

BS'D Soul Prayer, Class #2, September 17, 2019 ¹

Rosh Hashanah – Thankfulness, Tests, and Malkhut

Psalm 100

(1) Mizmor LeTodah – A Song of Thanksgiving: Let the whole earth call out to Hashem.	<i>Mizmor l'todah. Hariu l'Adonai kol ha'aretz.</i>	(א) מִזְמוֹר לְתוֹדָה הֲרִיעוּ לַיהוָה כָּל הָאָרֶץ:
(2) Serve Hashem with joy; come before Him with exultation.	<i>Iodu et Adonai be'simchah; bo'u lefanav bir'nanah.</i>	(ב) עֲבְדוּ אֶת יְהוָה בְּשִׂמְחָה בָּאוּ לִפְנֵי בְרִנָּה:
(3) Know that Hashem [the Infinite Eternal One who transcends any conception we have of Him] is Elohim [the One who conceals Himself as the Master Director of creation]. He alone made us; [we did not make ourselves; and that is why] we are His – His people and the flock of His pasture. ²	<i>De'u ki Adonai Hu Elohim; Hu asanu; ve'lo anachnu; amo, ve'tzon marito.</i>	(ג) דַּעוּ כִּי יְהוָה הוּא אֱלֹהִים הוּא עָשָׂנוּ וְלוֹ (ולא) אֲנַחְנוּ עִמּוֹ וְצֹאן מִרְעִיתוֹ:
(4) Enter His gates with thanksgiving, His courtyards with praise. Give thanks to Him, bless His Name [by continually drawing down and internalizing ever greater revelations of His eternal love].	<i>Bo'u she'arav be'todah; cha'tzero'tav bi'tehillah; hodu lo; barekhu shemo.</i>	(ד) בָּאוּ שְׂעָרָיו בְּתוֹדָה חֲצֵרֹתָיו בְּתִהְלָה הוֹדוּ לוֹ בְּרָכוּ שְׁמוֹ:
(5) For Hashem is good. His steadfast loving-kindness is eternal, and His faithfulness [to fulfill His promise of redemption] endures from generation to generation.	<i>Ki tov Adonai; le'olam chasdo; ve'ad dor vador emunato.</i>	(ה) כִּי טוֹב יְהוָה לְעוֹלָם חֲסִדוֹ וְעַד דָּר וְדָר אֱמוּנָתוֹ:

(א) שבחא על קורבן תודתא יביבו קדם יי כל יתבי ארעא:

A *shevachah* (praise) said when bringing a thanksgiving offering. Blast trumpets before Hashem all inhabitants of the earth! (Targum Yonathan)

(א) מזמור לתודה הריעו לה' כל הארץ. פירושו שתודו לו החדס שעשה עמכם ואתם תאמרו הריעו לה' כל הארץ, שכל הארץ ישמחו לשמחתכם: *Mizmor l'todah*: Thank Him for the kindness He has done for you. Only then call out, "Break forth in joyous song to Hashem, all the world!" That the whole world should rejoice in your joy. (Radak)

(א) לתודה - זה המזמור יאמר המביא תודה על הנס הנעשה לו. הריעו וגו' - על כי תראו מפלאות ה' בהנס הנעשה לי: *Le'todah*: this *mizmor* is said by one who brings a thanksgiving offering for a *ness* (miracle) done for him. *Hariu*: I want the whole world to see the wonders of Hashem in the *ness* that He has done for me; [I do not want this just for myself; I want the whole world to rejoice with me]! (Metzudot David)

(א) מזמור לתודה - על הודאה של נס, הריעו לה' - שבעת ינהיג עפי' הטבע דומה כמלך הסגור בהיכלו ומנהיג ע"י שריו ויועציו, אבל בעת הנס ידמה כמלך היוצא מהיכלו ומתהלך בין העם להשגיח בעצמו על עניניהם, ואז יריעו כולם תרועה גדולה להמליכו, כמ"ש כל העמים תקעו כף הריעו לאלהים: *Mizmor le'todah*: Thanksgiving for a *ness*. *Hariu*: When Hashem runs the world in accord with nature (hidden, behind the scenes of cause and effect), He is likened to a king closed up in his palace, governing his kingdom via his ministers and advisors. However, when He does a *ness*, He is like a king who goes forth from his palace and walks among the people, to oversee their affairs Himself. It is then that all shout and blast a great trumpet call in order to accept His *Malkhut* upon themselves. This is the meaning of [the call that will rise up from all mankind together when Hashem reveals His *Malkhut* in the messianic age], "[It is time to] join hands [and unite together], all you nations! Blast the great *shofar* to proclaim/accept Hashem's absolute sovereignty" (Psalm 47:2). (Malbim)

