

“Reign over the entire world with Your glory” Our Job on Rosh HaShanah Is to Install HKB”H as King over Every Element of Creation Contained within One’s Being

As we depart the old year and enter the new one, it is essential for every living creature to fulfill the following directive taught by our blessed sages in the Mishnah (Berachos 54a): **“ביציאתו נותן הודאה:”**—to express gratitude for the past and shout about the future. When we recite Kiddush on the night of Rosh HaShanah and utter the words: **“שהחיינו וקיימנו והגיענו לזמן הזה”**—to praise and thank HKB”H, the King of the Universe, both for the past year and the year approaching us auspiciously.

Regarding the past year, we express our gratitude that we and all of our family members have lived another full year in this world among the general population of Yisrael, servants of the Omnipresent. We thank Him for all aspects of our existence—be it material matters, physical health or spiritual matters, such as Torah-study and the performance of mitzvos. Each person praises and thanks HKB”H as befits his person and spiritual level. Additionally, one must cry out that the new year which approaches should be a good, sweet year, replete with berachah. We should pray that we merit serving Hashem with enhanced fervor and strength.

Recite before Me “Malchiyos” so that I May Reign as King over You

In this first essay in honor of the upcoming new year 5774, we would like to examine a well-known concept. It is our job on Rosh HaShanah to make HKB”H King of the entire world. The source for this idea is the Gemara (R.H. 34b): **“אמר הקב”ה אמרו לפני בראש השנה מלכיות וזכרונות ושופרות, מלכיות כדי שתמליכוני עליכם, זכרונות כדי שיבואו לפני זכרוניכם לטובה, וכמה בשופר”**—**HKB”H said: Recite before Me on Rosh HaShanah verses of “Malchiyos” (Kingship), “Zichronos” (Remembrance), and “Shofaros” (pertaining to the shofar). “Malchiyos” so that you may accept My sovereignty upon yourselves; “Zichronos” so that your remembrances should come before Me favorably; and how should this be done? With the shofar.**

This coincides beautifully with the words of Rabbi Seadyah Gaon, listing ten reasons for the mitzvah of blowing-shofar. Concerning the first reason, he writes:

“הענין הראשון, מפני שהיום תחילת הבריאה, שבו ברא הקב”ה העולם ומלך עליו, וכן עושים המלכים שתוקעים לפניהם בחצוצרות ובקרנות, להודיע ולהשמיע בכל מקום תחילת מלכותו, וכן אנו ממליכין עלינו את הבורא יתברך ביום זה, וכן אמר דוד (תהלים צח-1) בחצוצרות וקול שופר הריעו לפני המלך ה’.” **For this day is the beginning of the creation; on it, HKB”H created the world and reigned over it as king. This is the protocol of kings—horns and trumpets are sounded for them, announcing everywhere the beginning of their kingship. In similar fashion, we make the Blessed Creator our king on this day. In the words of David HaMelech (Tehillim 98, 6): “With trumpets and the sound of the shofar, call out before the King, Hashem.”**

Similarly, in all of the silent devotions, we pray to HKB”H, the King of the Universe, that he reign as king over the entire world and all of its inhabitants. In the berachah **“אתה קדוש”**, we utter the following words of prayer:

“לדור ודור המליכו לאל, כי הוא לבדו מרום וקדוש... ותמלוך אתה הוא ה’ אלקינו מהרה לבדך על כל מעשיך, בהר ציון משכן כבודך, ובירושלים עיר קדשך, ככתוב בדברי קדשך, ימלוך ה’ לעולם אלקיך ציון לדור ודור הללויה.”

