

LIKKUTEI SICHOS

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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Shagalov
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LIKKUTEI SICHOT

AN ANTHOLOGY OF TALKS

RELATING TO THE WEEKLY SECTIONS OF THE TORAH AND
SPECIAL OCCASIONS IN THE JEWISH CALENDAR

by the
Lubavitcher Rebbe
Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson

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Volume X: *Devarim*

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In English rendition
by
Rabbi Eliyahu Touger

ROSH HASHANAH

WHEN G-D IS TO BE FOUND

On the verse,¹ “Seek G-d when He is to be found,” our Sages comment:² “These are the 10 days between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.”

The wording of our Sages’ statement is problematic. On one hand, the expression “the 10 days *between* Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur,” seems to imply that Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur are not included in these days.³ Nevertheless, the expression “These are the 10 days...” indicates that Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur are indeed included in the count, for there are only seven days *between* Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur.

This compels us to understand that there are two elements to the observance of Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur: a) an essential quality which transcends the service of *teshuvah*, and b) the service of *teshuvah* which characterizes all 10 days.

First, our Divine service must center on the essential aspect of Rosh HaShanah. Afterwards comes the aspect associated with *teshuvah*. Thus, there are 10 days of *teshuvah* between Rosh HaShanah and Yom Kippur, for the aspect of

1. *Yeshayahu* 55:6.

2. *Rosh HaShanah* 18a.

3. Compare to *Taanis* 5a; see also *S’dei Chemed, Klallim Beis*, sec. 72.

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teshuvah associated with Rosh HaShanah comes after the essential aspect of Rosh HaShanah.⁴

MAKING HIM KING

Teshuvah transcends all other *mitzvos*. It can thus atone for all blemishes in the observance of *mitzvos*, for it reaches a deeper point in the soul than is reached by the other *mitzvos*.⁵ And as mentioned above, since the essential aspect comes before the service of *teshuvah*, it follows that this aspect of Rosh HaShanah transcends even *teshuvah*.

What is the essential aspect of Rosh HaShanah? The coronation of G-d as King. Thus our Sages quote⁶ G-d as asking: “Say before Me... verses reflecting My Kingship to make Me King over you.”

Until we have accepted G-d as King, serving Him through the observance of *mitzvos* is not relevant. And so our Sages

4. Similarly, there are two dimensions to Yom Kippur: a) the aspect of *teshuvah*; and b) its essential quality, which is revealed at the conclusion of the Ten Days of *Teshuvah*. See the *sichah* for Yom Kippur in this series.

5. See *Likkutei Torah, Vayikra*, p. 26c; *Derech Mitzvosecha, Mitzvas Vidui U'Teshuvah*. On this basis, it is possible to explain why, in his reckoning of the 613 *mitzvos* in *Sefer HaMitzvos*, the *Rambam* does not count *teshuvah* (focusing on *vidui*, confession, instead). For *teshuvah* transcends all the *mitzvos*, and includes them all. Thus it can be considered a general command, and is not included in the reckoning of the 613 *mitzvos* (*Sefer HaMitzvos*, General Principle 4).

One cannot argue that *teshuvah* should be counted as one of the *mitzvos* because it involves a particular deed (see pgs. 89-90 above). For *teshuvah* possesses two dimensions:

a) Its essential quality is the sinner's resolution to observe the Torah and its *mitzvos* in the future. This parallels other commands of a general nature, such as “be holy” (*Vayikra* 19:2), and

b) Regret over one's past deeds. This parallels the general command “Do not stiffen your necks any longer” (*Devarim* 10:16). As *Sefer HaMitzvos* (*loc. cit.*) mentions, both of these thrusts are general in nature.

The aspect of *teshuvah* that involves deed is the act of *vidui*, confession. And the *Rambam* does count confession as one of the *mitzvos* (positive *mitzvah* 73).

6. *Rosh HaShanah* 16a; 34b.

quote G-d as saying:⁷ “Accept My Kingship, and afterwards accept My decrees.” Therefore *teshuvah*, which serves to atone for failures in fulfilling the King’s decrees, is relevant only after His Kingship is accepted.

Our acceptance of G-d as King relates to His essence — a level above all revelations. The observance of the *mitzvos* relates to G-d’s will as it has come into revelation, for all the *mitzvos* are expressions of His will.

Teshuvah, which atones for transgressions of His will, relates to a higher level of G-dliness, but one which still shares a connection to His will.⁸ For a level which *totally* transcends G-d’s will must also transcend the service which repents for transgressions of that will. Thus *teshuvah* still relates to revealed levels of G-dliness. The acceptance of G-d as King, however, relates to G-d’s essence, which transcends all revelations.⁹

From this, we can appreciate the uniqueness of the souls of the Jewish people — that they can affect G-d’s very essence and evoke in Him a desire to be King. To be able to affect G-d’s essence, however, it is necessary to express the inner *bittul* that lies at the center of every Jewish soul.¹⁰ This is expressed in our request of G-d:¹¹ “Reign over the entire world in Your glory.”