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² The *kri* (spoken form) and *ktiv* (written form) of the word *velo* are homonyms (i.e., they sound alike but mean two different things). *Velo* is written *vav-lamed-aleph* (and we did not [make ourselves]) but pronounced (and understood practically) as *vav-lamed-vav* (and we are His). As we have tried to bring out in our translation, the *ktiv* (written form) is the basis of and leads to the *kri* (spoken form) [or stated otherwise, the *kri* flows from the *ktiv*]. In the language of physics, the *ktiv* is the ground or background (i.e., transcendent context), while the *kri* is the specific figure that stands out within that context. In rabbinical terminology, the *ktiv* is the *klal* (overriding first principle) while the *kri* is the *prat* (the detail through which we access the *klal*).

Thus the fact that we did not make ourselves – that Hashem literally formed and made us into a unique nation (perhaps referring to the iron furnace of Egyptian bondage), and that our subsequent history as a nation has never conformed to the normal laws of nationhood – this leads to the profound realization that we are His, that we actually belong to Him. The first idea (that Hashem created us) is brought out by Yeshaya, "Am zu yatzarti li, tehilati yesaperu – I [Hashem] fashioned this people for Myself, that they [by their very existence] might declare My praise" (Isaiah 43:21). The second idea (that we belong to Hashem) is embodied in a verse in the Song of the Sea, "Until Your people have crossed, Hashem; until the people You *acquired* [as Your own by virtue of having brought them forth from Egyptian bondage] have crossed over" (Exodus 15:16). Here, in *Mizmor LeTodah* (Psalm 100), King David has joined these two ideas in one word.

Modim

In the *Modim* prayer near the end of the *Amidah*, we thank for having granted us life and sustained us till this moment, and we ask that He continue to grant us life and be gracious toward us, to bring about the final redemption by gathering every soul from the four corners of the world to the *Beit HaMikdash* in Yerushalayim, so that we together with the entire world can serve Him. We then add, “*Al sh’anachnu modim lakh, barukh El Hahodaot* – [we shall forever thank You] for the privilege of giving thanks to You, O blessed GD of thanksgiving to whom all thanks is due.” Or alternatively: “We shall forever thank You for making it possible for us to express our thanks to You; for making us in a way that the most natural thing is to express our thanks to You.” This is based on the Talmud. According to Rav, we say, “*Modim anachnu lakh Hashem Eloheinu al sh’anu modim lakh* – we thank You, Hashem our GD, **for the privilege of being able to give thanks to You!**” According to Shmuel, we say, “*Modim anachnu lakh Elohei kol basar al sh’anu modim lakh* – we thank You, O GD of all living beings, **for the privilege of giving thanks to You!**” (*Sotah* 40a). Rashi explains: “*Al sh’natata be’libenu lihiyot devukim bakh umodim lakh* – we thank You for instilling in our heart the desire to cleave to You and to thank You.” This also explains why we call Hashem, “*El Hahodaot* – God of thanksgiving to whom all thanks is due.” Thankfulness is the key. Thankfulness to the Creator of the world, gratitude to the eternal source of life, the One who gives us awareness precisely so that we can thank and acknowledge Him.

A Year of Todah and Tests, Tests and Todah

Becoming Great Through Tests – Yitzchak, Avraham, Sarah, and US

“*After these events, HaElokim nissa (tested) Avraham*” (Genesis 22:1). The idea that Hashem tests us in order to build us and elevate us is crucial to our whole relationship with Him. We see this in the word *nissa* (the verb form of *nisayon*, test), which is related to *nassah* (to lift high). Also related is the word *ness*, on the one hand, a banner or even a ship’s mast which is raised high, and on the other hand, a miracle. The connection is clear: Hashem tests us by pushing and stretching us beyond our present limits. Why? In order to elevate us beyond that limit; in order to connect us to the level of miracle that transcends the laws and limits of nature. It is thus written, “*Natatah li’yir’ekha, ness lehit’nossess* – You have tested those who revere You, with the intention of raising them high” (Psalm 60:6, Rashi). The Midrash comments, “One *nisayon* (test) after another, many *gidulim* (acts of greatness) followed by others, in order to test them, in order to make them great, to lift them up as a ship’s mast” (*Bereshit Rabbah* 55:1).

