

## Rosh Hashanah II

The prayers in the סדור, *Siddur*, the Jewish prayer book, were composed by the Men of the Great Assembly, the אנשי כנסת הגדולה. This esteemed assemblage, was comprised of 120 holy Rabbis many of whom were also prophets. When they saw the era of prophesy coming to an end, they saw the need to compose a formal prayer book that would contain the deep and powerful prayers, which would penetrate the heavens, and make their way straight to Hashem, when properly recited.

There are different components to the prayers, however, the centerpiece of all the prayers and the essential act of praying takes place when one recites the עמידה, *Amida*, the silent devotion. All prayers up to that point, are designed to prepare us for that ultimate prayer the *Amida*, the silent devotion. In this prayer we ask Hashem for all our needs. Our Sages teach us, that the Men of the Great Assembly incorporated into the words of the *Amida*, any possible need that a person could ever have, until the end of time. This means to say, that if a person has a specific need, as he prays, he should be alert to the meanings of the words of the prayers, because, somewhere in those words he will find a reference to his need. It is for this reason, that the words in the *Siddur* are sacrosanct, never to be modified. They were composed with the utmost care and precision, with the holiest thoughts and meanings possible.

For the ten days beginning with Rosh Hashana and ending with Yom Kippur, the Sages made two small but significant changes to two of the standard blessings which are in every *Amida*. I will only discuss the first one here.

The first change occurs in the third blessing which is the same in every single *Amida*.

אַתָּה קָדוֹשׁ וְשִׁמְךָ קָדוֹשׁ וְקְדוּשֵׁים בְּכָל יוֹם וְהַלְלוּךָ סְלָה :  
בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ. הַקַּל (בַּעֲשֵׂיית הַמְלֶכֶת) הַקָּדוֹשׁ :

*You are holy, and Your Name is holy, and holy ones praise You every day, forever.*

*Blessed are You Hashem, the holy G-d.*

Starting with Rosh Hashana and ending with Yom Kippur, to emphasize to us and to help us maintain awareness of the fact, that during these ten days, Hashem is presiding over the world in the mode of King and is judging us, the word מֶלֶךְ, *king*, is substituted for the name G-d. Thus, the blessing concludes,

*Blessed are You Hashem the Holy King. (הַמֶּלֶךְ הַקָּדוֹשׁ)*

So important is this change to the prayers that if a person followed his habit and concluded the blessing the way he does the rest of the year, he would have to go back to the beginning of the *Amida* and start again from the beginning. If he only realized this after completing the entire *Amida*, he would have to repeat the entire *Amida*. The reason for this is, that if he hasn't said "the holy king," he hasn't fulfilled his obligation during these days, and it is as if he hasn't prayed at all.

In the special *Amida* for Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur, the Sages also added a group of extra lines to this third blessing. At first glance, these additions seem to have nothing to do with the theme of judgment that we associate with Rosh Hashana. However, with the deep and

penetrating wisdom of our Sages, we can see that these prayers add a very significant perspective to Rosh Hashana.

The first insertion goes like this.

וּבְכוּתוֹ פָּחַדְךָ יְדוּד אֱלֹקֵינוּ עַל כָּל מַעֲשֶׂיךָ, וְאֵימַתְךָ עַל כָּל מַה שֶּׁבְרָאתָ, וְיִירְאוּךָ כָּל הַמַּעֲשִׂים, וְיִשְׁתַּחֲווּ  
לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל הַבְּרוּאִים, וְיַעֲשׂוּ כְּלֵם אֲגָדָה אַחַת, לַעֲשׂוֹת רְצוֹנְךָ בְּלִבָּב שְׁלֵם. כְּמוֹ שֶׁיְדַעְנוּ יְדוּד אֱלֹקֵינוּ,  
שֶׁהַשִּׁלְטָן לְפָנֶיךָ, עַז בְּיָדְךָ, וְגִבּוֹרָה בְּיַמִּינֶךָ, וְשִׁמְךָ נוֹרָא עַל כָּל מַה שֶּׁבְרָאתָ :

*And so too, O Hashem our G-d, instill Your awe upon all Your works, and Your fear upon all that You have created. Let all works revere You and all creatures prostrate themselves before You. Let them all become a single society, to do Your will wholeheartedly. For as we know, Hashem our G-d, that the dominion is Yours, might is in Your (left) hand and strength is in Your right hand, and Your Name inspires awe over all that You have created.*

What is the meaning of this request? What exactly are we asking for here?

