

## ROSH HASHANA – “LENS OF THE YEAR” – R' SHOLOM SEGAL

The *מַתְנוּת* of *פרשה* – at the end of the *אני ד' אלקיכם* Kingship, from the juxtaposition of *עבודת היום* of declaring the *הקב"ה* Kingship, from the juxtaposition of *אני ד' אלקיכם* – immediately preceding that of *ראש השנה*. The question has been raised, why is this all-important *מצוה* rooted in *פאה* and *שכחה*?

These acts of *צדקה* are unique from all other forms, in that they are Divinely distributed. The owner of the field is forbidden to designate any of the above presents to an *עני*. He is commanded to let Hashem direct each ear of grain to the desired recipient. Whereas all other *מתנות* are a show of the donor's benevolence, giving of what is *his*, the aforementioned are left in the field for the taking, suggesting that the farmer has no ownership over them and that they really belong to a Higher Source; *אני ד' אלקיכם*.

With this idea, we may understand why the *תורה* describes *פאה* as the *פאר* of the field. The *תפילין*, or perhaps more accurately the *תפלה*, is also termed *פאר*. The *רשב"א* explains that the one compartment of the *יד* alludes to the Hand of Hashem. The 4 houses of the *ראש* represent the 4 directions of the world, incorporating all the *כווונות* therein. The latter is never worn without the former, for nothing can exist without the *יד* of Hashem.

One who is strong is not a better *human-being*, for many animals are far tougher than any person. It is the brain, the power of intellect and speech that define who one is. Four of the five senses, those which are least physical and most non-tangible, those which define the *human-being*, are found in the *ראש*. In the majority of cases, though one cannot recognise an acquaintance by his hand, leg etc, the face will be the give-away. Similarly, though we are unable to see the concealed Hand, it is through the immense powers of the *ראש* that one can identify the Hand of Hashem. When one marvels at the wonders of creation, unless blinded by ulterior motives, one is forced to acknowledge the existence of a Higher Force. Perhaps, this is the *פאר* of the *ראש*; namely, a lens through which we discover Hashem.

So too, the leaving of *פאה*, is the recognition that all the bounty of the past agricultural year, is all from Hashem.

The name of this festival gives us deeper insight into the very essence of the day. It is the head of year, the lens through which we can view the Hand of Hashem in our every-day lives. Through declaring G-D's Kingship on this Day of Judgement, we gain perspective into the running of His world. It is precisely on this day, when we recall the creation of man that we gain a glimpse into the identity of the One who empowers us with the ability to perform all that we do. As with any masterpiece structure, though many years following its construction, most will not know who was its architect, in the period surrounding its construction, people would definitely be aware who it was. So too, on this day, we return to the starting point, connecting with the One who moulded us, as we associate and subdue ourselves to the *מלך מלכי המלכים הקב"ה*.

When one recognises the *מהות* of the world and year, namely that everything is Hashem, one merits a good *ראש השנה*. This means that the whole year which is defined on this *ראש*, will be for the good, for one who recognises Hashem's Hand is assured direct *השגחה* from that loving Father figure.

Continuing the above train of thought, perhaps we may reveal a further facet of these High Holy Days. As the last rays of light disappear below the horizon, we cry out the verses *שמע* and *ברוך שם*, finally followed by the seven times *הוא האלקים*. Surely, *יום כפור* is not a day to pronounce Hashem's *מלכות*; that was reserved for *ראש השנה*. Would it not be more fitting to close with one last heartfelt plea for forgiveness?

The short-sighted will be unable to discern distant objects. However, when placed right in front of his eyes, unless clinically blind, he will be able to identify the article. So too *ראש השנה*, when we have returned to the day of Creation, as we stand next to the King of Kings, unless completely removed from *Yiddishkeit*, anyone, however tainted by sin, will be able to discern the Hand of Hashem in his life. However, we have now journeyed a week on in time, having had a chance to search for Hashem in every day of the week, a microcosm of the 50 weeks of the year. Things begin to become a little hazy, for sin taints the heart and forms a barricade before our eyes. Therefore, we require a *כפור* to wash us of all the dirt impairing our vision.

Having undergone a *ראש השנה*, the internal longing to hold such a relationship breaks forth, as we implore Hashem to shower us with the cleansing waters of *תשובה*, to clean the way, so that we can be privy to a clear vision of Hashem, throughout the ensuing year.

Having come through the cleansing process, we open our eyes to the beauty of the *הקב"ה*'s ways and declare, with absolute clarity of vision, *ברוך שם* and *שמע ישראל*. We then conclude with the seven utterances of *הוא האלקים*, *ד' הוא האלקים*, popularly understood as a means to accompany Hashem, as He ascends the 7 Heavens.

Perhaps, though, it would be a fitting conclusion to draw on the thoughts of *צ' ר' שמשון פינקוס וצוק"ל*. Let us not make the grave error of bidding farewell to our Father until next year. Rather, let us have in mind, that we want Him to stay right by our side, every moment of the day and night, throughout our lives; *שבת בבית ד' כל ימי חי*.

*Wishing the whole community a טובה והתימה טובה.*