Professor Philip Biberfeld

With Avraham, a new phase began in the *moral and spiritual evolution* of mankind. According to tradition, the creation of the world was only the achievement of the first part of its goal. Spiritually and morally, creation had not ended; it was just beginning. The end of the physical creation was the starting point of the struggle between the forces that tend to uphold creation (*tzadikim*) and those that tend to destroy it (*reshaim*). This struggle forms the essence of human history...The forces that will prevail in the end are those who attain freedom from the animal instincts inherent in human nature...In this respect, the first human beings were submitted to a *test*. Abstention from the fruit of the forbidden tree which strongly appealed to their instincts, would have proven their determination to control desire and would have led the way to human freedom. After the failure of Adam and Eve, the cause of human freedom waited twenty generations for a bearer of its torch, as we read in *Avot*, “Ten generations passed from Adam to Noach...” Even Noach, though a *tzadik* (righteous man), did not bring about a decisive turn. In spite of the overwhelming experience of the Flood, he did not achieve the stature needed to exert a permanent influence on future generations. This seems to be the meaning of the, “*ish tzadik, tamim hayah be’dorotav, et HaElokim hit’halekh Noach* – a righteous and blameless man in his generations, walking with God” (Genesis 6:9), implying that his significance did not extend beyond his own time. His descendants Shem and Ever were for centuries the towering guardians of the ancient traditions, but they did not impart to their time powerful impulses for the future. The endeavors of these intermediate generations were not lasting and their great traditions would have become meaningless had not Avraham turned them into the cornerstones of the future by becoming a rallying point in the scheme of spiritual evolution. **Even Avraham had to prove his fitness:** “Our forefather Avraham was tested with ten trials...” Throughout his life, Hashem confronted him with serious crises. Only when he passed the last and supreme test, the offer of his son, was his fitness as bearer of the banner of the moral and spiritual evolution of mankind established *for all time*, as indeed Hashem promised him in the wake of the *Akedah* (Genesis 22:16), “All the nations of the world shall be blessed through your descendants because you obeyed My voice” (Biberfeld, *Universal Jewish History*, Volume II, pp. 191-192).

Avraham’s tenth and final test involved his spiritual heir. To be the bearer of the *moral and spiritual evolution* of mankind meant to be exposed to the hostilities and persecutions of all those who oppose human freedom and human dignity. To walk through such a world full of hate proclaiming these goals in words and deeds would require matchless and indomitable courage, and willingness to sacrifice life and belongings at any time...This is the

explanation of the last test of Avraham as derived from the actual course of two thousand years of Jewish history and anticipated in his last and supreme trial. It confronted him with the question, “Are you willing to endanger and even to sacrifice the life of your descendants for *My goal* in the world?” This is clearly indicated by the words pronounced after Avraham had stood the test, “By My Essence I have sworn,” says Hashem, “because you performed this deed and did not withhold your only son, I will surely bless you and greatly increase your offspring like the stars of the firmament and the sand on the seashore...All the nations of the world shall be *blessed* through your descendants because you obeyed My voice” (Genesis 22:16). These words do not leave any doubt that in this trial the fate of the evolutionary goal was at stake (Biberfeld, *Universal Jewish History*, Volume III, p. 142, with notes from pp. 145-146).

“**All the nations of the world shall be blessed through your descendants because you obeyed My voice**” (Genesis 22:18). As Professor Biberfeld wrote, the *Akedah* has anticipated the path of the Jewish people throughout history. In this last verse, it anticipates what will happen after history as we know it, or as he calls it, the goal of the spiritual evolution of mankind. Here, at the conclusion of the *Akedah*, we see the crowning touch to what Hashem already promised at the very beginning when Avraham was first commanded to leave his home to make *aliyah* to Eretz Yisrael: “All the families of the earth will be blessed through you” (Genesis 12:3). All the great prophecies of the prophets are extensions of this great promise: “The earth shall be filled with the consciousness of Hashem as the waters cover the sea” (Isaiah 11:9). “I will bring them to My holy mountain and cause them to rejoice in My house of prayer. Their elevation-offerings and peace-offerings shall be accepted favorably upon My altar. For My House shall be called a House of Prayer for all mankind” (Isaiah 56:7). “And it shall come to pass in the end of days that the Mountain of Hashem’s House shall be set over all other mountains and lifted high above the hills. And all nations shall come streaming to it. And many nations shall come and say: Come let us go up to the Mountain of God, to the House of the God of Yaacov; and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths. For out of Tziyon shall go forth the Torah, and Hashem’s Word from Yerushalayim. And He will judge between nations and decide between peoples. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither will they pursue war any more” (Isaiah 2:2-4; Micah 4:1-3).