We should establish His kingship in every generation; He alone is fit to reign; as it is written: **“Hashem shall reign forever; He is your G-d, Tziyon, from generation to generation, Halleluyah.”**

We continue our words of prayer in this same vein in the middle berachah, formulated especially for Rosh HaShanah:

“אלקינו ואלקי אבותינו, מלוך על כל העולם כולו בכבודך, והנשא על כל הארץ ביקרך, והופע בהדר גאון עזך על כל יושבי תבל ארצך, וידע כל פעול כי אתה פעלתו, ויבין כל יצור כי אתה יצרתו, ויאמר כל אשר נשמה באפו, ה’ אלקי ישראל מלך ומלכותו בכל משלה... ברוך אתה ה’, מלך על כל הארץ, מקדש ישראל ויום הזכרון.”

O G-d and G-d of our ancestors, rule over the entire world in Your honor, and be raised above all the earth in Your glory, and appear, in the splendor of Your great might before all those who live in this world, Your domain. And all who were made will know that You made them, and all who were formed will know that You formed them, and all that have breath in their mouths will declare: Hashem, the G-d of Yisrael is King,

and His kingship has dominion over all. . . Blessed are You, Hashem, King over all the earth, who sanctifies Yisrael and the Day of Remembrance.

Nevertheless, this matter deserves further explanation. It is certainly true that Rosh HaShanah is the Day of Judgment for all creatures, as the Mishnah states (R.H. 16a): **“בראש השנה כל באי עולם עוברין לפניו כבני מרון—on Rosh HaShanah all who come to the world pass before Him like “bnei maron.”** If that is the main concern of the day, we should focus our thoughts on making amends for our sins and wrongdoings by performing sincere teshuvah characterized by regret, abandoning our old ways and accepting upon ourselves to behave differently. So, who requested of us to establish HKB”H as King of the entire universe?

Now, we did learn in the Gemara cited above that HKB”H Himself asks of us: **“Recite before Me on Rosh HaShanah verses of “Malchiyos . . . so that you may accept My sovereignty upon yourselves.** Even this, however, requires further explanation. For what possible purpose does HKB”H request of us, mere material beings, to establish His holy being as King of the entire universe—at a time when we should be focused on teshuvah and correcting the errors of our ways?

Additionally, it is worth examining the well-known piyut formulated by the divine Rabbi Amnon (”ובשובר גדול): **“יתקע, וקול דממה דקה ישמע, ומלאכים יחפזון, וחיל ורעדה יאחזון, ויאמרו הנה יום הדין, לפקוד על צבא מרום בדין, כי לא יזכו בעיניך בדין, וכל באי עולם יעברון לפניך—A great shofar sounds, and a still small voice is heard, angels rush forward, and are held by trembling, shaking; they say, “Here is the Day of Judgment visiting all the heavenly host for judgment”—for they are not cleared in Your eyes in judgment. And all who have come into this world pass before You like sheep.**

The commentaries are perplexed by the notion that the Day of Judgment causes the angels to tremble. After all, they lack a yetzer hara. Furthermore, we attest to the fact, in our morning prayers, that: **“כולם אהובים, כולם ברורים, כולם גיבורים, כולם קדושים, כולם עושים באימה וביראה—רצון קוניהם—they are all beloved, all pure, all mighty, all holy, and all perform in awe and reverence the will of their Maker.**

Rosh HaShanah Is the Day of Judgment because that Is When Adam HaRishon Sinned with the Eitz HaDa’s

Let us begin our enlightening journey by recalling a vital principle that is worth reviewing and remembering. Why has Rosh HaShanah been established as the Day of Judgment for all of

creation? As we state in our prayers: **היום הרת עולם, היום יעמיד במשפט—כל יצורי עולמים—the world was conceived on this day. Yet, what is the connection between the fact that it was conceived and created on this day and its being a Day of Judgment?**

So, the real reason is provided for us by one of the Rishonim, the Ran, Rabeinu Nissim, in his commentary on the Rif (R.H. 16a):

“ויש לשאול למה אדם נידון בראש השנה יותר מבשאר ימים, תירוץ דבר זה למדנו מדגרסינן בפסיקתא (פסקא כג) בשם רבי אליעזר, דתניא בכ”ה באלול נברא העולם.

