



**PARSHAS
VAYELECH -
SHABBOS
SHUVA
(YOM KIPPUR)**

5773

**SHALOSH SEUDAH
TORAH**

TRANSLATED INTO ENGLISH
\$1.00 EACH

Submitting Ourselves to Hashem During the Holy Days

The In-Gathering of the Entire Year

On the day a person passes away, all the days of his life are gathered together. Everything he did, his mitzvos, Torah and tefilah amass and his spiritual power is very great. King David hints to this in Tehilim, "תוסף רוחם יגעונו", their spirit – all of their spiritual efforts - is gathered, and then they pass away.

On the Day he passed away, Moshe said "Today I am one hundred-twenty years." On the day of his passing, Moshe was as great as all of his one hundred-twenty years combined.

Sfas Emes teaches that the ten days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur belong to the previous year as the fate of the coming year is not yet completely determined. However, they are also part of the coming year. Thus, Shabbos Shuva, which is between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, is both, the last Shabbos of the previous year and the first Shabbos of the coming year. As the last Shabbos of the year, all of the Torah and mitzvos of the past year are accumulated in this Shabbos. All of the Avodah of Shabbos is elevated on high as Shabbos leaves us, during Shalosh Seudos. There are tremendous spiritual treasures available then and it is an opportune time for a spiritual metamorphosis.

In this week's Parsha, Moshe appoints Yehoshua as his successor, and Yehoshua functions as the leader of the nation. Moshe, however, is still alive and instructs Yehoshua.² The era of Moshe has not yet concluded and the era of Yehoshua has already begun. So, too, the previous year is not yet over, and the new year has already begun.

We are Still in Gan Eden

Adam was created on Rosh Hashana which was on Friday. On that day, he sinned and it was decreed that he would be banished from Gan Eden. Shabbos defended him saying, "Let him not be banished upon my arrival. Let him stay in Gan Eden over Shabbos." Adam was allowed to remain in Gan Eden until the end of Shabbos.

During the ten days between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur we are especially close to Hashem. The Prophet Yeshaya exhorts the Jewish People, "דַּרְשׁוּהוּ בְּהִיְוֹתוֹ קְרוֹב", seek Hashem when he can be found, call out to him when he is near. The Gemara¹ notes, that this refers to the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah – the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur - when Hashem is especially close to us.

On Shabbos Shuva, the Shabbos right after Rosh Hashana, we find ourselves in Gan Eden, blissfully nestled close to Hashem. If we honor the Shabbos, it will plead and advocate on our behalf.

Submitting ourselves to Hashem

During this period, when Hashem created the universe, we reaffirm our loyalty to his sovereignty and focus on submitting ourselves to Him. As discussed in parshas Ekev and Re'eh, the period between Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur is compared to the Bais HaMikdash. Just as the Bais HaMikdash was the place everybody came to bow and surrender themselves before Hashem, so too, the Aseres Yemei Teshuvah are the time we focus on submitting ourselves to his reign.

We would have expected that during these awesome days we would be obligated to make the journey to Bais HaMikdash. However, we are not. We do not need to ascend to the Bais HaMikdash, because the Bais HaMikdash descends to each one of us.

Before beginning the Shacharis prayers on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, the Chazan sings "HaMelech," proclaiming Hashem as king. He does this in his place and only afterwards comes to the Amud to lead the congregation in prayer. This symbolizes that on Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur we do not need to go to Hashem, Hashem comes to us; the Bais HaMikdash comes to us.

Bringing Others Under the Malchus - Sovereignty - of Hashem

Every Jewish soul is intertwined and has an effect on other souls. When a person surrenders himself to G-d, all the souls that are connected to him will feel a desire to draw near to holiness.

Just in the wilderness there were Jews who were leaders of ten people, leaders of a hundred, and leaders of a thousand, so too there are souls who influence tens of Jews, hundreds and some affect even thousands of souls. When we surrender ourselves to the sovereignty of Hashem, we draw near tens, hundreds and perhaps thousands of others.

Nobody knows how influential his soul is. A simple, quiet, no fanfare Jew, in the corner of the Shul, who nobody pays much attention to, can be very dynamic and have an effect on thousands of people without him even being aware of it.¹

Bringing the Entire Creation Under the Malchus of Hashem

On Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur we pray, "וידע כל פעול כי אתה פעלתו", ever creation should know that you are the one who created it. By submitting ourselves to the Malchus of Hashem, we make all of creation aware of Him. "כל שִׁתָּה תַחַת רַגְלֵי־י", the animals, birds, fish etc. are all under the jurisdiction of man. Adam, the first man, called to all of nature, commanding, "בֹּאוּ נִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנִכְרַעַה נִבְרָכָה לְפָנַי ה' עֲשׂוּנִי", come, let us bow, kneel and prostrate before Hashem our G-d. By surrendering to the Malchus of Hashem, Adam brought all of creation to do so to.

