

שחרית

זכרינו לחיים

This is the first addition we have to the tefila of Rosh Hashana. We introduce here the idea of חיים, life. R. Moshe d'Leon says we must understand what exactly we are asking for. Most opinions hold that we are asking on Rosh Hashana for physical life, our most basic necessity. The Tosafot (Rosh Hashana 16b) say we are asking for life in the world to come.

R. Moshe d'Leon presents a problem- The Talmud Brachos instructs that one may not ask for personal requests in the first three brachos of the amidah. Yet here on Rosh Hashana, we are asking for life - obviously a personal request - in the first bracha of the amidah.

Most Rishonim respond by saying that the communal request for life overrides this prohibition. R. Moshe d'Leon offers a novel explanation. He explains that the request on Rosh Hashana for חיים, life, is not for our physical life, or for life in the world to come; rather for a spiritual connection with Hashem now, in this world. It is a desire to restore our connection to Hashem, the source of our "real" life: our spiritual existence. The whole purpose of the first three

brachos of tefila, in general, are to establish a spiritual connection with Hashem before we ask for our personal needs. Therefore, asking for this type of חיים, life, to reconnect to Hashem, fits perfectly into the theme of the first three brachos. It is just another way of seeking a connection with Hashem.

ספר החיים

Every time חיים, life, is mentioned on Rosh Hashana, we are asking for a connection with Hashem, the source of spiritual life. The Sefer HaChayim is not the same as the book mentioned in the gemara, where you are written either as a tzaddik (who will live), a rasha (who will die), or a beinoni (who will hang undecided until Yom Kippur). Our judgment involves our physical life, but our tefillos concern not what will happen in our physical life, but in our spiritual life. The book of life, Sefer HaChayim, is a book of people searching for a connection with Hashem. On the Rosh Hashana, when Hashem is closest, we are not just focused on a request for physical life, but on a great opportunity to increase our spiritual life.

מי כמוך אב הרחמים

When we ask for life, why do we request this from אב הרחמים "merciful Father"? It would seem

more appropriate to refer to Hashem in His role as king, or as a judge to grant life, rather than as a father.

If we were asking for physical life, it would be similar to a servant asking a king, or a defendant asking a judge to grant his life. However, since the request is for "חיים," meaning a spiritual connection or relationship, then it is appropriate to ask the "merciful Father". Typically, any son would ask his father for a closer relationship. It would be illogical to ask Hashem in His role as King or Judge for a closer relationship.

ובכן

R. Moshe d'Leon explains that there is a series of three "ובכן"s here: 1) ובכן תן (2) ובכן תן פחדך (3) ובכן צדיקים כבוד.

(It is interesting to note that R. Moshe is one of the few rishonim who had this nusach, which is the prevailing nusach today.)

R. Moshe d'Leon says that the word "ובכן" itself is a reference to the name of Hashem containing 72 letters, which is in fact the gematria of the letters in "ובכן". The way in which we relate to Hashem on this day is through the mystical and holy 72-letter name of Hashem, while the rest of the year we relate through the 4-letter name.

ובכן תן פחדך

In whom does Hashem put His fear on Rosh Hashana?

The Chachmei Ashkenaz say that this is a request for the fear that Hashem will eventually put into the nations of the world. Thus, the focus of the tefila now is on the future, that in the future redemption all the nations of the world will fear Hashem. When the nations fear Hashem, the glory will return to Am Yisroel. Therefore, this is followed by **ובכן תן כבוד לעמך** – You shall restore glory to Your nation.

R. Yehuda HaChassid offers a different explanation. He feels that “ובכן תן פחדך” is asking Hashem to put fear of Him into each of us. Only by Hashem putting His fear in us will we repent and succeed in doing teshuva. This leads to the next verse, **ובכן תן כבוד לעמך**. Glory can be restored to Klal Yisrael only when we are successful in doing teshuva.

According to R. Moshe d’Leon, the **פחד**, fear, described above is a constant fear which relates both to the nations of the world in general, and to Am Yisroel. It is one of the attributes which Hashem uses to relate to the world all the time. In our daily tefila, in the first three brachos we relate to Hashem through **תפארת**, **גבורה**, **חסד**, and **פחד**. In

our daily tefilos, in the first bracha, Avos, we relate to Hashem as He who acts toward us with kindness, חסד, and remembers the kindness of the Avos. In the second bracha, Gevuros, we relate to the aspect of Hashem's Tzimztum, restriction, Hashem's hidden judgment. (Later we will discuss why healing and saving are part of this bracha). In the third bracha, Kedushos, both aspects are combined and merge into תפארת.

On Rosh Hashana, all three aspects are still present; it is only that the order and focus change. This change in focus, will be expressed in the positioning of the three ובכן phrases, which correspond to the three midos of חסד, גבורה and תפארת.

On Rosh Hashanah the focus of the day is דין, judgment. Therefore, instead of starting with the ובכן phrase which corresponds to חסד (as might have been done during the rest of the year), the process begins with the ובכן phrase which references judgment- gevurah or דין. The first ובכן therefore refers to the פחד, the fear of judgment.

The next two ובכן phrases explain how Hashem's chessed and rachamim are especially directed at am yisroel; ובכן תן כבוד describes how Hashem's chessed flows to am yisroel regardless of their merit, and ובכן צדיקים describes Hashem's

rachamim where the mercy is dependent on the righteousness of the people.

