

Rosh Hashana / ראש השנה

The Teshuva of Rosh Hashana

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Toras Avigdor

Adapted from the teachings
of Rav Avigdor Miller zt"l

Junior

First Day of Rosh Hashana - after davening

Yitzy and Shimmy waited patiently for Totty to finish saying Shir Shel Yom.

“Gut Yuntif, boys,” Totty smiled as he closed his machzor and they walked out of shul together. “How did you enjoy the davening?”

“It was amazing, Totty!” Yitzy said. “The baalei tefillah sang so beautifully and it really made the words come alive. I feel now more than ever that Hashem really is our King.”

“Yeah it was so special,” agreed Shimmy. “But I have a question. My rebbi told us that Rosh Hashanah is the first day of the Aseres Yemei Teshuva. But we don’t do any teshuva on Rosh Hashanah. We just say over and over again Hashem Melech, Hashem Moloch, Hashem Yimloch L’olam Va’ed. What does that have to do with teshuva? And also, why does Hashem need us to tell him that He is the King? It’s not like anyone else can be King besides him. And to say it over and over again? Why can’t we just say it a few times instead of repeating over and over again for hours?”



Totty adjusted the belt of his kittel as they took a shortcut through a path in the park. “That’s a great question, Shimmy! Rosh Hashanah is Yom HaDin - we’re being judged! So we would think that the only thing we should be doing on Rosh Hashanah is teshuva. And yet, we instead spend the day davening that He should become our King.

“You know, I heard this question myself from Harav Avigdor Miller Zt”l at one of his Thursday night drashos. And he said the answer is that saying Hashem is our King is the biggest teshuva we can do! Because reminding ourselves that Hashem is our King is to remind ourselves that nothing in this world is important except for him. Money, cars, fancy silverware - it’s all nothing. Hashem is the only One that matters.”

Totty paused as they approached the monkey bars and slides. There on the bench was Mommy waiting for them, as Basya was trying to help little Yaeli climb the rope ladder. She was managing to get up the first couple steps, but then each time she would lose her footing and tumble into Basya’s arms.

“Gut Yuntif,” Tatty warmly greeted the rest of the family. “I think little Yaeli is helping us answer another question.”

Everyone looked at Totty in confusion as he continued. “I was just explaining to Shimmy how saying Hashem is our King is the best form of teshuva. But he also asked why we need to say it over and over.

“Take a look at Yaeli, Shimmy. Look how many times she is trying to climb that rope ladder? Why does she keep doing it?”

“Because she’s trying to learn how to climb,” said Shimmy. “If she does it over and over and over again, then she will learn how to do it.”

“Exactly!” Totty exclaimed as Basya scooped up Yaeli and the family began to finish their walk home. “And that’s why we need to say over and over again that Hashem is our King. It’s not enough to just say it once. We are so used to all of the gashmiyus around us that it’s hard for us to really know that Hashem is actually our King and the most important One in our lives. So we need to practice in order to learn it well enough that it is actually real to us. And that’s why we spend the whole day repeating that “Hashem is our King, Hashem has been our King, Hashem should be our King forever.” And the more we get that message into our heads, the more we deserve to have a good year of Life!”

Have A Wonderful Yom Tov!

Let’s Review:

- Why do we do teshuva on Rosh Hashana?
- How do we do teshuva on Rosh Hashana?



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