Hariu l’Adonai kol ha’aretz!!!

Immediately after the *Akedah*, it is written regarding Sarah Imenu, “The lives of Sarah were one-hundred years, twenty years, and seven years; [these are] the years of the lives of Sarah” (Genesis 23:1). Of course, in Hebrew, the word *chayim* (life) is always plural, lives. But here is where it really is. Because Sarah lived fully in both the upper world of the soul and the lower world of the body, in the most perfect way.

When Avraham and Yitzchak were up on Mount Moriah, they too attained this exalted level, or to be more exact, since they had already largely attained it, but now, because they had overcome the split between this lower world and the world above (that resulted as a consequence of the sin of Adam HaRishon), they now became worthy of embodying that level fully and in the most perfect way – the ability to live in both the upper worlds and the lower world simultaneously. According to the Ari, this is the meaning of Hashem calling Avraham’s name twice, “Avraham, Avraham” (Genesis 22:11). During the ordeal of the *Akedah*, Yitzchak’s soul left him and flew heavenwards. He was actually taken and lifted up into *Gan Eden*.³ After the *Akedah*, he was carried by angels to the yeshivah of Shem, the son of Noach, Malkhi-Tzedek. This explains why he is not mentioned after Avraham returns to join Eliezer and Yishmael, to return with them to Be’er Sheva.

This also explains the small letter *kaf* in the word *ve’liv’kotah* (to cry for her, Sarah), which is taken to mean that Avraham did not cry excessively over Sarah’s passing (Genesis 23:2). In prophetic vision, Sarah had been shown what her husband and son were doing on Mount Moriah, and the incredible heights they attained. As a result, her soul became so attached on high that she left this dimension completely. Her death was thus not a regular death, but a divine kiss that released and propelled her soul upward. Avraham knew this – that Hashem had allowed each of them to reach the highest, each in his own unique way. Sarah went up completely. Yitzchak was taken away from the world temporarily, but would return completely transformed. Avraham was now able to live in both worlds simultaneously. Again, this is alluded to in the fact that Hashem called his name twice.

Finally, this explains why Avraham was so intent on purchasing *Me’arat HaMakhpelah* (the Double Cave) in Hebron. He had entered the cave when the angels came to visit him to announce Yitzchak’s birth (38 years prior). There

³ In the Torah it is written (Genesis 27:26-27), “Yitzchak said to him [Yaacov], ‘Come closer to me and kiss me, my son.’ So he [Yaacov] drew near and kissed him, and he [Yitzchak] smelled the fragrance of his garments and blessed him, saying, ‘See, the fragrance of my son is like the fragrance of a *sadeh* (field) that Hashem has blessed.’” What *sadeh* (field) is Yitzchak Avinu referring to? According to tradition (*Taanit* 29b), he is referring to *Gan Eden*, which is called *Sadeh Tapuchim* (Apple Orchard). How did Yitzchak Avinu know what *Gan Eden* smells like? When he was on the altar, and Avraham was about to put the knife to his throat, Yitzchak’s soul departed and ascended into the spiritual dimension. This was Yitzchak’s near-death experience that transformed him into another person (*Siftei Cohen*, Genesis 23:2).

he beheld Adam and Chavah, with even the heels of their feet shining brighter than the sun and moon. Now he was purchasing it because he had finally attained what the cave stood for: “Why is it called *Makhpelah* (Double Cave)? Rav and Shmuel both agreed that it is a *double* cave, but differed exactly as to how. According to one, it is a large cave which opens up into another cave. According to the other, it is a two-story cave” (*Eruvin* 53a, *Baba Batra* 58a). *Makhpelah* (Double Cave) alludes to man’s existing simultaneously in the upper dimension of the soul and the lower dimension of the body. The same is true when we speak about an outer and an inner cave. The outer cave alludes to the body and the inner cave to the soul.