7. *Mechilta*, *Shmos* 20:3; *Toras Kohanim*, *Acharei*, ch. 13; *Yalkut Shimoni* to *Shmos*, *loc. cit.*

8. For this reason, in several texts of *Chassidus* (e.g., the series of *maamarim* beginning Rosh HaShanah, 5691), *teshuvah* is described as relating to “the depths of His will,” or to “the Master of the will.”

9. See the explanation of this concept in the series of *maamarim* beginning Rosh HaShanah, 5703.

10. When the essence of a Jewish soul is revealed, it draws down G-d’s essence, or becomes a vehicle for that essence which is rooted in it. (See the *maamar* entitled *Mi E-l Kamocho*, 5627, sec. 2.)

11. Rosh HaShanah liturgy, *Siddur Tehillat HaShem*, p. 274.

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“HEAD OF THE YEAR”

Names employed by the Torah are chosen because they describe the true nature of the things to which they refer, expressing their very life-force.¹² This also applies to Rosh HaShanah, which literally means “head of the year.”¹³

The head has several unique aspects:

a) The head is the most elevated and sophisticated of all the body’s limbs;

b) The head includes the life-energy for all the limbs of the body within it; and

c) The head directs the functioning of all the limbs.

Parallels to all three qualities apply with regard to Rosh HaShanah:

a) The Divine service which characterizes Rosh HaShanah — the crowning of G-d as King — affects G-d’s essence, a level which is above the Divine service carried out throughout the year.

b) Rosh HaShanah is also a day of *teshuvah*. *Teshuvah* relates to the *mitzvos*, but stands above them. Indeed, it can be said to include them.

c) The good resolutions made on Rosh HaShanah influence one’s observance of *mitzvos* in the year to come, affecting them as the head directs the limbs of the body.

THE SHOFAR’S MESSAGE

With regard to Rosh HaShanah, it is said:¹⁴ “The *mitzvah* of the day involves the *shofar*.” Based on the above explanations, it follows that all three factors mentioned above — the coronation of G-d, *teshuvah*, and the observance of the *mitz-*

12. *Tanya, Shaar HaYichud VehoEmunah, ch. 1.*

13. See *Likkutei Torah, Devarim 41c; Ateres Rosh*, in the beginning.

14. *Rosh HaShanah 27a.*

vos — are reflected in the sounding of the *shofar*.¹⁵ And, as is true with regard to all matters of *P'nimiyus HaTorah*, this concept is also alluded to in *Nigleh*, the revealed dimension of Torah law.

In *Hilchos Teshuvah*,¹⁶ the *Rambam* writes:

Although the sounding of the *shofar* on Rosh HaShanah is a decree from the Torah, it also contains an allusion. [It is as if the *shofar* is saying:] “Awake.... Turn to G-d in *teshuvah*.”

A question arises: Why does the *Rambam* state this concept in *Hilchos Teshuvah* rather than in *Hilchos Shofar*? Although the *Rambam* is speaking about *teshuvah*, since he is explaining the motivating principle for the *mitzvah* of *shofar*, seemingly, it would have been more appropriate to include it in *Hilchos Shofar*.

To cite a parallel: The *Rambam* concludes his *Hilchos Mikvaos*¹⁷ with an explanation of the motivating principle for immersion in a *mikveh*:

15. On this basis, we can appreciate the explanation in the *maamar* of the Alter Rebbe entitled *B'Chochmah Yivneh Bayis* [5564] (printed in 5722; see also the other *maamarim* cited there) regarding the rationale for the recitation of *Malchiyos*, *Zichronos*, and *Shofros*: “In order for the influence [of the *mitzvah*] to be maintained, it is necessary that it be sealed by the Torah.”

On the surface, this is problematic, for with regard to other *mitzvos*, it is not necessary to bring proof from the Torah. Why then is this necessary with regard to sounding the *shofar*?

The situation can be explained as follows: A seal is necessary when influence is drawn from a level which transcends the spiritual cosmos, as is the case with *teshuvah*, and certainly with regard to the crowning of G-d.

This also explains the continuation of the *maamar*: “As we see with regard to the mysteries and secrets of the Torah in the *Zohar*, the author of these concepts would always quote a verse from the Torah as support. For without [such support], the mystic secrets he taught could not be maintained.”

In this instance as well, since the mystic secrets reflect the dimension of the Torah which transcends the limits of the spiritual cosmos, support from a Torah verse is necessary.

16. *Mishneh Torah, Hilchos Teshuvah* 3:4.