Returning now to **ובכן תן פחדך** (the first of the **ובכן** trio), we see that there are three different types of fear mentioned: **פחד, אימה, יראה**. According to R. Moshe d'Leon, each represents a different aspect of fear.

פחד is the fear of harsh judgment (**דין הקשה**), the sense that immediate harm will come to the person. It is felt even more on Rosh Hashanah, since it is the **yom ha'din** and the **shechinah** is present. Feeling that Hashem is judging you produces a sense of fear- who can stand worthy before Hashem?

אימה is a fear produced by lenient judgment (**דין** (**הרפה**) , a judgment balanced by **chesed**. It is not the sense of feeling the sharp sword at your throat, since the king isn't imminently going to chop off your head. Rather, it is the knowledge that the judgment will be meted out, albeit in an attenuated fashion, and so you experience a vague sense of uneasiness, of uncertainty about the future.

יראה is related to the word "ראה", seeing. Once one appreciates and understands who the Creator is, he rationally comes to the realization that he

should have fear and respect for God's judgment. This fear in turn can operate on two different sublevels: fear of offending Hashem, who is so great, **יראת התרוממות**, and the lower level of fearing punishment, **יראת חטא**.

ובכן תן כבוד

As we explained earlier, this **ובכן** describes the chessed that Hashem does for us, which brings us simcha. R. Moshe d'Leon explains **שמחה לארצך**, happiness to your lands, in that the only true sense of simcha emanates from a simcha in Eretz Yisrael, the simcha that comes from being in the Eretz Ha'Kedoshah and close to the shechina. All the descriptions here, **ששון לעירך ועריכת נר לבן**, **יש** etc. – are all ways that the shechina is closer to us. The description here is not just a futuristic description of the Geulah Ha'asida, but the chessed we feel from the shechina reaching out and wanting to be closer to us. This is symbolized by Eretz Yisrael being our home, since that is where the shechina emanates from.

ובכן צדיקים

Here we combine the above two concepts of the great awe of Hashem's presence, and the warm feeling of the shechina at the same time. R. Moshe d'Leon has a novel explanation of how they blend

together. On Rosh Hashanah we see that the Final Redemption will not come just through fear and not solely from love. Both love and fear are necessary, and neither is enough on its own. Fear can force an action, but it cannot result in **ויעשו** **כלם** **אגודה** **אחת** **לעשות** **רצונך** **בלבב** **שלם** "serving with a full heart", which requires a commitment from one's heart. It is only the combined feeling of love and fear together that will result in the ultimate redemption.

אתה בחרתנו

R. Moshe d'Leon has a novel interpretation of **ורוממתנו מכל הלשונות** "and You raised us up from all other nations". The usual interpretation is that Hashem lifted us up, but R. Moshe interprets it that we lift Hashem with our mouths, by praising Him. The way He raised us up is by giving us the ability to praise Hashem as the malachim do, **כשם** **שמקדישים** **אותו** **בשמי** **מרום**. It is because we have the ability to exalt Hashem that we ourselves are raised up.

יעלה ויבוא

The usual interpretation of **יעלה ויבוא** is that our remembrance, and that of our fathers and of Yerushalayim, should come before the shechina. R. Moshe d'Leon interprets it totally differently,

meaning that Hashem's glory should be elevated until it overflows and rains down on us. Basically, it is a description of the shefah of Hashem flowing from the hidden recesses, until it becomes revealed.

והשיאנו ה' אלהינו את ברכת מועדך

The Avudraham explains that there are many interpretations of this section. Some commentators explain the phrase והשיאנו ה' אלהינו to mean that Hashem will uplift us, either spiritually or intellectually, or by remembering us for good. But the Avudraham has a problem with all of these interpretations, for how can we then explain the next phrase "את ברכת מועדך"? If והשיאנו ה' אלהינו already expresses a complete thought, then את ברכת מועדך seems to be a sentence fragment.

Because of this difficulty, the Avudraham instead interprets the phrase as a single unit: let Hashem bestow (השיאנו) the blessing of the holidays (את ברכת מועדך) upon us. According to the Avudraham, the blessings of the holiday are physical presents which parents give to children. While this explanation fits the words of the prayer, it does not really explain how we are uplifted, the concept stressed by the other rishonim.

Based on the words of R. Moshe d'Leon, we can offer a novel interpretation: Hashem will uplift us by bestowing his bracha, a physical and spiritual entity, upon us. The way He bestows his bracha is by connecting to us. We aren't asking directly for a physical gift, but to be connected to Hashem. Once we are connected to Hashem, the physical gift will flow automatically.

תקיעת שופר

We hear 3 different sounds from the shofar. R. Moshe deLeon explains the concept behind each one. [see the Hebrew section footnote 89].

תקיעה – The straight sound of the shofar represents the middah of רחמים, mercy. The tekia precedes and follows the teruah and shevarim, to soften the aspect of judgment which is represented by them.

תרועה – The constant but broken sound of the shofar represents the middah of דין הקשה, harsh judgment. The harsh aspect is symbolized by the sound not having any breaks- so that it is constant judgment.

שברים – The sound broken into three segments represents the middah of דין הרפה, lenient judgment. It is symbolized by the breaks, to show that suffering is not constant, but we have a respite between suffering.