Kabbalat Ohl Malkhut Shamayim (SHMA) – The secret of the Nesirah on RH Receiving/Accepting Hashem’s Malkhut on Rosh Hashanah

Shma Yisrael Havayah Elohenu Havayah echad.

Havayah Melekh, Havayah Malakh, Havayah Yimlock le’olam va’ed.

Elokim said, “Let us make Adam (Man) in our image and likeness...” *Elokim* created Adam in His image; in the image of *Elokim* He created him; male and female He created them (Genesis 1:26-27). **Hashem Elokim said**, “It is not good for Adam to be alone. I will make him a compatible helpmate” (Genesis 2:18). **Hashem Elokim made** a *tardemah* (deep trance) fall upon Adam, *vayishan* (so that he fell into a deep sleep). He took one of his ribs, and closed the flesh in its place. *Hashem Elokim* built the rib that He took from Adam into *ishah* (wife), and He brought her to Adam. Adam said, “Now this is essence of my essence, and flesh of my flesh. She shall thus be called *ishah* (wife) because she was taken from *ish* (man).” Therefore an *ish* shall leave his father and mother, and be united with *ishto* (his wife), and they shall become one flesh (Genesis 2:21-24).

In the oral tradition based on these verses (See *Berakhot* 61a; *Eruvin* 18a; *Ketuvot* 8a; *Zohar Vayetze*, 1:165a; *Zohar Bamidbar*, 3:117a), we are told that Adam and Chavah were originally united back-to-back. In order to “operate” on Adam and separate Chavah from him, Hashem “anesthetized” him by causing a deep *tardemah* (trance, sleep) to fall on him. Once she was separated from him, He brought her to Adam, and they united face-to-face. Paralleling this on a cosmic level, initially we existed in God. Enfolded in His infinite light, our souls were undifferentiated in a state of infinite unity. In order to give us the gift of existence, God withdrew and hid His light. He withdrew His *Torah* which is His *emet* (the obvious truth of His existence) in order to create the possibility of our *emunah* (faith) and our *tefillah* (prayer) which can only grow and mature when, like the moon, it is not overwhelmed by the direct illumination of the sun. At first, that is, man is said to be *back-to-back* with God. His very existence is subsumed in the light. The greatest act of *chesed* (kindness) that God can do is to withdraw His light in order to allow room for man to come to full existence. In other words, the Godly light (which is masculine) must circumscribe itself to allow room for man (who is female vis-à-vis God) to express himself and to come to his fullness. As we saw above, this involves the male quality going into a state of *tardemah* (trance) or *dormita* (deep sleep). On a spiritual level this is only a feigned sleep. Be that as it may, it is all that is necessary in order to separate the female from the male. This is the *nesirah*. Only after they have been *separated* from their initial back-to-back relationship can the two unite together face-to-face.

Left	Right
<i>Elokim/Adanut</i>	<i>Havayah (YHVH)</i>
<i>Shekhinah</i> (Indwelling Presence)	<i>HaKadosh Barukh Hu</i> (Blessed Holy One)
<i>Sefirah</i> (detail)	<i>Partzuf</i> (collective, synergy)
<i>Malkhut / Chavah</i>	<i>Zeir Anpin / Tiferet / Adam</i>
<i>Beriah-Yetzirah-Asiyah</i>	<i>Atzilut</i>
<i>Particle</i>	<i>Wave</i>
<i>Matter/Mass</i>	<i>Energy</i>
<i>Finite</i>	<i>Infinite</i>
<i>Emunah</i>	<i>Emet</i> ⁴
<i>Tefillah</i>	<i>Torah</i> ⁵
<i>Earth</i>	<i>Heaven</i>

On RH we, as separate individuals, as separate existences, choose to reunite with Source. This is the inner work of RH.

⁴ *Emet* is truth; *emunah* is faith. *Emet* (truth) is like the sun; *emunah* (faith) is like the moon. The sun of the day dispels and eliminates darkness; the moon of the night illuminates darkness but does not dispel it. When *emet* (truth), corresponding to the sun of day, shines, what place is there for the *emunah* (faith), corresponding to the moon? As the sages put it, “What good is a candle in the noonday sun?” (*Chulin* 60b).

⁵ *Torah* is Hashem’s teaching from above and *tefillah* is man’s prayer from below. At first, *tefillah* is said to be joined in an imperfect relationship with the written *Torah*, namely, back-to-back. When this is so, it is not considered a separate, independent entity. Only after being separated is it then able to bond face-to-face with the *Torah*.