וגרסינן תו התם בפסיקתא, נמצא אומר בראש השנה נברא אדם הראשון, שעה ראשונה עלה במחשבה, שניה נתייעץ [הקב”ה] עם מלאכי השרת, בשלשה כנס עפרו, בד’ גבלו, בה’ רקמו, בו’ עשאו גולם, בז’ זרק בו נשמה, בח’ הכניסו לגן עדן, בתשיעית נצטווה [שלא לאכול מעץ הדעת], בעשירית סרח [לאכול מעץ הדעת], באחת עשרה נידון, בשתים עשרה יצא בדימוס [זכאי]. אמר לו הקב”ה זה סימן לבניך, כשם שעמדת לפני בדין ביום זה ויצאת בדימוס, כך עתידין בניך להיות עומדים לפני בדין ביום זה ויוצאין בדימוס, וכל זה אימתי בחודש השביעי באחד לחודש.”

Why is man judged on Rosh HaShanah more so than on any other day? We have learned in the Pesikta in the name of Rabbi Eliezer that the world was created on the twenty-fifth of Elul. Thus, it turns out that Adam HaRishon was created on Rosh HaShanah. He was conceived intellectually during the first hour of the day; HKB”H consulted with the ministering angels during the second hour; during the third to sixth hours man’s physical form was created from the dust and soil; he was given a neshamah during the seventh hour; he was introduced into Gan Eden in the eighth hour; he was commanded not to eat from the Eitz HaDa’as in the ninth hour; he transgressed this command in the tenth hour; he was judged in the eleventh hour; he was acquitted in the twelfth hour. HKB”H said to him: This is a sign for your descendants; just as you stood before Me in judgment on this day and were acquitted, so, too, are they destined to stand before Me in judgment on this day and be acquitted. When did all of this transpire? On the first day of the seventh month.

Thus, we learn from the commentary of the Ran, based on the Midrash, that Rosh HaShanah is the Day of Judgment, because Adam HaRishon sinned on this very day. He performed teshuvah on this day and was then acquitted. As a consequence, HKB”H promised him: **“Just as you stood before Me in judgment on this day and were acquitted, so, too, your children are destined to stand before Me in judgment on this day and be acquitted.”**

Adam HaRishon’s Sin Was Caused by the Neshamos Included within His Being

Let us embellish this idea based on an idea from the Arizal. He teaches us that Adam HaRishon’s sin was not due to any personal fault

of his own. Rather, it was caused by the Neshamos that were included within his being. He explains in Sefer HaLikutim (Ha'azinu):

”סיבת חטאו של אדם הראשון היתה, בסיבת הנשמות שהיו כלולים בו מכל מיין ומיין, מהם צדיקים מהם רשעים, מהם גזלנים מהם גרגרנים, ומצדם נתאוה לאכול מן העץ, אם כן לא היה מצדו כל כך חטא כי אם בסיבתם, ועם כל זאת עשה תשובה, כי לולי החטא היה נצחי לעולם, ובחטאו נאמר לו (בראשית ב-יז) כי ביום אכלך מות תמות.” Adam HaRishon’s being incorporated all sorts of Neshamos; some belonged to tzaddikim, some to reshaim, some to thieves and some to gluttons. These various Neshamos instigated his desire to eat from the forbidden tree. Hence, the sin did not actually stem from him, but rather from them. Nevertheless, he performed teshuvah. Had it not been for the sin, he would have lived forever. Concerning his sin, it is stated (Bereishis 2, 17): **“For on the day you eat of it, you shall surely die.”**

Now, we can better appreciate the commentary of the Ran in the name of the Pesikta. Rosh HaShanah is the Day of Judgment for all creatures, because Adam HaRishon was created on Rosh HaShanah and sinned on the very same day by partaking of the Eitz HaDa’as. HKB”H judged him on this day and decreed that he must eventually die. HKB”H also decreed that he must labor for his sustenance (ibid. 3, 19): **“בזעת אפיך תאכל לחם”—by the sweat of your brow shall you eat bread.**

Seeing as the sin of the Eitz HaDa’as was in fact a sin committed by all of the creatures contained within the being of Adam HaRishon, they are held accountable and judged again annually on this day. Each individual is examined to see if he remains culpable for rebelling and disobeying HKB”H’s command. If so, chas v’shalom, he is subject to the decree of death and the decree to toil for his sustenance. Yet, if a person performs teshuvah and corrects his ways, HKB”H forgives him as He forgave Adam HaRishon; as we know, he lived a long life after the sin and did not die on that day.

