



uplift your heart

Join us for a transformative, two-day seminar in which you and like-minded individuals will engage in song, meditation, reflection, and prayer. Through this you'll build a life's vision, crystallize goals, nurture dreams, and develop strategies for change. You'll draw on the emotions of love and awe to develop a purpose-filled approach to life that will energize your home and professional life.

For many of us, it sounds like a dream opportunity. To take two days out of our packed schedule, join with others, make an inventory of our lives, and ask ourselves: What do I really want, and is my present trajectory leading me toward or away from my goals?

Actually, we can all attend — without even filling out an application form.

The seminar takes place every Rosh Hashanah. And our facilitator is the machzor.

How? Why? Is this even possible?

Let's explore.

Malchuyos Reconnect with Why

Barrier: I don't do dread

We're a generation that doesn't give punishments, only consequences. We try to shower our children with positivity and love. Now, we come to Rosh Hashanah and recognize the *din*. It's serious. And we find it off-putting.

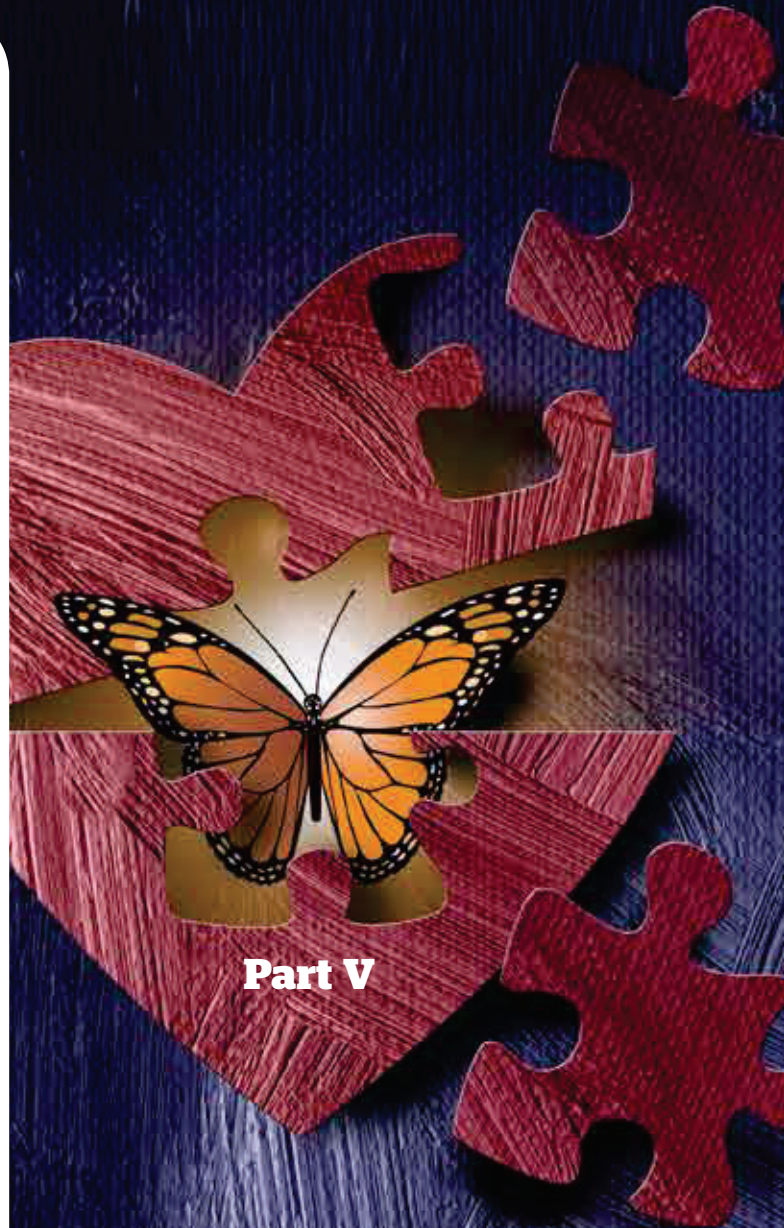
We've always related to Hashem as a loving Father. We ask, we beg, and we do so with the confidence that He wants to hear from me, give to me. Every year, as we lead up to Rosh Hashanah, we feel like we're losing our footing. Suddenly, we begin relating to Hashem as a King who sits in judgment. How can we relate to Hashem as our King in a meaningful way?