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These are decrees of the Torah.... Nevertheless, there is an allusion to the concept... to purify one's soul from its impurity and base character traits.... by immersion in the waters of pure knowledge.

This concept, though related to the Divine service of *teshuvah*, is stated in *Hilchos Mikvaos* and not in *Hilchos Teshuvah* because it describes the rationale for immersion in the *mikveh*. Why then is the rationale for sounding the *shofar* not explained in *Hilchos Shofar*?

The *Rambam's* statements also provoke another question: The *Talmud* states:⁶ “Say before Me... verses reflecting My Kingship to make Me King over you. By what means? Via the *shofar*.” The *shofar* is thus the medium which brings about the coronation of G-d.¹⁸

Why does the *Rambam* not mention this allusion?

The answer to these questions requires that we understand three elements involved in the sounding of the *shofar*:

a) The *mitzvah* of sounding the *shofar*, as expressed in all the particular laws which apply to it. The *Rambam* considers this as one of the 613 *mitzvos*, and mentions these laws in *Hilchos Shofar*.

b) The concept of *teshuvah*. This is alluded to by the sounding of the *shofar*. *Teshuvah* reflects a rung above the observance of *mitzvos*. To point to this quality, the *Rambam* mentions this concept in *Hilchos Teshuvah*, and not in *Hilchos*

17. Apparently, there is a printing error in the standard text of the *Mishneh Torah*. It would seem that the text in *Mikvaos* should read: “When he immerses himself in the waters of pure knowledge, he becomes pure.”

18. This is the simple meaning of the quote from *Rosh HaShanah* cited previously. Similarly, this is one of the intentions which we are to have in mind when performing the *mitzvah* of sounding the *shofar*, as stated in *Likkutei Torah, Devarim* 56d, and other Chassidic texts. See also *I Melachim* 1:39 [which speaks about sounding a *shofar* at the coronation of a mortal king.]

The *Tosefta* (*Rosh HaShanah* 1:11) mentions other reasons for sounding the *shofar*. These and similar reasons in other statements by our Sages reflect other dimensions of the *mitzvah*.

Shofar. *Hilchos Shofar* contains a description of the laws of sounding the *shofar*. It does not mention *teshuvah*, for this dimension transcends the *mitzvos* and is only alluded to by the *shofar*.¹⁹

This is reflected in the wording used by the *Rambam*: “Although the sounding of the *shofar* on Rosh HaShanah is a decree from the Torah.” In other words, although it is fundamentally a *mitzvah*, “it also contains an allusion,” i.e., it refers to *teshuvah*, which transcends the *mitzvos*.

c) The aspect of sounding the *shofar* which brings about G-d’s coronation. This aspect transcends the *mitzvah* of sounding the *shofar* entirely, and cannot be communicated even by an allusion. For an allusion reflects a thrust toward revelation, while the coronation of G-d, by contrast, brings forth the *bittul* that lies at the foundation of the soul [which is entirely above revelation].²⁰

CHOOSING FREELY

Based on the above, we can appreciate the connection between the sounding of the *shofar* and the verse:²¹ “He chooses our heritage for us,” which is recited before the sounding of the *shofar*.

19. The allusion reflected by immersion in the *mikveh* is, by contrast, mentioned in *Hilchos Mikvaos* because it is of a more particular nature. Although the *mikveh* is intended to purify blemishes, it involves “the purification of one’s soul... from base character traits.... by immersion in the waters of pure knowledge,” and not an all-encompassing movement of *teshuvah*. Therefore it relates to *Hilchos Mikvaos*.

20. The allusion to this quality in the *shofar* is in the fact that it is narrow at its lower end. This narrowness is not a result of sin, but rather a reflection of the fact that the person feels as a separate and lowly entity, rather than an extension of G-d’s unbounded essence where his soul has its roots. This therefore affects G-d’s essence. See the conclusion of the *maamar* entitled *Shir HaMaalos*, 5703, and the conclusion of the series of *maamarim* beginning Rosh HaShanah, 5695.

21. *Tehillim* 47:4.

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In an ultimate sense, free choice involves choosing without regard to any factor or consideration other than the initiative of the one who chooses. When a person's choice is motivated by a reason, it is as if that reason *forced* him to choose; this cannot be considered free choice.²²

How then can G-d's "choos[ing of] our heritage for us" be associated with the sounding of the *shofar*? If His choice is dependent on the sounding of the *shofar*, how can it be considered free?

These questions can be answered by referring to the above concepts. The two aspects of sounding the *shofar* associated with the performance of the *mitzvah* and the Divine service of *teshuvah* do not relate to G-d's essence. Instead, they draw down merely the revealed aspects of G-dliness — an arousal from above that is dependent on an arousal from below.