R' Shaya of Tchechov once went with a group to the zoo to see the marvelous creations of Hashem. The zookeeper told him, "I can see that you are not like your father, R' Chaim of Sanz. When your father came to the zoo, all of the lions bowed before him and fled in fear."

The ferocious lion submits himself before the tzaddik who is completely humbled before Hashem because they too, recognize who created them and before whom they must pay homage too.

If we would listen to a lion roar as it hunts its meal, we would hear a mighty cry of hunger. King David heard within the roar a prayer to Hashem. הַכְּפִירִים שֹׁאֲגִים לְטֹרֶף וּלְבִקֵּשׁ מִקֵּל

¹ A person not only influences the souls under him, he also has an effect on the souls above him. If he sins, Heaven Forbid, he pulls down his leader, whether he is aware of him or not. When facing temptation, a person should strengthen himself by remembering that his leader will be negatively affected and will lose part of his ability to further influence his students.

"אָקלם, the young lions roar for prey, and to ask Hashem for food. Even the lion knows that it is dependent upon Hashem.

The Shirah of the Dog

Perek Shirah lists the shirah (song) each creature sings to Hashem. The verse, באו נשתחוה ונכרעה etc, is listed as the shirah of the dog. Why did Adam specifically choose the shirah of the dog to inspire all of creation to sing before Hashem?

There is no more offensive insult than, "You dog!" Why should a person feel slighted if he is called a dog? Dog is Man's best friend!

Every creature naturally shuns submission to Man. They want to submit to Hashem, not to a human being. The dog is an exception. When it sees its master it runs to him, licks him and totally surrenders itself to him. It is very lowly to completely defer to a human being. Every person should have self-esteem as an independent creation of Hashem.¹

When Hashem revealed himself to us at Mount Sinai, the first words he told us were, "I am Hashem your G-d that took you out of Egypt." The Zohar explains, you are no longer subjugated under human masters; you are free to surrender to Hashem.

The dog by its complete dependence upon man shows irreverence for the sovereignty of the Al-Mighty. Therefore, Evil is represented by the dog. There were tzaddikim who were careful not to even say the word כלב, dog, and would say instead – כף, למד –

"והכלבים עזי נפש", dogs are impudent. עז פנים לגיהנום is a sign of impurity. עז פנים לגיהנום, the insolent go to Gehinom. עזות is a lack of recognition for one's superiors. The dog does not recognize that it must submit before Hashem, its creator.²

Adam chose the song of the dog in order to bring the entire creation, down to the impudent, lowly dog under the dominion of Hashem. The dog will sing its shirah of באו נשתחוה when it will achieve spiritual rectification with the coming of Mashiach. Then it will recognize that submission and self-surrender are appropriate before Hashem only. The dog will submit to Hashem and exhort all of creation to do likewise.

Yom Kippur and Immersing in a Mikvah

There is a Halacha that one should immerse in a Mikvah on the eve of Yom Kippur.³ The most important part of immersing in a Mikvah is to bend down into the water, to completely surrender oneself before the holy names of Hashem of which the waters of the Mikvah are comprised. (This is elaborated upon in our essay on Mikvah.)

As one puts his head beneath the water, he symbolically gives up his life to Hashem as a person cannot live under water. Thereby he nullifies himself. Upon emerging from the

² There is a segulah from R' Shmshon of Astropole for one who is attacked by a dog. He should say to the dog, "I have within me 716 bones of holiness and you have within you 716 bones of impurity. My 716 bones of holiness should overpower and subdue your 716 bones of impurity." He finds this hinted to in the verse, (תהלים פ' כ"ב) אספר כל (הצילה וכו' מיד כלב יחדתי. אספר כל) "הצילה וכו' מיד כלב יחדתי. אספר כל" (תהלים פ' כ"ב) "הצילה וכו' מיד כלב יחדתי. אספר כל" "עצמותי", rescue my soul from the dog. I will count all of my bones.

"לב טהר ברא" לבי אלקים" create a pure heart for me, is טבל, immerse.

The essence of Yom Kippur is the secret of Mikvah. There are forty days from Rosh Chodesh Elul until Yom Kippur. These correspond to the forty Sa'ah (a measurement) of water which a kosher Mikvah requires. Each day is another Sa'ah. Yom Kippur completes the Mikvah. On Yom Kippur we immerse in this sublime Mikvah and emerge pure.

What is the Mikvah of Yom Kippur? "מקוה ישראל ה'יב", the Mikvah of the Jewish people is Hashem. On Yom Kippur, we surrender ourselves to Hashem and thereby we are purified.

ונזכה לתשובה שלימה ולגאולה קרובה
May we merit a complete repentance, and a speedy redemption

^א תהלים קד:כט

^ב רש"י לב:מד

^ג ישעיה נה:ו

^ד ר"ה יח:א

^ה תהלים ח:ז

^ו תהלים צה:ו

^ז תהלים קד:קא

^ח מהר"ל

^ט ישעיה נו:יא

^י או"ח ס' תר"ו ס' ד'

^{יא} תהלים נא:יב

^{יב} ירמיהו יז:יג