“נעשה אדם”—All of Creation Participated in the Creation of Man

Continuing on along this exalted path, let us explain the important task that is required of us on Rosh HaShanah. First, let us present a wonderful introduction from the teachings of the Arizal in Likutei Torah (Ki Sisa) concerning the purpose of man’s creation. The passuk states (Bereishis 1, 26): **“ויאמר אלקים נעשה”—G-d said, “Let us make man.”** Our blessed sages noted the peculiar use of the word “נעשה”—a verb indicating plurality. Seeing as there is only one HKB”H, the passuk should have more appropriately employed the verb “אעשה”.

The Arizal explains that HKB”H was addressing all of the universes and all of the angels with the proclamation: **“נעשה”**

“אדם.” He wanted them all to participate in the creation of man by donating a part of themselves to be incorporated into man’s makeup. Thus, man is an “olam katan”; he constitutes a small universe comprised of elements from all of creation. So, when he rectifies himself by means of Torah-study and good deeds, he is essentially rectifying all of the elements of creation within him. Conversely, chas v’shalom, if he goes astray, he damages and corrupts all of these elements within him.

In Nefesh HaChaim (1), authored by the great Rabbi Chaim of Volozhin, zy”a, he applies this concept to explain at length that which is written (Bereishis 1, 27): **“ויברא אלקים את האדם בצלמו בצלם—G-d created man in his image; in the image of G-d He created him.** The commentaries toil to explain the term “צלם אלקים”—translated as “the image of G-d.” After all, HKB”H does not have an image or a form. He explains the matter based on that which is written in the Tur and the Shulchan Aruch (O.C. 5): **“בהזכירו אלקים יכוין שהוא תקיף בעל היכולת ובעל הכוחות כולם”—**when one mentions the name “Elokim,” one should have in mind that he is powerful, able and omnipotent.

In other words, all of the forces present in the universe, without exception, derive their power from the source of their existence—namely the Almighty, blessed is He. At any given moment, all living creatures are dependent on the power and potential HKB”H supplies them with. Consequently, HKB”H is **“powerful and able and omnipotent”**; all the forces at play in the universe come from him.

Seeing as man contains within him all of the universes, he also, as it were, possesses an aspect of omnipotence--**“בעל הכוחות כולם.”** After all, he is the center of creation; the perfection and completion of all of the universes depends on him. If he serves Hashem and acts accordingly, he provides tikun for all of creation and elevates all of its elements to their intended purpose. Conversely, if he sins, chas v’shalom, and descends into the spiritual abyss, he drags all of creation down along with him into the abyss.

This then is the meaning of the passuk: **“ויברא אלקים את האדם בצלמו בצלם אלקים ברא אותו”—**As explained, HKB”H is G-d, possessing all the powers present in all of the universes; He controls them and directs them every single moment, as He pleases. So, too, the Almighty empowered man with the ability to open and close myriads of forces and universes, based on His master plan at any given moment--owing to the fact that he contains within him all the elements of creation. For, the source of man’s deeds, speech and thoughts is in the heavens above. Thus, it is as if he, too, is the source of their powers, so to speak.

would resemble Hashem in that he would function with freedom of choice—a characteristic the angels lack.

