

Wake Up

“What is the prognosis, doctor? Will my only son, the Royal Prince ever rise from this bed?”

“Your Royal Highness, I have good news and bad news.”

“Let me hear the bad news first, doctor.”

“Your Excellency’s son has a very serious disease. His life is in danger.”

“I see. I was afraid of that. What is the good news? Is there anything that can be done for him?”

“Yes, Your Highness. If he cuts down his sleep to the absolute minimum, we may be able to save his life. Your Highness just has to make sure that he does not sleep any more than is absolutely necessary.”

“Oy he looks so tired. Can’t I just let him sleep?”

“I’m afraid not, Your Excellency.”

“I see. Thank you very much, doctor.”

And so, with a heavy heart, the King issued orders for his servants to remove the bed from the Royal Prince’s room. He would sleep on the cold floor. That would surely keep him awake.

After the servants carried out the bed, the Prince sat down on the floor, wondering what to do. He was so tired. Yet, he had no bed to sleep on. Before long, fatigue overcame him and he fell fast asleep on the floor. The servants found him and alerted the King immediately.

“What can we do to keep him awake?”

The King’s advisers had some ideas. The King tried them, and they all failed. He was exasperated. How could he save his only son?

“Very well. It pains me very much, however, we have no choice. Bring sharp knives and swords into the Prince’s room and spread them all over the floor. The blades will cause him sharp pain, but at least it will be impossible for him to sleep.”

This is a parable from Rav Chaim Volozhin zt”l. Hashem is the King, and Klal Yisrael is His precious son. When we were living in our Land with the Beis HaMikdash, everything was quiet and secure. We fell asleep and were not conscious of the mitzvah of *tshuva*. Therefore, Hashem tried to wake us up. He destroyed the Beis HaMikdash and exiled us from the Land. Yet, we still slept on, unaware of *tshuva*. Therefore He must bring war and suffering upon us to wake us from our

spiritual sleep.

Kinderlach . . .

It’s time to wake up. The alarm clock has rung several times already. It has been ringing for the past 2000 years.

“Wake up, My dear children, wake up. Come back to Me. Turn your hearts away from all of the falseness. Love Me with all of your heart.

Things will be good for you in both worlds.” Kinderlach let the shofar blast wake you up. Let it pierce your heart. B’ezras Hashem we will no longer need the other type of wakeup call.



Here And Now

“May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year and a good and peaceful life, immediately in the book of perfect tsaddikim.”

“Amen. That is quite a blessing that you gave me.”

“You deserve nothing less.”

“Thank you. Shall I take it literally?”

“Why not?”

“You said that I should be inscribed in the book of perfect tsaddikim. Do you really expect me to be a perfect tzaddik this year?”

“Why not?”

“Is it realistic that from this moment onward I perform all of my mitzvos perfectly, and do not sin at all?”

“Definitely. That is what Rosh Hashanah is all about. Hashem judges us on Rosh Hashanah as we are now.

If you are a perfect tzaddik on Rosh Hashanah, you will be written into the book of perfect tsaddikim.”

“How do you know that?”

“Rav Nosson Meir Wachtfogel zt”l explains in his sefer ‘Leket Reshimos’, that the prayers of the day make no mention of sins, or forgiveness. Only Hashem and His Kingdom. We speak only about Him and His Greatness. For two days He says, ‘Come and join Me in My Palace. Forget about yourself and be with Me. Forget about your past. Don’t think about the future. Just think about Me.’”

“I am beginning to understand. That is the life of a tzaddik. He is always with Hashem. He acts differently, because he is with Hashem. Who could dream of committing a sin in front of Hashem?”

“Precisely.”

“These are our days of Royalty. We are in the Royal Palace, behaving as Royal Subjects, therefore we will immediately be judged as such and written into the book of perfect tsaddikim.”

“Amen.”

Kinderlach . . .

“Let us go on a trip this Rosh Hashanah. Where? To Hashem’s Palace. Leave your past behind you. Don’t think about the future. Just concentrate on the prayers of the day. Think about Hashem and His Glory. Think about how wonderful it would be if everyone recognized Him and accepted His rule. He would then reveal Himself in the world. Let His Presence fill you with spiritual energy. When you realize that you are in the presence of the King, you will automatically become a new person. A perfect tzaddik.

Rosh Hashanah - questions

- Name four minhagim of Erev Rosh Hashanah (Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim 581)
- What additions do we make to Shmoneh Esrei during “aseres yimei tshuva”? (ibid. 582:1,3)
- What special foods do we eat on Rosh Hashanah? (ibid. 583)
- Is the chazzan allowed to blow the shofar? (ibid. 585:4)
- Why do we use a ram’s horn for the shofar? (ibid. 585:6 Mishna Breura 2)
- Can one perform a melacha on Yom Tov in order to bring the shofar? (ibid. 586:21)
- Can we blow the shofar at night? (ibid. 588:1)
- Do you get the mitzvah of shofar if you blow it to make music? (ibid. 589:8)