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FREE RENDITION

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ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
In the Days of Selichoth, 5723
Year of the 150th Yahrzeit Anni-
versary of the Old Rebbe, Founder
of Chabad.
Brooklyn, New York

To my Brethren, Everywhere
G-d bless you all

Greeting and Blessing:

The days of Rosh Hashanah, the Days of Awe, which usher in the new year (may it be a happy and blessed one for all of us), fill every Jewish heart with a sense of holiness.

The feeling which the Days of Awe inspire goes deeper than a sense of apprehension in the face of Divine judgment. It is a feeling of Yirath Haromemuth - a sense of awe and trepidation that is inspired by the consciousness of the unfolding event of the "coronation" of the Supreme King of Kings, blessed be He; a coronation in which every individual Jew participates. For this is the essence of Rosh Hashanah.

The "coronation" of the Creator of the Universe as the "King over all the Earth," for which we pray and which we actually carry out on Rosh Hashanah, renews the personal union of each Jew with G-d; it is the direct and inward union of each individual as an individual, and not merely as a part of the community or people as a whole. The "coronation" is accompanied by the personal petition of each and every one of us that the Almighty accept this coronation, and thereby is created the mutual union of "We are Thy people and Thou art our King."

The idea and experience of this "coronation" are expressed in the prayer: O, our G-d and G-d of our fathers, establish Thy glorious reign over all the world... that every creature shall know that Thou didst create him... and every living soul shall declare: the L-rd G-d of Israel is King, and His Kingdom reigneth everywhere! - The whole of Creation, and especially the human being endowed with a soul, recognizes and submits to the Sovereignty of G-d. This prayer accentuates the feeling of Yirath Haromemuth and, at the same time, the inevitable consequence thereof - the compelling readiness and longing to obey the commandments of the King.

Hence, notwithstanding the fact that Rosh Hashanah ushers in the Ten Days of Return (Asereth Yemei Teshuvah) and is part of them, there is no tachnun, nor any confession of sin, during Rosh Hashanah. For the feeling of oneness with the Almighty, which is evoked by the Coronation, so permeates our heart and mind, that however great may be the sorrow over the deeds of the past, it is completely "dissolved" in the overwhelming experience of Yirath Haromemuth.

As a matter of fact, Teshuvah itself - in its deeper concept as the "Return (to the Source)" - is in complete harmony with the essential

content of Rosh Hashanah, namely the event of the Divine Coronation.

Only after Rosh Hashanah, the further aspects of Teshuvah come into their own, such as repentance of the past and resolution for the future, with confession of sin, supplication for forgiveness, etc., as the necessary effects of the Coronation on Rosh Hashanah. For the consciousness of the renewed and strengthened union with the King, and feeling of oneness with Him, must create in the subject the will and determination to be worthy of this exalted relationship. This, in turn, must induce every effort to remove anything that interferes with, or hinders, the consummation of this union, namely all sins, whether committed rebelliously, knowingly, or even inadvertently.

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Unfortunately, for various reasons, the inspiration engendered by the Days of Rosh Hashanah and the Ten Days of Return has not always, nor everywhere, been put to the best or fullest advantage. In some congregations, and in many individuals, the inspiration evaporated with the passing of the Days of Awe, without a discernable change or improvement in the personal day-to-day life of the individual Jew and Jewess. And where there is a lack of improvement on the individual level, there must inevitably be a lack of improvement on the social level.

One of the main reasons for this failure is that the spiritual awakening and inspiration of the Days of Awe are not directed towards the self, but towards matters relating to others. Not infrequently these auspicious days serve as an occasion for general pronouncements on world problems - "messages" that do not implicate anyone in particular, least of all anyone in the immediate environment. This approach "satisfies" everybody, all the more so since it has some claim to "justification" in view of the fact that Rosh Hashanah embraces the whole of Creation, and the world is not lacking in universal and vital problems requiring improvement or change.

The concentration on, and preoccupation with, such lofty world problems and resolutions (resolutions which, in the majority of instances, are beyond the control of those making them) provide a convenient justification for diverting the necessary, vital and utmost attention from the self, from self-searching and the reappraisal of one's personal life (precisely those areas where personal resolutions can be effective).

An indication as to the proper use of the spirit of these holy days is to be found in the details prescribed for the Mitzvah of Sounding the Shofar, the only special Mitzvah of Rosh Hashanah. This commandment does not prescribe the use of an ensemble of instruments, but only one; and that also not a delicate instrument producing extraordinary musical compositions. The insistence is that the Shofar be a plain horn of an animal, and "all sounds are proper in a Shofar." Thus, the Shofar emphasizes that the orientation should be, first and foremost, on the individual self, with the accent on the duty to introduce sanctity even into the ordinary and commonplace of the daily

life of the individual, and then into the social life of the individual as a member of the community, and so forth.

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May G-d help that every Jew and Jewess, especially those who are spiritual leaders, should take full advantage of the sacred moments and the soul-stirring inspiration of the Days of Awe - not in the direction of general world or national problems (which, however important, are not the ~~essential~~ purpose of Rosh Hashanah and the Ten Days of Return, either for the individual or for the community); but in response to the urgent call of these days: "Make Me King over you!" - to accept the Sovereignty of G-d, as one's own King and Master, which calls for Teshuvah, Tefilah, Tzedakah - Return, Service, Righteousness - all of which should begin at home, in the self; and then around the self, in the congregation, and the environment at large.

And may the spiritual awakening and inspiration of these days illuminate and permeate every day of the year, so as to intensify the union between each Jew and G-d into a profound attachment that will express itself in the daily life according to, and in harmony with, the Divine Torah and Divine commandments. Surely, the change for the better in the spiritual life will bring a change for the better in the material life, and the next year will be a blessed one in every respect.

With prayerful wishes for a

כתיבה וחתימה טובה
לשנה טובה ומתוקה
בשוב הנראה והנגלה

/MENACHEM SCHNEERSON/