The *bittul* of the soul's essence, which is expressed by the coronation of G-d through the sounding of the *shofar*, relates to G-d's essence, tapping that level of the soul on which Jews are one with G-d. And at that level, G-d chooses the Jews freely; the sounding of the *shofar* is not what causes Him to choose.²³

UNLIMITED BLESSING

G-d's essence knows no bounds. Since the influence drawn down by the sounding of the *shofar* on Rosh HaShanah is rooted in G-d's essence, this influence is not restricted by any limitations of the spiritual cosmos. The influence is drawn down precisely as He desires it to be. And what He desires is certainly good, as it is written:²⁴ "In the countenance of the King, there is life." *Penai*, translated here

22. See *Likkutei Sichos*, Vol. IV, p. 1309 and pgs. 1340-1342.

23. See the *maamar* entitled *Yivchar Lanu*, 5703, sec. 14, which states: "Drawing down [G-d's] will from [His essence] is not an imperative, for this comes from His essence, which is not prompted by an arousal at all."

24. *Mishlei* 16:15.

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as “countenance,” also means “inner dimension.” Thus any desire emanating from G-d’s inner dimension will surely be associated with life and goodness.

This will be revealed on the material plane, for G-d’s essence is connected to our material reality. And so it is that every Jew will be inscribed for a good and sweet year, filled with open and apparent blessings.

(Adapted from *Sichos Rosh HaShanah* and *Sichos Simchas Beis HaShoevah*, 5723)



BESURAS HAGEULO

The Announcement Of The Redemption

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The most essential matter is: the true and complete Redemption, truly immediately!

Several signs indicate the imminence of the Redemption, primarily the statement of our Sages¹ many generations ago that: "All the deadlines have passed, and the matter depends solely on Teshuvah [repentance, return]." My sainted father-in-law, the leader of our generation clarified that Teshuvah had already been achieved, and that we "all stand ready,"² and we have been ready for quite some time.

*(The blessing of the Rebbe Shlita, after the Annulment of the Vows,
Erev Rosh Hashanah, 5752)*

1. *Sanhedrin* 97:2.

2. The expression of my Sainted father-in-law in his letter of 26 Adar I 5698 - [published in] his *Igros Kodesh* vol. 4, p. 279. And see *HaYom Yom* 15 Teves.

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The most essential matter is that "so shall it be for us, in actuality." Moreover, indeed, it has already been, in the past tense. In particular, our Rebbes and leaders have revealed to us that the publication of the coming of Moshiach is in the newspapers.¹ This has actually occurred in recent times, as several newspapers throughout the world have publicized (and we should increase the publicity) that "**Behold, he (Melech HaMoshiach) is coming.**"² Immediately and literally speaking, **he should have already come**, below ten handbreadths³ and in a manner that is manifest for the entire world to see, and especially "for the eyes of all of Israel."⁴ And may this occur in actuality, immediately!

(from the talk of Shabbos Parshas Netzavim 5751, Second day of Rosh Hashanah, and Shabbos Parshas Vayelech, 6 Tishrei, 5752)

1. See *Sefer HaSichos Toras Shalom*, p. 12: "The Rebbe (the Alter Rebbe) has said that Moshiach will appear in the gazettin (newspapers) ... all the Jews will be ready for the coming of Moshiach as if the newspapers reported that he is coming..."

2. *Shir HaShirim* 2:8. And in *Shir HaShirim Rabba* on the verse.

3. *[An expression frequently used by the Rebbe to denote that what will occur is not just a metaphor or even a spiritual reality, but that it will be so in the domain that we inhabit, within the confines of the physical world. Translator's note.]*

4. End of Parshas *Brocha*.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF OUR DEAR FATHER
Reb Berl Leib Haleivi ben Reb Tzvi Hersh Haleivi ע"ה Gross
Passed away on 7 Tishrei, 5759

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

*

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Mrs. **Roneete Mona Mina bas Reb Zev ע"ה Kurtzman**
Passed away on 9 Cheshvan, 5783

ת. נ. צ. ב. ה.

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21 Elul, 5783 - "Year of Hakhel"

"May you become increasingly studious and conscientious in your study of the Torah, in the revealed teachings of the Torah and likewise in the teachings of *Chassidus*, and may you observe the *mitzvos* precisely and beautifully. And may G-d grant you success in your endeavors to become a chassid, a G-d-fearing Jew, and a scholar."

(From the Rebbe's Letter to a Bar Mitzvah Boy)

AND IN HONOR OF THEIR SISTERS

THE SOLDIERS OF "TZIVOS HASHEM"

Chaya Mushka, Devorah Bracha and Shterna Sara שיחי

May they merit to be a source of Chassidic pride
to their family and a Torah light to their community.

*

DEDICATED BY THEIR PARENTS

Mr. & Mrs. **Mordechai** and **Ruthie שיחי Naughton**

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