Our Sages explain.

In the world, there exist two opposite forces, good and evil. The Jewish people were chosen by Hashem to receive His Torah with the 613 mitzvot, the prescription for a holy and moral life. The nations of the world, remained with the seven laws given to Noah, which are designed to protect basic human rights, and to maintain law and order. They are, 1. To believe in Hashem the creator of the universe, 2. Not to curse Hashem, 3. Not to murder, 4. Not to steal, 5. Not to commit adultery, 6. To have a court system that enforces these laws, 7. Not to eat a piece of a living animal. The Jewish people through their adherence to the Torah and its tenets, were set to be the force of good in the world, and to inspire the rest of humanity to keep their seven commandments.

In this way, life on earth, would be perfect. The holiness from Hashem would pour forth onto the Jewish people, and from there it would trickle down to the nations of the world. All mankind would recognize Hashem as the Master of the world, and would be serving Him faithfully, each in their prescribed way; the Jewish people through the Torah and the Gentiles through keeping their seven laws.

The Torah has such a model within the Jewish people. The Jewish nation is comprised of three different groups of Jews, the Cohens, the Levites, and the Israelites. The Cohens are not allowed to own land and are dedicated through their unique mitzvot, to serve in the Holy Temple, study the Torah and teach it to the Jewish people. The Levites are also not allowed to own land, and are the assistants to the Cohens in the Holy Temple, and also teach Torah to the Jewish people. The third group, the Israelites who are the majority, and own land, work, and earn money, support the Cohens and the Levites through the gifts the Torah mandates they give them, from their profits. This system allowed the Cohens and Levites to dedicate themselves completely to the service of Hashem, and to reach the greatest spiritual heights. By example, and through their teaching, they would elevate the entire nation and keep them focused on their service to Hashem, even though they were involved in worldly matters.

The Jewish people comprise a “Kingdom of Priests.” We can conceptualize it as a pyramid with the Cohens on top, then the Levites, comprising the tip of the pyramid, and then the many Israelites forming the bottom piece.

Before giving the Jewish nation the Torah, Hashem sent Moshe to deliver a message to the Jewish people.

ספר שמות פרק יט  
(ו) וְאַתֶּם תִּהְיוּ לִי מִמְלֶכֶת כֹּהֲנִים וְגוֹי קְדוֹשׁ אֱלֹהֵי הַדְּבָרִים אֲשֶׁר תִּדְבַּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל :

*And you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. These are the words you shall speak to the Children of Israel.*

The Jewish nation are to be “a kingdom of priests”. Based on this idea, we can take this concept a step further. The three- tiered pyramid of the Cohens, Levites, and Israelites, serves as the tip of a much greater base, comprised of the other nations of the world. The Jewish nation, with the 613 mitzvot, are a holy nation and serve as the Priests to the rest of mankind. And, just as the Israelites supported the Cohens and the Levites so they could be free to do their service to Hashem, so too, the nations of the world would provide the commerce and support for the Jewish nation, allowing them to serve Hashem and do their mitzvot. Through their support of the Jewish nation, the nations of the world would also be serving Hashem. This would entitle them to receive holiness from the Jewish nation. It would trickle down to them inspiring them to lead upstanding moral lives, much like the holiness of the Cohens and Levites, trickled down to the rest of the Jewish nation to elevate them.

This model was realized during the kingdoms of King David and King Solomon. The law of the Torah was the law of the country, and the Jewish people were seen as the nation of Hashem, a mighty and powerful G-d. The Sanhedrin, the high court, presided over all judicial matters. Dignitaries from kingdoms the world over came to visit them, and all gentiles who lived in Israel were subject to the laws of the Torah.

We make many references in our prayers to מַלְכוּת בֵּית דָּוִד – *The Kingdom of King David*. It was during the reign of King David that the Kingdom of Hashem was properly established in the world. This was the model that Hashem had in mind, when He created the world.

This is also the mission of the מְשִׁיחַ בֶּן דָּוִד - *The Mashiach*. To reestablish the Kingdom of King David and restore the Glory of Hashem to the world. This is why we await the coming of Mashiach so desperately.

