

## Between *Malchus* and *Adnus*

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We enter Rosh Hashanah with the sense that *teshuva* and bettering our actions are the broad theme of these days. Indeed, Rosh Hashanah is the first of the *asseres yemei teshuva*. Yet, as we keep davening, we rarely find any mention of sin, nor any type of repentance per se. As a matter of fact, it is prohibited to mention sin or sinning in the davening of Rosh Hashanah. This really leaves us bewildered as to the connection of this day to the process of *teshuva*.

We speak a lot about Hashem as “king”, and Rosh Hashana as the day of coronating the king. It is something that leaves us a bit puzzled. Does this mean just “to believe in Hashem”? Does this mean just obeying His orders? How does this differ from Hashem as master [*Adon*] of the world, and thereby having the right to tell us what to do?

To fully understand the meaning of Rosh Hashanah, we need to take a second look at the concept of Hashem as “monarch”, as opposed to a “master”. A master is someone who owns a slave, or in a more benign version an employer and employee. The subordination of the employee or servant is simply there to bring benefit to the master. By either having acquired the servant by force or the employee by money, he now can dictate to the servant/employee what it is that he is to do, and it is all there for the benefit of the master.

But that is not the concept of a monarch. The Rambam states that “the monarch’s heart is the very heart of the nation” (*Hilchos Melachim* 3:6). What this means is that just as an individual person is considered such by having many parts working in excruciating tandem to create one whole person, so too a nation has many parts and pieces that must come together as one. An individual person has a mind and heart that have the vision and understanding, and they then instruct the hands and feet to accomplish the common goal. All of that together is a whole person.

This is similarly true of a society. A society where each person has their own goals and visions and desires yet comes together for things of common benefit is a very nice society. But it is not a people and not a nation. It is only when there is a commonality of being and vision that they can begin to become a nation. A nation needs to have a leader who provides the vision and guidance for all the other parts to realize their common dream.

Israel is the nation of Hashem, meaning it is the nation that understands that its essence is to bring out and reflect Hashem's greatness in this world. This nation is formed by people who understand this and want to contribute their very being for this aspiration. It also needs someone to be the heart and mind, whose understanding and vision brings this into focus, and then the rest of the nation falls in line, each contributing their own share to this common vision. That is what monarchy is all about, and that is why we pray to restore the monarchy of Dovid Hamelech.

Rosh Hashanah is the beginning of man. Way before we deal with the bits and pieces of our performance, we need to put down the goal of ourselves as humans. If a person's goal is some sort of pleasure or personal achievement, then he could technically be a Torah abiding person, but he's not part of that big picture. He may be doing the *mitzvos*, and staying away from *aveiros*, but it has nothing to do with *malchus Shomayim*. Rosh Hashanah we start by putting down the framework of our actions and aspirations as part of *malchus Shomayim*. The world is meant to be a “kingdom”, meaning a place where all the pieces come together to realize this *malchus Shomayim*. Without crowning Hashem as our king, we

really are missing the single most important part of changing ourselves. We are meant to make a statement that we recognize all of this world as being parts of a monarchy. It is a place that has one vision and focus, implemented by the contribution of each person giving what they possess for this *malchus*. This comes before Yom Kippur.

This is also the reason why the gemara (Rosh Hashana 32b) rules that the verse of "*Shema Yisroel*" may count towards *malchiyos*. Even though Hashem as king is not mentioned explicitly, but the idea of "*echad*"- oneness- is really an expression of what *malchus* is all about. *Malchus* is the mechanism that creates a unity of everything, the "*echad*". Without *malchus* we have many bits and pieces but no cohesive whole.

Rosh Hashanah coming first in the days of *teshuva* gives us a very different picture of what *teshuva* is all about. Yes, we have done wrong, and yes, there are consequences, But those are particular items. The big question, however, is what is the framework under which all my activities are subsumed. Even believing in reward and punishment still does not ensure that my purpose in keeping Torah isn't for personal gain or loss. My keeping of Torah needs to be seen as part of the big world, bringing *malchus Shomayim* back together.

If we understand the point of *malchus* on Rosh Hashanah, we will be able to structure our life appropriately and allocate our resources and deeds to one purpose: *malchus*.