We know the theory: Crowning Hashem King is a privilege and so should be done joyfully. But, how does that work?

Open Thoughts

Kingship. Scepters, royal carriages, a jewel-encrusted crown.

There's more. A country operates effectively when a leader establishes a cohesive system. In Torah thought, *malchus* doesn't just mean statesmanship; the king unifies the people and guides them. In today's terms, *malchus* is the quality seen in a school principal who finds the talents in each staff member and harnesses them to contribute to her vision of her school. True unity comes from a shared goal.



Part V

The overriding theme of Rosh Hashanah davening is Hashem's Kingship, and this is distilled in the brachah of Malchuyos. In our daily lives, *malchus* — a unifying factor — can feel far away. We're faced with leaking-roof-a-deadline-a-kid-acting-up-a-family-simchah-that's-causing-stickiness-a-friend-in-need-a-diet-going-awry-carpool-shidduch-stuff-demanding-neighbor-husband's-concerns... can we breathe yet?

We're pulled in so many different directions: thoughts about the future, doubts about the present, reflections on the past. Inside, we're comprised of different desires: We want to be expansive and generous, but we also feel jealous and protective at times. We get angry and frustrated and self-righteous and we're also altruistic and generous and selfless. What enables us to avoid fragmentation and brings us to centeredness?

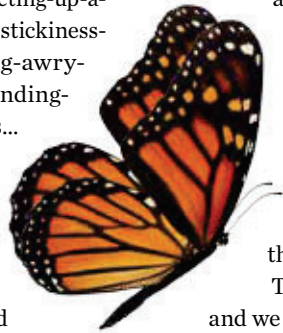
Malchus.

Malchus asks: Why are we doing all this? Why am I running? What's it all for? How does each detail fit into the bigger picture? Is there a bigger picture? On Rosh Hashanah, we begin to address these questions. We sense the day's importance, and we're aware of fear, but we sometimes miss the accompanying frisson of anticipation — at all we can dream, at all we can be.

Hashem's *malchus* is not abstract. To crown Hashem King means over all of our lives, every conflicting desire, every challenging relationship, every place inside. It's bringing all of it together into a single cohesive vision that tells us why we were given life and why we beseech Hashem to bestow that precious gift anew.

"There's no *malchus* but the home,"

states the Shelah Hakadosh. Our homes are the setting for our best moments and our failures. It's where we face our sense of inadequacy and also the place where we show patience to our kids, understanding



and forgiveness to our spouse, where we open up to giving and also to receiving. It's the place where we realize that self-sufficiency is a myth, that we must turn to others and Hashem, conscious of our limitations and asking for them to be filled.

That's the essence of tefillah — and we can turn it into a request for a life of purpose and service. This is why we declare Hashem's Kingship through prayer:

Reign over the entire universe in Your glory...

Let everything that has been made know You are its Maker...

and let everything with a life's breath in its nostrils proclaim:

Hashem, the God of Israel is King, and His Kingship rules over everything.

(Mussaf Rosh Hashanah)

As we say each word, we access and develop the place inside us which is drawn to finding the why of the world — and the why of our lives. As we say the tefillos, we draw our desires into one underlying theme: We rediscover why we want everything that we want. If all of tefillah is an act of *malchus*, of bringing Hashem into the disparate and mundane details, then saying Malchuyos on Rosh Hashanah is supercharged. Through relating to this tefillah with depth, we form the *ratzon*; we arrive the beginning of all, the source of the why.

A Blast of Unity

Tekiah: pure and true, one long blast of Kingship. This is followed by shevarim's

brokenness and the weep of the teruah. Multiple sounds, a fragmented lament, nothing making sense, plans and hearts shattered. *Din. Dai!* No more! It's too painful. Shevarim, teruah. Sobs and shards.

Malchus calls us to thread the pain into a tapestry of goodness. It's a work of gathering together all the fragments and broken pieces into one overarching vision that proclaims: Hashem is One. He's to be found in the darkness and the light, in the teruah and shevarim and the tekiah. In doing so, we show that everything is from the One G-d whose Kingship extends even to the shadows

OPEN LIPS

Avinu Malkeinu

Avinu: My Father — before I even ask, You are there with me.

