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Chapter One

Kingship Acceptance in Shema and on Rosh Hashanah



Section 2: Divergent Approaches to Acceptance of Hashem's Kingship

Rabbeinu Yonah writes in *Shaarei Teshuvah*,⁴ “The mitzvos of *tefillin* and *mezuzah* are positive commandments and are constituent elements of the mitzvah of acceptance of Hashem’s Kingship, which is why they appear in the *Shema* chapter.”⁵ Rabbeinu Yonah is setting forth a rule: Everything that appears in the first *Shema* chapter is a component of acceptance of Hashem’s Kingship. See the Rabbeinu Yonah in context.

מדבריו של רבנו יונה יוצא לנו כי מצות האהבה משמכת יותר לקבלת על מלכות שמים מאשר היראה, שהרי בפירוש זה של קבלת על מלכות שמים הוזהרנו רק על האהבה ולא על היראה.

One interesting outcome of Rabbeinu Yonah’s rule is that the mitzvah to love Hashem has a greater affinity to acceptance of Hashem’s Kingship than the mitzvah to revere Hashem, since the *Shema* chapter contains only the commandment to love Hashem; the commandment to revere Hashem does not appear there.

4. *Shaarei Teshuvah* 3:22. This Rabbeinu Yonah is also discussed in *Pachad Yitzchok*, *Shavuot* 23:7, *Shavuot* 30:4, *Pesach* 76:8, and *Shavuot* 25:1.

5. *Devarim* 6:4. This chapter is recited twice a day and follows the theme of its first verse: *Listen, Yisrael, Hashem is our G-d; Hashem is one*, שמע ישראל ה' אלקינו ה' אחד, — which is acceptance of Hashem’s Kingship.

It is noteworthy, however, that in the Rosh Hashanah service the situation seems to be reversed. A major objective of our Rosh Hashanah worship is acceptance of Hashem's Kingship: "The Holy One, blessed be He, said... recite before Me on Rosh Hashanah [verses making mention of] Kingship... so that your remembrance may rise favorably before Me."⁶ Yet, as is well-known, the atmosphere of the service of the day leans more heavily toward reverence than to love.⁷

We must acknowledge, then, that our spiritual focus when we accept Hashem's Kingship in *Shema* must be fundamentally different from our spiritual focus when we accept Hashem's Kingship in the *Malchiyos* service of Rosh Hashanah. This emerges as well from the origin of the Rosh Hashanah *Malchiyos* requirement, as set forth in the Gemara:⁸

"The verse states,⁹ and it shall be a remembrance... **I am Hashem, your G-d.** Whenever you observe a remembrance, *Zichronos*, accompany it with Kingship, *Malchiyos*."

Kingship in the context of Rosh Hashanah, then, is expressed in terms of "I am Hashem, your G-d."¹⁰ It should be obvious, though,

6. *Rosh Hashanah* 16a. These verses, pertaining to Hashem's Kingship, comprise the first of the three sections of the Rosh Hashanah Mussaf service, *Malchiyos*. The other two are: *Zichronos*, verses that are a remembrance of Hashem's covenant with mankind and with Yisrael throughout history; and *Shofaros*, verses pertaining to the significance and use of the *shofar*.

7. See, for example, the text of the *U'nesaneh Tokef* prayer, one of the centerpieces of the Rosh Hashanah service: "Let us proclaim the mighty holiness of this day, for it is awe-inspiring and fearsome. Thereon, Your Kingship is exalted... the angels tremble; fear and dread seize them, and they exclaim, 'The Day of Judgment is here!'"

8. *Rosh Hashanah* 32a.

9. *Bamidbar* 10:10: וְהָיָה לָכֶם לְזִכְרוֹן . . . אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֵיכֶם.

10. The verse links *Malchiyos* and *Zichronos* because of their juxtaposition in the verse, and the portion of the verse that the Gemara ascribes to *Malchiyos* is, "I am Hashem, your G-d." Thus, that statement constitutes the acceptance of Hashem's Kingship that is appropriate to Rosh Hashanah.

The name of Hashem used in the "I am Hashem" component of the "I am Hashem, your G-d" phrase is the *Havayah* name, which is spelled *yud-hei-vav-hei*; its implications are discussed in the following *Maamarim* in this volume: *Pesach* 53, 60 (at length; duplicated in *Yom Kippur* 5), 65, and *Shavuot* 25 (at length).

The name of Hashem used in the "...your G-d" component of the phrase is a

that if someone reciting the *Shema* verse omitted its final words, “Hashem is one,” ending the verse at the immediately preceding “Hashem is our G-d,”¹¹ he not only has a flawed *Shema*, his acceptance of Hashem’s Kingship, which he intended to accomplish with the first verse of *Shema*, is also flawed.¹²

Clearly, Rosh Hashanah’s rendition of acceptance of Hashem’s Kingship cannot be used as a substitute for the acceptance of Hashem’s Kingship required by *Shema*. And the Kingship acceptance dichotomy between Rosh Hashanah and *Shema* cuts both ways; the Gemara¹³ cites a difference of opinion as to whether the first *Shema* verse fulfills the *Malchiyos* requirements of Rosh Hashanah.

We see, then, that there are basic differences between the spiritual focus required when we accept Hashem’s Kingship in *Shema* and the spiritual focus required when we accept Hashem’s Kingship in the *Malchiyos* service of Rosh Hashanah.

Section 3: Bringing the Future Into the Present With Shema

What underlies these differences? Our approach to answering this question will be by way of the explanation of our Sages to the verse in *Zechariah*,¹⁴ *And Hashem will become King of all the earth and on that day* (a reference to the World to Come) *Hashem will be one and His name will be one*. The Gemara asks:¹⁵ Is His name not one today?

