

הכנה לראש השנה

מורינו ראש הישיבה הגהר"ר אהרן פלדמן שליט"א

From the start of *Elul* until after *Shemini Atzeres* we say a *kapitel* of Tehillim (27) every morning and every evening after davening. This is the *kapitel* of “*LeDovid Hashem Ori*.” The reason that the *poskim* give as to why we say this *kapitel* is because the *Midrash* says, “*Ori zu Rosh Hashanah, Yish'i zu Yom Kippur*.”

It is difficult to say that because of this *remez* we would add a *kapitel* to the end of davening for all these days. It must be that there is an intrinsic relationship between this *kapitel* and the *Yomim Noraim*. What is this connection?

The *posuk* speaks of Dovid HaMelech in *tzaros*. “*Evil people come close to me to eat up my flesh, my enemies, they fall*.” Why do I merit to be saved? “*Achas sho'alti mei'eis Hashem, osah avakesh: Shivti b'veis Hashem kol yemei chayay lachazos b'noam Hashem u'levaker b'heichalo*.” Because Dovid Hamelech asked Hashem for one thing, to dwell in the house of Hashem all the days of his life, he merited salvation

In other words, bringing home to ourselves what our purpose in life is, that our purpose is “*Shivti b'veis Hashem*” is the key to have Hashem save us from *tzaros*. These words are a *moshol* for feeling a closeness to *HaKadosh Boruch Hu*, gained by performing His *mitzvos* and learning Torah. “...*To see the pleasantness of Hashem and to visit His palace*,” that is my purpose in life. Everything that I do is to come closer to that goal. Because that is what I believe my goal is, my enemies will not be able to eat my flesh.

This is very much related to the *Yomim Noraim*. The whole idea of the *Yomim Noraim* is that a person should begin to think what his purpose in life is. This is presented in the *tefilah* of “*U'vechein tayn pachdecha Hashem Elokeinu...*,” where we ask that all of mankind should fear *HaKadosh Boruch Hu* and recognize this to be their purpose. We are *mispallel* that mankind recognize that they were created to serve *HaKadosh Boruch Hu*.

Because *Rosh Hashanah* is the time of creation of Man, therefore Man must introspect and bring home to himself why he was created. To the extent that he recognizes this, the enemies around him will fall and the *din* which he should receive for his *aveiros* will all fall away because of this awareness of his purpose in life.

It sounds like a tall order to recognize one's purpose in life. The *Yetzer Hara* doesn't permit one to think of these ideas. It argues, “Oh, that's for big *tzadikkim*, not for me.” It says this because it is afraid of *Kabolas Ol Malchus Shomayim*. *Chazal* tell us that at the time of *Matan Torah*, the body of the Jews jumped back twelve *mil* outside of *Machane Yisroel* because they were frightened to receive the Torah. They had to be brought back by *malochim*. The natural reaction of a person, due to his *Yetzer Hara*, is to be afraid of *Kabolas Ol Malchus Shomayim*. Yet, this is his *avodah*— to accept *Ol Malchus Shomayim*.

The reason we should be thinking of what our purpose in life is, is not merely because of our *Olam Haba*. “*Lachazos b'noam Hashem u'levaker b'heichalo*” does not necessarily mean in *Olam Haba*. Rather, this *avodah* is for a person's benefit in this world.

Imagine someone's wheel falls off his car and he doesn't have a replacement but another person offers to lend him his. It's from a different model and it will only work for one hundred miles until he can reach a gas station to buy the proper replacement. The wheel will eventually wear out and become useless because the manufacturer specifications that his car requires are not in that wheel.

So too, there are manufacturer specifications for human life and those specifications are what the Torah prescribes. The Torah tells a person how he should live and what will make him successful in

living a happy life. The only thing which will give us a happy life for the long term is the “manufacturer’s specifications.” Those specifications say, “*Shivti b’veis Hashem kol yemei chayay*”-- to use our lives to come closer to Hashem; if we do this, then not only will we gain *Olam Haba* but we will also have *Olam Hazeh*.

Last week, a young therapist who just started his practice asked me, “Can you give me some *eitzos* for how I can make people happy? How can I help them?” I told him that the only way to make people happy is by having them live according to their purpose in life. Besides that, it’s hopeless. I told him that there could be a stop-gap measure, something that will help them run fifty or one hundred miles, but in the end their lives will break down unless they are able to accept upon themselves the *tachlis* of their lives. The *tachlis* of their lives is not themselves, rather it is thinking about others and *Emunah* and *Bitachon* in *HaKadosh Boruch Hu*- and then the world will be a happy one.

Chazal tell us a story of R. Yanai who once went out into the market and heard a peddler crying out, “Who wants life?” R. Yanai told him “Yes,” he would like to buy it. The peddler proceeded to tell him that the *posuk* (*Tehillim 34: 13-15*) says, “*Mi ho’ish hehofetz chaim, ohev yomim lir’os tov; netzor leshonecha mayra u’sfasecha medaber mirma; sur mayra va’aseh tov bakesh shalom v’rodfehu.*” R. Yanai declared that he had never heard these *pesukim* explained in such a way before he heard this from the peddler.

How do we understand this? R. Yanai must have said this *kapitel* of *Tehillim* numerous times before, as we say it every Shabbos in *Pesukei d’Zimrah*. What was the *chiddush* of this peddler in these *pesukim* that R. Yanai was so impressed by?

The answer is that usually we read this *posuk* and interpret it as referring to *Olam Haba*. The peddler was saying, “I’m standing here in the middle of the market where there are all the goods of this world– the food, the elegant clothing, and the gadgets– that people buy themselves to try to make their lives happy. I’m telling you that the real ultimate commodity for this world that people should acquire is ‘*sur mayra va’aseh tov bakesh shalom v’rodfehu.*’ That’s what is going to give you life in this world.” R. Yanai understood the peddler’s message that the ultimate purchase is “*sur mayra v’aseh tov.*” Material goods will only work temporarily, but they don’t meet the manufacturer specifications and a person will end up depressed and unhappy. The only way to be happy in this world is by “*sur mayra v’aseh tov.*”

That is what Rosh Hashana is. *Yomim Noraim* are really *yomim* that are *smeichim*. The *Gemara* says that really, we ought to say *Hallel* on Rosh Hashana, and it is only because *sifrei chayim v’sifrei meisim* are *munachim lifonov* that we don’t. It’s a time of joy to confront ourselves and turn to what our true purpose is in life.

That is the *kapitel* of *Tehillim* we say every morning and night, and it should make us think what our *tachlis* in life is– *Shivti b’veis Hashem kol yemay chayay*. We sit in yeshiva, and when we are no longer in yeshiva we sit vicariously in yeshiva and remind ourselves what it is to sit and learn three *sedorim* a day and to become closer to *HaKadosh Boruch Hu* – and to try to get as close as possible to that. To learn Torah, to work on our *middos* and *avodas Hashem* and our *davening*– that is true *Olam Hazeh*

May Hashem *bentch* all of you to always be sitting *b’veis Hashem kol yemei chayeichem, lachazos b’noam Hashem u’levaker b’heichalo*.