Malkeinu: My King — distant, far away

Avinu: I know that Your love for me is boundless, why are You holding me to judgment? Can You not embrace me even with my mistakes?

Malkeinu: My King. I step back in awe. Ruler of the Universe, Creator of the stars and the tiniest atoms, Orchestrator of our long history... Who created me and gave me life.

Avinu: Your love for me causes this accounting for it shows that my actions count. In bringing me to judgement You are affirming that my life has meaning.

Malkeinu: Give us life, for my wish is to fill it with purpose.

Avinu Malkeinu: My Father, my King. Even as I tremble, I feel Your belief in me. Even as I'm aware of my smallness, I'm lifted by the prospect of making not just Heaven, but earth — my home, my heart, into a place where You reign.

of my heart. Everything becomes part of a larger purposeful whole, both the tribulations and the kindness.

Open Hearts

“When a *neshamah* enters the world, a cry sounds from one end of the world to another. This is the *neshamah* that cries out as it enters the confines of a body — and when it is released from it” (*Yoma* 20b)

An infant enters the world. In that awesome moment when a soul is taken from the treasure house of Heaven and slipped into earth, there is a cry.

Speech is the bridge between our inner world and the outer world. Without speech, we’re trapped, unable to bring our thoughts into fruition. But there’s something deeper — *kol*, a cry. Raw, primal, unadorned, it’s echoes through the world at every birth. A cry comes from the liminal place between spiritual and physical. It’s man’s soul breaking the constraints of his body. *Kol* is the sound of spiritual desire in a world of concealment.

On the day of Adam Harishon’s creation, a *kol* was heard. It sounded again at the birth

of our nation. The Torah — the soul of the world — was brought down into our reality.

On this very day, we sound the shofar. We reenact that cry to bring us back to a place of birth. Through the *kol* of the shofar, we’re reminded: Whatever the words, however things appear, whatever the behaviors, that’s just external. When you delve deeper, you arrive at the pulsing inner core. You touch what truly moves us, what we really want.

“*B’kol shofar aleihem hofotah*: You appeared to them with the sound of the shofar” (Mussaf Rosh Hashanah). When we look closely at the words, we find a hint to a beautiful idea. *Hofotah*, “to appear,” shares a root with the name Puah — the midwife who birthed our nation in the darkness of the Egyptian exile.

Shofar is related to the word to improve, as we see in the phrase, *shifru maaseichaem*, improve your actions. And, of course, we also have a hint to Shifra, to Yocheved, mother of Moshe and midwife along with Puah.

On the day of man’s birth, on the day we beg for life, the cry of the shofar is our midwife, emboldening us to undergo a moment of rebirth.

It calls us to access that place deeper than words. The place of our origin, before we were absorbed by the cares and draws of the physical world. It helps us redefine ourselves as people connected to soul not body — and on this day of the creation of man, it enables us to recreate ourselves as people who seek life, who long to bring Hashem’s *Malchus* into the world.

Zichronos

Memory and Meaning

Barrier: Why wallow in the past?

Many people talk about making a *cheshbon hanefesh*, as if it’s possible to look back over the year and make an inventory of how many times I spoke *lashon hara* or disappointed myself. If I can’t remember what happened this morning, how can I start owning everything I’ve done this past year? How exactly should I relate to *Zichronos*?

If Rosh Hashanah is about making

OPEN EYES

When we talk about making an inventory of the year, our thoughts automatically spring to the things we’ve done wrong. But what about all the things we’ve done right? What about the changes that we’ve made, the moments of insight, the times we felt truly alive? What about the times we felt when we were completely present?

Close your eyes, summon up one or two of these moments. Bring it to life: remember the room, the smells, a lingering taste, an expression that caught your attention. Use remembering to own your experiences, using them as a precious resource for self-knowledge and growth.



To crown Hashem king means
over all of our lives, every
conflicting desire, every
challenging relationship, every
place inside

Hashem King, why the preoccupation with memory? Don't I want a fresh start on Rosh Hashanah?