Rabbi Acha bar Chanina answers, “This world is not like the World to Come. In this world, for good news we recite the blessing, *HaTov*

variant of the *Elokim* name of Hashem. The distinction between these two names in this context is important and will be discussed in Section 4 of this *Maamar*.

11. Which, as we just saw, is sufficient for Rosh Hashanah’s Kingship acceptance requirement.

12. In other words, the form of acceptance of Hashem’s Kingship that is suitable for Rosh Hashanah, the declaration that “Hashem is our G-d,” does not adequately address the *Shema* requirement for acceptance of Hashem’s Kingship.

13. *Rosh Hashanah* 32b.

14. *Zechariah* 14:9: וְהָיָה ה' לְמֶלֶךְ עַל-כָּל-הָאָרֶץ בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יְהוָה ה' אֶחָד וְשֵׁמוֹ אֶחָד.

15. *Pesachim* 50a.

See also *Pachad Yitzchok*, *Pesach* 60:9, *Shavuos* 25:9; *Maamarei Pachad Yitzchok*,

VeHaMeitiv, 'He is good and He does good,' while for bad news we recite the blessing, *Dayan HaEmes*, 'Blessed be the true Judge'; whereas in the future world we will recite only the blessing, He is good and He does good."¹⁶

When a person declares the Kingship of his Creator with the words "King of the universe,"¹⁷ then, he is using a phrase that has two levels of meaning. On one level he might be characterizing Hashem's Kingship as having the **dual aspect** of "true Judge" and "good and does good." Or, more profoundly, he might be characterizing Hashem's Kingship as having only the **single aspect**, "good and does good."

We refer to the dual aspect meaning of Kingship-declaration as the "this-world," here and now meaning; the single aspect meaning is the Kingship-declaration that belongs exclusively to the World to Come. Our intellects in the here and now are capable of grasping only the "this world" meaning. Even if a person were to reach the pinnacle of acceptance of suffering with love,¹⁸ he still remains capable of affirming his Creator as King only on the basis of "true Judge." His mind is locked into viewing the "true Judge" and "good and does good" modes of behavior as two separate things and thus this duality will always be present in his acceptance of Hashem's Kingship. Acceptance of Hashem's Kingship on the basis of the single-aspect, "good and does good," is reserved for the World to Come.

Pesach 28:7, *Pesach* 39, *Pesach* 53:11, *Pesach* 69:13; *Pachad Yitzchok*, *Kuntres Reshimos*, *Pesach* 5:2; and *Pachad Yitzchok*, *Yom Kippur* 5:8.

16. Hashem does only good, but in the context of this world unpleasant things seem "bad" and feel "bad," even if we can appreciate intellectually that bad does not emanate from Hashem. That a particular "bad" event is actually good is a matter of faith, since we cannot see how or why it is good. The "true Judge" blessing acknowledges this reality. In the World to Come, however, what was a matter of faith will now become obvious; we will in fact see how and why all is good and therefore the "true Judge" blessing will become moot.

17. This phrase is part of the formula that serves as the opening of most blessings: "Blessed are you, Hashem, King of the universe..."

18. Even if from the depths of his being he is at peace with his suffering because he realizes that all that Hashem does is good, and it does not diminish his great love for Hashem, still, because he cannot see how and why his suffering is good, his acceptance of Hashem's Kingship remains on the dual aspect level of this world, which includes "true Judge."

When righteous people exert themselves to accept suffering with love, they are striving to achieve the highest level of Kingship-acceptance possible within the confines of “true Judge.” From the perspective of this-world Kingship acceptance, the “World to Come” form of acceptance is in the category of,¹⁹ *For man shall not see Me and live* — it is unattainable.

ואם בקל זאת, כל ישראל משכימים ומעריבים בקבלת על מלכות שמים מתוך קריאת “השם אחד”, הרי אין פרושה של המלכה זו אלא האמונה הקרושה והבטחון הגמור בעתידה הברור של ההמלכה של “היום ההוא.”

Yet, every Jew wakes up and retires with *Shema*, with an acceptance of Hashem’s Kingship that concludes with the cry, “Hashem is one!”²⁰ The only possible explanation is that the Kingship acceptance of *Shema* incorporates a sacred trust, an absolute confidence, in the certainty of a future where the Kingship acceptance reserved for the World to Come will be reality.²¹

(Elsewhere, using these same concepts, we explained that the custom to cover the eyes when reciting the *Shema* verse derives from the custom to close a person’s eyes after he passes away. Covering the eyes during *Shema* is a statement that our ability to enter into

19. *Shemos* 33:20: בי לא יראני האדם וחי. After forgiveness for the sin of the Golden Calf, Moshe was granted the privilege of experiencing the maximum revelation of Hashem’s essence possible for a human being. Yet, there were limits. Moshe was allowed to see only the “back” of Hashem; anything more than that was out of his reach because it was out of the reach of any human being — *For man shall not see Me and live*.

Similarly, the World to Come form of acceptance of Hashem’s Kingship is out of reach of anyone living in this world.

And similarly, as long as we are bound to this world, we lack the tools necessary to achieve the World to Come-level, single-aspect, “good and does good” only, form of acceptance of Hashem’s Kingship.

20. The implicit question here is why? Why does our acceptance of Hashem’s Kingship in this world incorporate what the Gemara characterizes as the next-worldly, single-aspect mode of Kingship acceptance, which we are incapable of in this world?

21. At the same time that we accept Hashem’s Kingship in this world in the imperfect dual aspect mode, we articulate our confidence that it will not always be this way, that the time will come when we will, in fact, be able to accept Hashem’s Kingship in the single aspect, “good and does good” mode.