The Shofar and the Song of Return

written by Dovid Mark September 18, 2023



The energy has dimmed. The light a bit faded. We are left wondering if we can keep Rosh HaShana going straight into Yom Kippur, the day of atonement and yet, we are grasping for inspiration.

Rebbe Nachman teaches the following in Likutey Moharan lesson 211:

"The reason people travel to tzaddikim for Rosh HaShanah—this is because the essential mitigating of the judgments is only by means of holiness and purity of thought, for that is their source. As is brought in the Zohar, 'Everything is purified in the mind' (II, 254b)."

"However, it is possible to achieve a pure mind only through attachment to the tzaddikim, as it is written (Exodus 13:19), 'Then Moshe took Yosef's bones.' Moshe is the aspect of the mind, while Yosef is the aspect of the tzaddik. That is, there is no perfection of the mind except by being attached to the tzaddikim."

And Rosh HaShanah is the source of judgments for the entire year. A person must purify his thoughts in order to mitigate [the judgments], and for this reason people travel to tzaddikim, in order to merit purity of thought."

The Tzaddik is the ultimate frequency, song of the universe. He is the inner guide that brushes aside our own stumbling blocks allowing us to reach our goal of relating to the Creator in a direct and authentic manner. Ultimately, this niggun or frequency is most exemplified in the sound of the shofar, which begins with a simple tone and then breaking apart, shattering into wailing pieces of consciousness only to be reformed into a simple blast. This whole process represents a person's return to HaShem, the Creator. It is this process we must undergo while heading into Yom Kippur.

In order to reach it, we must take the clarity and the sound of the shofar we attained on Rosh HaShana and allow it to continue to wake us up from the inside. This is the frequency of the Tzaddik, the niggun or song of the infinite that brings us to true atonement on Yom Kippur.

If we are quiet and envision ourselves standing there, the shofar blasting and wailing and blasting again — then the voice within can carry us forward to a day that is like no other, a day of purity and renewal.

(Based on the Yerach Itonim by the Tzerner Rav Lesson 4, Lesson 64 and 211 in the Likutey Moharan)

