himself over to Hashem completely and visibly.

Therefore, over the two days of Rosh Hashanah one must be vigilant in all areas [of conduct]. For Rosh Hashanah is when we dedicate ourselves to *Elokus*, totally and openly, declaring that there is nothing else in the world!

(מאמר ד״ה א״ר אבהו תרצ״א)

What's It All About?

"It was Sunday, Erev Rosh Hashanah 5631," the Rebbe Rashab relates. "My father [the Rebbe Maharash] had just returned from a visit to the Ohel of my grandfather [the Tzemach Tzedek], and I went into his room to ask him what is the *avodah* of Rosh Hashanah."

The Rebbe Maharash explained to his son:

The *avodah* of Rosh Hashanah is *kabbalas ol*; to accept upon yourself the yoke of Torah and mitzvos. Much like a soldier accepts the command of his superiors who tell him how to behave.

"These few words were sufficient for me," the Rebbe Rashab later said. "I requested his *bracha* and left the room to begin saying Tehillim..."¹

Chazal tell us that on Rosh Hashanah we crown Hashem as King. With our *avodah*, Hashem becomes "*Melech Yisroel*," King of the Jewish people, and with that He becomes "*Melech al kol haaretz*," King of the entire world.

The way to crown a king, the Rebbe explains, is by accepting his leadership and submitting to his will—through *kabblas ol.*²

For this reason the *avodah* of Rosh Hashanah, even for the greatest and most accomplished people, is all about the "simple" act of reciting Tehillim. One should also refrain from sleeping too much on both nights of Rosh Hashanah, and avoid speaking *dvarim b'teilim* **at all costs**. We behave like slaves who don't have even one moment's rest from their master's work; or like a child who is preoccupied with the joy of greeting his father.³

Solemn Joy

Rosh Hashanah, like every Yom Tov, is a time for *simcha*; except that on Rosh Hashanah the joy is coupled with solemnity, as the *possuk* says (גילו"). ברעדה.

The Alter Rebbe once said that the *avodah* on Rosh Hashanah must be done with joy. Later, the

Tzemach Tzedek and Reb Nochum (the Mitteler Rebbe's son) came into the Alter Rebbe's room and asked, "If the *avodah* of Rosh Hashanah is supposed to be carried out with *simcha*, why are you crying?" The Alter Rebbe explained: "These are tears of joy!"⁴

As the Rebbe describes in the Reshimos: "Chassidim [in Lubavitch] would break out in a dance even on the first night of Rosh Hashanah!"⁵

MILLIONS OF WORDS!

From the time he was young, the Alter Rebbe would spend the entire first day of Rosh Hashanah reciting Tehillim; from after *mincha* of Erev Rosh Hashanah until *maariv* of the second night. This conduct he observed by his father, Reb Boruch. He continued this practice into adulthood as well.

The Alter Rebbe taught his children and grandchildren to do the same, and this is how our Rabbeim conducted themselves throughout the generations.

(Sefer Hasichos 5702 p. 1)

Many members of *anash* wished to join [the Frierdiker Rebbe for *seudas* Yom Tov on the second day of Rosh Hashanah], but he was quite displeased by this. He said: "This time could be used to add many more millions of words to *sefiras haMalchus…*" (Sefer Hasichos 5705 p. 10)

The Shofar

Chassidus explains that the sound of the shofar is the simple cry from the depths of our hearts, calling out to our Father in heaven.

The *mashal* is given of a valuable utensil that was defiled or even broken. Firstly, we cry for the loss. Then we wash it out, and then we attempt to put it back together and make it usable once more.

Rosh Chodesh Elul is the time of *cheshbon hanefesh*. At *selichos*, we cleanse the "utensil," washing it with tears. And on Rosh Hashanah we fix the utensil and put it back together with our *kabbalas ol*.

Then, at *tekias shofar*, we do a complete *teshuvah* calling out from the depth of our hearts. As the Baal Shem Tov put it, it's like a child who cries out "אבא אבא הצילני —Father, father, have mercy; father, father, save me!"

The *machzor* says that at this point we are מתוודה —confess silently. This is an expression of our great longing for our father. The earlier *teshuvah*, with clamor and noise, is an expression of regret for our wrongdoings. But at this point we have reached the innermost longing to our father—and this we express with the שירה בלחש.⁶

Head to Head

In a letter to the Mezritcher Maggid, the Baal Shem Tov writes: "On the two days of Rosh Hashanah, before blowing the shofar, envision my face and the face of my teacher—whom you once merited to see…"⁷

Indeed, Chassidim interpreted the meaning of יתוודה בלחש as envisioning the Rebbe's face.

The Rebbe often repeated the idea that since Rosh Hashanah is the "head" of the year, the way to connect the "head" with the rest of the year for good, healthy operations throughout the year is by connecting with the "head" of the Jewish people.

In the course of the *maamar* on Rosh Hashanah, the Rebbe would specifically mention each of the Rabbeim, and during the farbrengen, a *niggun* of each Rebbe was sung.

The Rebbe once explained the reasoning behind this custom, based on a story told by the Frierdiker Rebbe how his father, the Rebbe Rashab, was sure to mention something from each of the preceding Rabbeim on Rosh Hashanah. Because mentioning the Rabbeim, an act of *hiskashrus*, assists us in our everyday *avodah* of Torah and mitzvos, especially in the *avodah* of Rosh Hashanah.⁸

Following in the ways of our Rebbe will be the channel by way of which we'll receive the *bracha* for a הכתיבה וחתימה טובה לשנה טובה ומתוקה, for all good materially and spiritually, on Rosh Hashanah and for the rest of the year.⁹

- 1. Igros Kodesh RaYYaTZ vol. 3 p. 489.
- 2. Likkutei Sichos vol. 9 p. 450.
- 3. Igros Kodesh RaYYaTZ vol. 10 p. 425.
- 4. Toras Menachem vol. 2 p. 4.
- 5. Reshimas Hayoman p. 338.
- 6. Likkutei Diburim vol. 1 p. 100.
- 7. Hatamim vol. 1 p. 121.
- 8. Rosh Hashanah 5746; Hisvaaduyos 5746 vol. 1 p. 28.
- 9. Igros Kodesh vol. 3 p. 468. See "Pidyon Nefesh" Derher 24 (101), Tishrei 5775.