

RABBI MENACHEM M. SCHNEERSON
 Lubavitch
 770 Eastern Parkway
 Brooklyn 13, N. Y.
 HYacinth 3-9250

מנחם מענדל שניאורסאהן
 ליובאוויטש

FREE TRANSLATION

770 איסטערן פארקוויי
 ברוקלין, נ. י.

By the Grace of G-d
 In the Days of Selichoth,
 5731. Brooklyn, N. Y.

To the Sons and Daughters of
 Our People Israel, Everywhere

G-d bless you all!

Greeting and Blessing:

In the present days of preparation¹ for Rosh-Hashanah, it is, first of all, necessary to understand clearly the significance of Rosh-Hashanah - may it bring us and all Israel good and blessing. Much can be learned about it also from the practices and customs which the Torah has ordained to precede Rosh-Hashanah, preliminary to its observance, since the Torah is Light² (Torah - Or), and its ordinances clearly illuminate the Jewish way of life in every detail.

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Among the ordinances which are directly related to Rosh-Hashanah and serve as a preparation to it, is the reading of the Sidra Nitzovim on the Shabbos before Rosh-Hashanah. Every year, invariably, the Sidra precedes Rosh-Hashanah, bringing an important and timely message to each and every Jew for the year ahead.

The Sidra begins with the declaration: "You are standing firmly (nitzovim) this day, all together, before G-d, your G-d: your heads..to your water-drawer, in order to bring you into the covenant of G-d, your G-d..."

At first glance, this declaration appears to contain a contradiction: It begins by saying, "You are standing firmly, all of you together (without distinction); yet, it proceeds immediately to divide them into various and separate categories. Besides, what is the the purpose of enumerating the various classes of Jews, from the highest to the lowest, after they had already been all included in the general term "all of you" (כולכם) ?

But - herein precisely is to be found a basic "rule"⁵, namely, that both go together⁶: (a) "all of you", meaning all as one, and (b) at the same time, however, each individual, man or woman, has his or her specific task and mission, each or one according to one's status and station in life.

Yet, the question begs to be asked: Since such a division is necessary, indeed such an extreme diversity - from "your heads" down to your "water-drawer"

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- how can they be so completely unified and merged as to become "all as one?"

The answer is: "You are standing firmly this day, all of you - before G-d, your G-d." The Hebrew verb נצב is stronger than עומד⁷, and means a firm stand, being deeply conscious of standing in the presence of G-d, Who is "your G-d" - your strength and your whole essence.⁸ In this - all Jews are equal, and this is what makes them all - one.

To clarify the above by means of an analogy: When a group of individuals join to create an association, be it financial or scientific enterprise, or for some other purpose, the members become united for a certain period of time and for a certain purpose, requiring from each a contribution of some of his money and energy, or scientific knowledge and the like. In all other aspects - each member is a "world"⁹ for himself.

However, when Jews are united, as required by the Torah, namely, "before G-d, your G-d," as mentioned above, and for the purpose of "entering the covenant of G-d, your G-d, and His oath, which He makes with you this day," a covenant that embraces the whole of man, with all his capacities (the "all of you" in each individual¹⁰) - then it is an eternal and total unification of "all as one" (and of "all of you" together with G-d, your G-d).

And the Torah goes on to explain: "All of you together" are divided into "your heads"...down to your "water-drawer," and each of them, with his distinct capacity¹¹ (and his special endeavors) is brought into the covenant with G-d. Each individual endeavor, whether by one who belongs in the category of your heads and acts like a head, or in the category of water-drawer and acts as such, is an expression of the total covenant of all of you with G-d, your G-d. Each one has his special Divine assignment according to his status and station in life, and in this way - when each and everyone carries out his assignment - the complete unity of Klal Yisroel - all as one - is achieved.

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This brings up a subject which must once again be emphasized¹² as a timely reminder. It concerns those who are in the category of "your heads (of) your tribes"¹³ - spiritual leaders in their communities, or men of influence in their circles, and down the line, to the one who is head of his family.¹⁴

It is self-understood that the first obligation and task of spiritual leaders, especially during the time of the "Solemn Days," days of inspiration and introspection, is to strengthen all aspects of Torah and Mitzvot among their followers, in actual practice in the daily life; and as for those who, for various reasons, are as yet alienated from Yiddishkeit - to inspire them to a sense of Teshuvah¹⁵, to return to their source and begin to live as whole Jews, with whole Yiddishkeit, the whole year round.

Regrettably, this most precious opportunity of the year is sometimes lost through

speeches and lectures on world problems and themes which, however important they may be, are entirely beyond the control of the speakers or their audiences, since they can do nothing to solve them. It is most deplorable and saddening that - instead of utilizing these moments of soulful inspiration to strengthen and encourage Jews in their awareness of the eternal and total covenant with G-d, Who has personally given each and everyone of them individually - from "head" to "water-drawer" - a mission in life, and to explain what the duties of every Jew in his daily life are - the time and attention are dissipated on global problems, or government politics, or other general topics which do not at all belong in that place and at that time.

