

# Preparing For Rosh Hashanah

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We are already halfway through Elul, one week before Rosh Hashanah. I imagine that there are a lot of people out there who have mixed feelings about that. There are probably many people who don't even know what they should be feeling.

What do I mean? Well, on one hand we came into Elul with the understanding that this is a special month which Hashem has given to us in order to prepare for the Day of Judgment which is Rosh Hashanah. After all, it's the day on which the entire upcoming year is going to be decided, and we want to make sure that we're ready to appear before the Judge as best as we can. But now that we are already two weeks into our preparations, after realizing how our so-called preparations are coming along, I'm guessing that not a few people are finding their only consolation in the fact that they will be spending Rosh Hashanah with the greatest lawyer in the world, our holy

Rebbe.

But then there is the excitement of Rosh Hashanah itself, and the expectations that come with it. Until Rosh Hashanah actually happens, our anticipation and eagerness for “The Rebbe’s Rosh Hashanah” will hopefully only grow. But how will we prepare for the day after, with feelings of disappointment of Rosh Hashanah not turning out the way we wanted?

Ashreinu! We’re very lucky that the same Rebbe with whom we will be spending the holiday with has also prescribed specific guidelines with how to deal with all of these predicaments and their accompanying feelings.

The Rebbe teaches us in Likutei Moharan II, 82, that Hashem created the world with two characteristics- order and what seems to be disorder. The Rebbe explains that ‘not in order’ means the chaotic aspect of the everyday battles which we all go through, when things don’t turn out the way we wanted, or our hopes and our prayers are not realized.

What is the cause of finding ourselves in this situation where everything turns out just the opposite of what we want?

The Rebbe explains that the aspect of ‘not in order/chaos’ in reality is just an expression of the true order of things. The same way speech is an expression of a person’s thoughts and desires, this world and its situation is Hashem’s mouthpiece, so to speak. When a person hears a language or a concept which he understands, he hears much more than just sounds- he hears the ideas and thoughts which are contained within them. But if one were to listen just to the sounds and ignore their meaning, like when one doesn’t understand the language being spoken, all he hears is a mumble jumble totally lacking in any order.

When a person concentrates on realizing that Hashem really does have a master plan in mind, he doesn’t even see the lack of order in the world. It’s only when a person tries taking

charge of his own world and cuts it off from Hashem does he begin to perceive the world as chaotic and lacking any order. When a person humbles himself before Hashem and concentrates only on His plan, he doesn't see a lack of order anymore- on the contrary, he sees how the world is singing such a wonderful song and revealing Hashem's thoughts and desires, so to speak.

In other words, if Elul or Rosh Hashanah doesn't seem to be working out, the problem is that we think that we are in charge of our lives and achieving our goals. We therefore get frustrated when faced with the disappointment of things not working out the way we hoped. But if we would humble ourselves to realize that the situation which we're in, together with all of its disorder and disarray, is an expression of Hashem's Will and Plan- then the illusion of chaos will disappear.

Reb Nosson explains in Hil' Netilat Yadayim Shacharit 3 that this is really the best preparation for Rosh Hashanah. Rosh Hashanah is the day which we proclaim Hashem's Kingdom and enthrone Him over the whole universe. The whole universe includes every possible situation and predicament also, including those that seem to us lacking in order. By realizing now that even those situations are expression of Hashem's plan, we proclaim His Kingship in everything and everywhere, and we prepare ourselves for Rosh Hashanah.