For You bring a decreed time of remembrance
for every spirit and soul to be recalled...

For it is You who eternally remembers all forgotten things
And there is no forgetfulness before Your Throne of Glory

To understand why Rosh Hashanah is called Yom Zikaron, we have to imagine life with no memory. Every moment would be bewildering and disconnected, without context and meaning. Most horrific of all, there would be no me, no identity.

Memory allows all the moments of our lives to form a shape. Moments doesn't just disappear, they build on every previous moment, so the aggregate is a person, with accomplishments, thoughts, fears, desires. Memory brings cohesion to our lives. That's why it's related to *malchus* — that act of gathering together the details into one awe-inspiring picture.

If this is true on an individual level, it's also true nationally.

To the Creator, the creation has purpose, direction, and unity. We don't see this vision — only fragments, stray details, one tiny lifespan. History appears to us as a great labyrinth. We have no sense of direction, and though we know there's an end point, it's obscured. Memory gives us a pathway through history. As we say in davening: *Everything is revealed and known before You, Hashem our God, Who keeps watch and sees to the very end of all generations.*

Hashem remembers us on Rosh Hashanah, as we remember what it means to live a life of context and direction, as part of a nation that was born at Matan Torah and is marching to the shofar blow of Mashiach. Through showing up and accepting responsibility over our deeds and the direction of our lives, we become active participants in Hashem's ultimate purpose.

As we say the tefillos, something in us opens and changes. We accept *zichronos* upon us. We assent that our lives have significance, and that we're marching the path of history with the whole of Klal Yisrael — past, present, and future—by our side.

Zikaron also brings us life. Why?

Because life attaches our present to our past — and to our future, eternity in Olam Habah. *Zikaron* shows us cause and effect, highlights order and structure, vision and expression, past fears and future

ALONE, TOGETHER

This year, for many of us, Rosh Hashanah davening is going to look very different from what we're used to. Every country and community has its own configuration of how they'll conduct minyanim — but there will be many of us who will be unable to attend.

And we're wondering: How will we daven without our chazan's rendition of Unesaneh Tokef?

Without the uplift of the niggunim? Without the atmosphere created by the many people around us who are absorbed in reaching to Hashem?

One idea that can sustain us is that, without *hisorerus* from the outside, we're left to reach for Hashem in our aloneness, from a deep place within. The environment helps, and we want it. But we may well find (and so many people testified to this after Pesach), that without it, we can attain a level of authentic connection that's refreshing and real.

We can turn our newfound flexibility to our advantage. Alone at home, we can pick our own tunes.

We can join with neighbors to learn, say Tehillim, or sing the Rosh Hashanah niggunim. We can work in some alone time, going outside and reflecting in the quiet of the early morning.

Part of the beauty of davening in shul is the connection we feel to the people around us. We can extend our reach: We're saying the same words, involved in the same *avodah* as people davening at the Kosel, Mir Yeshivah, Lakewood, Chabad in Kathmandu, the world over. We can imagine our own shul, bringing it to life in our minds. Think of all the people in the same position as us. We can silently bless them with a good year. Connection doesn't have to mean physical proximity; it's alive in our hearts.

Rosh Hashanah without a minyan might not be something we'd choose, but if it's forced upon us, then in the spirit of a joyful acceptance of Hashem's *Malchus*, we can dig into ourselves and create a deeply meaningful experience.

of the soul longing for its Maker. We may be in *galus*. We may fall and get confused and fragmented. We may be estranged from our better selves. But still, we blow the shofar. We have not abandoned our longing for our Creator.

Mashiach's arrival will usher in a new awareness: Hashem is One! There's nothing but our Father in Heaven, and we want nothing but to return to Him. The *satan* is confused when he hears our shofar because in our *teruah*, there is indeed an echo of the call of Mashiach. Our *tekias* shofar is made up of the same tone, the same liberation, the same clarity, the same awe and joy, as the shofar of Mashiach. It is the call of judgment, yes, but it is also the sound of freedom.

Open Hearts

As we blow the shofar, we're engaged in a dialogue with our Maker.

Tekiah: We yearn for You. Despite failure after failure, reaching for You and not finding You, still — the only thing we want is You.

