

You are standing today... before Hashem, your G-d. (29:9)

Hayom, today, alludes to the special day, *Rosh Hashanah*, when we all stand in judgment before Hashem. This day is different, for on this day, as **Horav Nosson Wachtfogel, zl**, comments, we enter into the palace of the King. We have a private conference, during which we think of nothing else: not of the past; not of the future; just the present. Our conversation does not revolve around ourselves; it is not for our personal requests. Rather, on this day we coronate Hashem; we praise Him and pray that today will be the beginning when all creatures, all peoples, will recognize and acknowledge that He is the Creator of us all. “Today” is “His” day. It is a day that allows us to divest ourselves of “ourselves” and focus on what is really important – Hashem.

When someone approaches *Rosh Hashanah* with the realization that today he has the unique good fortune to stand *lifnei Hashem*, before Hashem; when he understands the significance of this moment, this private meeting, he will not waste it on personal issues. The difference between a small person and a big person lies in what is important to each of them. True, our lives, and the lives of everyone that we hold dear to us, are all-important, but, in the larger scheme of things, in terms of the purpose of our existence, in light of our own personal *raison d’etre*, is this not somewhat selfish? Imagine being allowed one request from the king, one favor. What would we ask for? Would we ask the king for a new suit, a better lunch, a nicer car, or would our request be more sweeping, more global, less self-serving?

It is all about *V’yeida kol pa’ul ki Atah pi’alto, v’yavin kol yetzur ki Atah yitzarto*, “Let everything that has been made know that You are its Maker, and let everything that has been molded understand that You are its molder.” **Horav Shimshon Pincus, zl**, says that, on *Rosh Hashanah*, Hashem wants to maintain a *Panim el Panim*, face to face, relationship with us. This means that nothing is on our minds but Hashem. Our every thought, comment, nuance, should be focused on the Almighty.

The first step is to recognize that, when we enter *Rosh Hashanah*, we have just completed an entire year of life. We tend to focus immediately on the future, without recognizing our obligation to offer gratitude for the past. As we begin the New Year, we should commence it by thanking Hashem for allowing us to reach this juncture in life. Furthermore, as the **Brisker Rav, zl**, comments, we enter the New Year with nothing from the past year to support us, no promises, no *chazakos*, status quo. Just because we have a job, good health and money in the bank, does not mean that our good fortune is on autopilot and will continue. It is a New Year – a completely new judgment. It begins over again. Your driver’s license has expired; your passport is no longer valid. It is a new year, a new list, a new judgment. Whatever we have been fortunate to have had until now is no guarantee for the future. *Hayom*, “Today,” is a new day.