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Lest anyone argue that in the present age and conditions it is difficult for a Jew to adhere to total Yiddishkeit without compromise, all year round, and with all his being -

The Torah declares: "You are standing firmly this day," etc. This is not a command or promise for the future, but a statement of fact. Jews must know that they are standing firmly before G-d, Who is their life and strength. It is only necessary that every Jew, man or woman, should discover this fact in himself or herself, and bring forth from concealment into the open, and from the potential into the actual, that which is deeply rooted in his or her true essence.

With this assurance of "Nitzovim", Jews - each and all, from "head" to "water-drawer", without exception - gather for the "coronation", of the Supreme Being in the days of Rosh-Hashanah¹⁶, "and willingly accept His Kingship over them"¹⁷, with all their heart and zeal¹⁷, and proclaim the Supreme One as "King and Redeemer of Israel,"¹⁸ and "King over all the Universe."

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May G-d grant that every Jew - man, woman and child - should in the coming days be permeated with the spirit of Rosh-Hashanah and begin the new year with the steadfastness and assurance of "Nitzovim", to carry out the Divine mission which G-d bestows upon each and every Jew according to his station and walk of life, - and carry it out in the days of Rosh-Hashanah, and subsequent days, and every day of the year - each day being "this day".

On His part G-d will surely fulfil His promise¹⁹, as stated immediately further: "That He raises you up this day as His people" - today and every day,

And "this day" also according to the interpretation of our Sages²⁰ of blessed memory: As the day begins with darkness then turns bright, so will the life of every Jew, and of Klal Yisroel, be truly bright,

Until the fulfilment of the prophecy: G-d will be your everlasting light,²¹ with the coming of the true and complete Geuloh, through our righteous Moshiach.

And, in the prayerful words of David, the "Sweetner of the Songs of Israel"²².
 "O, G-d²³, to deliver me - to help me, make haste²⁴, O G-d" - speedily in our days.

With blessing of Kesivo vachasimo toivo
 for a good and sweet year -

Signed /Menachem Schneerson/

(1) דבהתחלתם אומרים: במוצאי מנוחה... דוחלים ורועדים מיום בואך (ר"ה). וביותר
 עפמש"כ בעטז"ק (לשו"ע או"ח רסתקפ"א) שהם ימי ביקור עצמו (דוגמת קרבן) דר"ה.
 (וכדי שיהי' לעולם יום קבוע - מקדימים ליום א. לבוש שם). (2) ראה דרוז"ל למשלי
 ו, כג. זח"ג (נג,ב): איקרי תורה בגין באורי וגלי במאי דהוי סתים. ומשנה ברורה:
 הפך בה דכלה בה ובה תחזי (אבות ספ"ה ובפיה"מ שם). (3) טוש"ע או"ח סתכ"ח.
 (4) ראה ג"כ אור החיים כאן. (5) עיין בכ"ז לקו"ת ר"פ נצבים. (6) להעיר מדוגמתו
 בבריאת העולם - ע"פ משנ"ת בליקוטי לוי יצחק - לתניא פכ"א. (7) ראה אור התורה
 להצ"צ עה"פ ע" א"רא ואילך. (8) ראה טוש"ע או"ח ס"ה. (9) סנה" לז, א-לח, א.
 (10) ראה אור תורה להה"מ פ' תרומה: שכולו נקרא איש כו' (נת' באוה"ת להצ"צ שם
 ע" א"רז. ובפס"ד בטוש"ע (או"ח סרל"א): בכל דרכיך דעהו כו' כל מעשיך יהיו לשם
 שמים. יתרה מזה ברמב"ם הל' דעות רפ"ה: בשם שהחכם ניכר בחכמתו... כך צריך כו'.
 (11) לקו"ת שם. טעמי המצות להאריז"ל ונת' בסהמ"צ להצ"צ מצות אהבת ישראל. (12)
 בארוכה במכתב דימי הסליחות ה'תשכ"ג (לקו"ש כרך ד' ע' 1356). (13) רש"י (עה"פ).
 וכ"מ בירושלמי סוף הוריות. אבל ראה תיב"ע עה"פ. זח"ב (פב,א). לקו"ת שם. (14)
 ראה שבת נד, סע"ב. (15) ראה דרך חיים שער התשובה פ"כ ובתחלתו. (16) שלכן בכל
 תפלות ר"ה (גם בערבית) הבקשה מלוך על העולם כו'. בארוכה במכ" הנ"ל. (17) ראה
 ד"ה מן המיצר תר"ס. יו"ט שר"ה תש"ג. (18) ועי"ז ואח"כ מלך על כל הארץ (ראה
 המשך וככה פפ"א-פב. חייב אדם לברך פ"ט, פי"ג). (19) וידוע תורה הבעש"ט: אתם
 נצבים היום... ראש השנה... נצבים קיימים ועומדים והיינו שזוכים בדין ("היום יום"
 - כה אלול). (20) תנחומא בפרשתנו. (21) ומסיים בתנחומא שנאמר והי' לך הוי' לאור
 עולם. ויל"פ שאור עולם זה יהי' ע"ד: הוי' אורי. (22) מנעים זמירותיהם של ישראל
 (שהש"ר ד,ד). (23) תהלים ע,ב. (24) להעיר מהבטחת הוי' (ישעי' ס,כב): אני ה' בעתה
 אחישנה.