Unfortunately, when the Jewish people slip from their position of holiness by leaving the very source of their holiness, the holy Torah, they cease to be the force of good in the world, and everything goes haywire. Today, the pyramid is upside down. The gentile nations rule the world and the Jewish people are on the bottom. This has reversed the flow of influence. Instead of a holy flow going from Hashem to the Jewish people, and from them to the rest of the world, an unholy flow goes from the gentiles to the Jewish nation. The Jewish people become influenced, and follow the example of the gentiles, who live a materialistic life, devoid of holiness, and in denial of Hashem.

The only way to rectify this situation is to right the pyramid. To put the Jewish nation back on top so that through us, the world will once again recognize Hashem and reinstate His kingdom. What could possibly bring that about? How could such a drastic and radical change happen?

The answer is simple. Hashem could reveal Himself to the world through bringing the Mashiach, and in one instant, every single human being would wake up and see Hashem. What is behind the wholesale denial of Hashem is the fact that Hashem is hidden from us. He does such a great job of hiding Himself, that He has most of the world fooled into thinking He doesn't exist. Of course, those whose eyes are open to see Hashem, see Him in every nook and cranny! But if one does not make a point of looking for Him, he will never see Him.

Going back to the section of the prayers we quoted before, this is the request that we are making on Rosh Hashana.

*And so too, O Hashem our G-d, instill Your awe upon all Your works, and Your fear upon all that You have created. Let all works revere You and all creatures prostrate themselves before You. Let them all become a single society, to do Your will wholeheartedly.*

We are asking Hashem to bring Mashiach and to bring the world to its perfection. Please bring forth the fulfillment of Your Master Plan when *“all creatures, **Jews and non-Jews** all become a single society to do Your will wholeheartedly.”*

But why have the Men of the Great Assembly inserted this request specifically on Rosh Hashana?

On Rosh Hashana Hashem created mankind and revealed himself as King. Therefore, Rosh Hashana is the opportune time to tell our King, “We want to see You! Please, reveal Yourself once again so that the entire world will accept You as their king! After all, this was the Divine plan conceived on this very day, please bring it to fruition!”

Maybe we are asking the impossible? To this we say:

*For as we know, Hashem our G-d, that the dominion is Yours, might is in Your (left) hand and strength is in Your right hand, and Your Name inspires awe over all that You have created.*

Hashem, You answer to nobody, and if You decide it should happen, nothing can stand in Your way. Therefore, if we ask sincerely and fervently enough, Hashem will see that we have had enough, and part the curtain once and for all, so all may see Him.

The continuation of the insertion into the Rosh Hashana prayer, goes on to describe a cascade of events that will occur when Hashem reveals Himself to the world. It will all make sense to you after this preface.

There is another deep message hidden in this request that we are making of Hashem.

In Torah terminology, there is an essential difference between a מלך - which means *a king*, and a מושל - which means *a dictator*. A dictator, imposes his rule upon the people, but they do not really want him to be their ruler. On the other hand, a king is one who the people have chosen to be their sovereign.

Hashem wants specifically to be, our מלך - our king, not our dictator. Of course, Hashem could force us to serve Him and obey His every wish, but instead, He wants us to choose Him as our king. The reason for this is, true honor and reverence, cannot be mandated. They must be earned. In order for the honor we bestow upon someone to be real, it must emanate from a deep respect for that person. There is nothing more pitiful than a person in a position of authority or control who needs to demand the respect they feel they are due. Similarly, in order for our membership in Hashem's kingdom to show true honor to Hashem, we must choose to be there.

What are our choices?

Our Sages teach us that when a child is born, he is like a king. Everyone is at his beck and call trying to fulfill his every whim. Even as we grow older, we may still think of ourselves as the king of the world. A king is in complete control and does only what he wants to do. No one tells me (the king) what to do, even Hashem!.

So here is our choice. Am I going to crown myself king, and do only what I want to do, or am I going to choose Hashem as my King and honor and respect His will instead of mine?

On Rosh Hashana, I acknowledge Hashem as my King. Implicit in that, is the message that in spite of my past behavior, today, I recognize You Hashem as the real King, and I wish to join Your great kingdom.

This is the ultimate message to Hashem on Rosh Hashana, since He created the world to reveal His kingdom to mankind. And, here I am, on Rosh Hashana, telling Hashem I am prepared to live my life as part of His Kingdom.

Shana Tova Umetuka to everyone, and may we all merit to see the Kingdom of Hashem restored this year!