Hashem responds: Look at My children. Even when they're so far away, they realize they've been caught up in the details of life and thrown off center. They trust in my mercy and return to me, because their love for Me is their essence.

Klal Yisrael responds: Even though I fell and sinned and I obscured Your presence, I won't give up. In every situation, I'll look for You. Hashem responds: I want my Oneness to be revealed in the dark and distant world. And it's the distance which is leading you to look for Me.

Klal Yisrael blow a shevarim: We know an accounting needs to be made. We lost sight of who we really are and what we really want. There's a judgment, for we have willfully filled our lives with things other than You.

Klal Yisrael blows a *teruah*: We feel regret. At this moment, so much falls away; we realize what's real, and what we really want.

Hashem responds: My mercy has been aroused. Blow a final *tekiah* and step into My Light. Hold on to this truth: All of the

hopes. It's the amalgamation of all I used to be and all I want to be and all that I am right now. In it, we become attached the *malchus* of our inner self, the *malchus* of the world, and the journey of the universe and Am Yisrael.

Folded within each second of time is the potential of becoming, along with the culmination of all the past moments that led to this and the way my choices will affect my life, my family, my nation. It will take us towards or distance us from a Hashem's unity.

Zikaron teaches us to live memorably, with the knowledge that this moment will soon become history, and the present is fleeting, but oh, so sweet.

Shofaros

Cycle of Connection

Barrier: The lost blasts

We're losing out on shofar this year because the first day of Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbos. I'm wondering if this quirk of the calendar, which follows a difficult year, is a sign that a worse year is yet to come.

How can I relate to the fact that we don't have access to this *segulah* for Hashem's mercy?

And more, the shofar is a time of judgment; it fills me with trepidation and awe. How can this coexist with our confidence in Hashem's love for us?

Amid thunder and lightning You were revealed to them

and with the sound of Shofar You appeared to them...

Sound the great shofar for our freedom, raise the banner to gather our exiles.

Open Thoughts

The *satan* is afraid of our shofar, the Gemara tells us. He fears our *tekios*. Why? Hearing the blast, he thinks Mashiach is on his way. His end is near.

It's a difficult statement. Does the *satan* have such a short memory? Doesn't he have a calendar to remind him that it's Rosh Hashanah, and this is what the Jews do every year?

The shofar, as we explained, is the voice



On the day of man's birth,
on the day we beg for life,
the cry of the shofar is our
midwife, emboldening us to
undergo a moment of rebirth

world is created to reveal My Oneness and bring *malchus* to every hidden place. Hold on to my love for you, and listen to the voice of yearning that's always in your hearts.

(Dialogue adapted from *B'Yam Darkecha*).

Shofar on Shabbos

If Rosh Hashanah is all about shofar, what happens when Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbos? How can we stand before Him without this powerful *segulah*?

Glassblowing is a magical process, and watching a bona fide craftsman at work is mesmerizing. He fills his mouth with air, blows into the blowpipe, and the molten glass balloons into a vessel.

KEEPING THE KAVANAH

We come to Rosh Hashanah, expecting our best davening of the year.

What can keep us from being disappointed?

Reality check: How much do you daven during the year? How long is your concentration span? Be realistic. Most likely, we're not going to lose ourselves in our tefillah and forget where we are, what we have or haven't eaten, what the kids have or haven't eaten, how long will it take to heat up the food so it's hot but not dry and, and, and.

Don't expect perfection. Know what works for you. For some, it's helpful to daven at a slightly faster clip. You may not be savoring each and every word with its nuances, but the movement can keep your eyes on the goal.

And if your mind does wander astray, the worst thing to do is that which is most natural — beat ourselves up. Instead, gently and compassionately guide your thoughts back to the words.

You can also try pausing, taking a deep breath in and out, and asking: Does that thought have something to do with what I want, with what's preoccupying me? If so, find a way to plough the underlying emotion or theme into the words of the prayers in front of you.

SOLITARY SUPPLICATIONS

Rabbi Doniel Neustadt

Prepared for print by Faigy Peritzman

For some, tefillos Yamim Noraim at home is a given as they balance the Yamim Noraim with caring for their families. For others, due to coronavirus, this may be the first times in decades they're davening at home. If your avodah this year is to daven at home, this chart will guide you, letting you know what you may or may not say without a minyan.