We see that even the angels do not entitle HKB”H to be called “מלך”. Although they accept the sovereignty of Heaven willingly, nevertheless they do not possess the capacity to choose that which is bad. So, it is as if they are forced to accept His kingship. As such, their relationship with HKB”H does not qualify Him as a “מלך”. On the other hand, human beings, despite being material creatures, possess both a yetzer hara and a yetzer tov; and they are capable of choosing the bad or the good. Consequently, when they choose the good and accept the sovereignty of Heaven willingly, only then is Hashem revealed to the world with the title of “מלך”.

In this manner, we can begin to appreciate to some small degree HKB”H’s infinite wisdom. He proclaimed to all of the universes and all of the angels: “נעשה אדם”—intending that every single element in creation should contribute to the creation of man. Since only man possesses the freedom to choose the bad or the good, it turns out that only he is capable of instating HKB”H willingly as King over all of creation.

On Rosh HaShanah We Must Rectify the Rebellion against the Sovereignty of Heaven

This should enlighten us with regard to the damage man inflicts upon every aspect of creation when he transgresses. Not only is he himself rebelling against the King of Kings, HKB”H, but he is causing every element of creation incorporated within his being to rebel against Hashem along with him, albeit reluctantly. Therefore, when he accepts upon himself to perform sincere, complete teshuvah—returning to Hashem—he must confess to Hashem not only for his own wrongdoings but also for causing all of creation, in a sense, to rebel and reject the kingship of Heaven.

Now, on Rosh HaShanah, man was created and he rebelled against Hashem by sinning with the Eitz HaDa’as. That transgression caused harm to all of the universes included in his being. Therefore, every year on this very same day, HKB”H judges all elements of creation. He discerns whether each and every human being continues, chas v’shalom, his rebellious ways—causing indescribable harm to all of creation. If so, he is not worthy of receiving a new lease on life for the upcoming year, along with all of the universes incorporated in his being. After all, it is quite

likely that he will harm himself and all of creation once again with his transgressions in the year to come.

With this understanding, we can better appreciate why HKB”H commanded us to blow the shofar on Rosh HaShanah. As Rabeinu Seadyah Gaon explained, it signifies the coronation of HKB”H as King of the entire universe. Thus, we demonstrate our sincere desire to accept upon ourselves the yoke of the sovereignty of Heaven. To this end, we pray: “מלוך על כל העולם כולו בכבודך”—**reign as King over the entire universe in Your glory.** We wish to make amends for rebelling against the sovereignty of Heaven by committing countless transgressions. In this merit, HKB”H will grant us a new year along with all of the universes we contain within our beings.

Now, we have also achieved a better understanding of why the malachim have such a great fear of the Day of Judgment: “ומלאכים--יחפזון וחיל ורעדה יאחזון, ויאמרו הנה יום הדין, לפקוד על כל צבא מרום בדין”—**angels rush forward, and are held by trembling, shaking; they say, “Here is the Day of Judgment visiting all the heavenly host for judgment.”** Since they are incapable of establishing HKB”H as King--“מלך”—they are dependent on man to accomplish this feat. Their spiritual elevation is only through man—whose makeup includes all of the malachim. The Arizal explains this phenomenon as follows: “כשהאדם עושה מצוה גם אל המלאך יחשב כאלו עשה מצוה ואוכל משלו”—when a person performs a mitzvah, it is also considered as if the malach participated in the mitzvah and deserves credit.

Therefore, on every Rosh HaShanah, when man is judged, the malachim are also judged along with him. For, if he failed to perform the necessary teshuvah for all of his transgressions, chas v’shalom, this leaves a defect in them as well—since they were a part of him when he sinned. On the other hand, if he succeeded in performing the requisite teshuvah—making amends for all that he transgressed and being acquitted by the heavenly court—he achieves tikun retroactively for all; all of the elements incorporated within his being are also elevated. With this understanding, we can well understand that which is required of us on Rosh HaShanah. It is our task to instate HKB”H as King over the entire universe, so that we finally realize the desired, long-awaited reality of: “והיה ה’--למלך על כל הארץ ביום ההוא יהיה ה’ אחד ושמו אחד”—**then Hashem shall be King over all the earth; on that day Hashem shall be One and His name One.**

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