Tefillah	Can be said without a Minyan	Notes
Hataras Nedarim	No	The last paragraph; <i>Harei ani...</i> is said alone
Shir Hamaalos Mimamakim after Yishtabach	Yes	
Yekum Purkan (Shabbos)	No	
Avinu Malkeinu	Yes	
13 Middos Harachamim before Krias HaTorah	No	
Lamnatzeach Levnei Korach/ Min Hameitzar before Shofar	Yes	May be said before the Tekias Shofar for women
Mussaf	Yes	Begin only after Zman Krias Shema ends
Unesaneh Tokef	Yes	Until the words: <i>ain kitzva...</i>
Piyutim Such as V'chol Maaminim	Yes	
Prostration by Aleinu	No	
Hayom Haras Olam	No	
Areshes Sfasainu	No	
Tashlich	Yes	
Tefillas Zaka	Yes	
Kol Nidrei	No	Recite <i>shehecheyanu</i> if did not do so at candle-lighting
Baruch Shem Kevod Malchuso aloud	Yes	
Slichos Night of Yom Kippur	Yes	Skip Keil Melech and 13 Middos and any segment in Aramaic
Second Vidui of Chazaras Hashatz for each Tefillah	No	
Yizkor/Av Harachamim	Yes	
Avodas Kohein Gadol	No	
Slichos of Neilah	Yes	Skip Keil Melech and 13 Middos and any segment in Aramaic
Shema Yisrael, Baruch Shem, Hashem Hu HaElokim at the end of Neilah	Yes	

The *Nefesh HaChaim* (*Shaar Aleph*, chapter 15) likens this process to the creation of man.

The highest level of man, which corresponds to the air before it's blown, is the *neshamah*. The next level is *ruach*, when the glassblower releases the air into the blowpipe. The last stage, at which man becomes animated with life, a vessel for his soul, is called *nefesh* — an expression of *shevisa* (cessation) and *menuchah* (rest). In spiritual terms, there was a downward movement in our creation, from *neshamah* to *ruach* to *nefesh*, as Hashem filled man with life force.

There's a rule that applies to hiking and to almost anything else in life: What comes down must go up (and vice versa). A downhill ride will be followed by a hill to climb. That applies to seasons, energy, mood — all of life works in cycles. There's the water cycle and photosynthesis, sound waves and light waves. (In fact, when we think we're at the furthest point away from our origin, we're closest to the beginning.)

Man's creation was a downward movement. What follows? An upward swing. The soul longs for its source. Man seeks to find his Creator. This may be dressed up as a search for truth and knowledge, a yen to find oneness with the universe, or a celebration of morality. Whatever form it takes, essentially, it's the soul trying to complete the cycle that began with creation.

This takes vivid shape on Rosh Hashanah. We blow the shofar: our sound, breath, and air, and with it, affirm our part in the process of creation. We blow — a buoyant breath of hope and longing. No wonder it arouses mercy.

But what if when we don't have this?

The cycle of man's creation — the *olam katan* — is a mirror of what took place as Hashem created the world. Seas, vegetation, animals, Hashem's presence was concealed further with each creation. His *malchus* veiled. And then man was created. Man, who can deny Hashem. Man, who can claim the world as his personal kingdom. It was Erev Shabbos. Everything hung in the balance.

What followed? Shabbos. Adam declared: "Hashem Melech" (Tehillim 93:1). Testimony that Hashem is the Creator. Shabbos. Cessation. Move out of the rat race, relax our grip on the attempts to control and conquer. Refocus on the why, reacquire ourselves with He who has ultimate control.

Shabbos, from the word *shevisah*, to cease, and *shuvah*, to return. Return to its source. Six days of fragmentation and concealment was followed by Shabbos, a day of unity, of meaning, a day when the seeming randomness came together to form a pattern of *malchus* and holiness.

Shofar brings us to *malchus*. And Shabbos Malkesa accomplishes the same spiritual task.

When Shabbos falls on Rosh Hashanah we don't need to blow shofar, because Shabbos is our shofar. Shabbos, the completion of the cycle, the jump from distance to closeness, brings us to a place of unity, meaning, and connection. ☺