

Good Yom Tov, everyone. I want to again wish you all a *k'siva vachasima tova*. . . a year filled with much *bracha* and *hatzlacha*...and a year filled with good health and much success...in *ruchniyus* and *gashmiyus*, a year of *shalom* and *achdus*...and a year of *refuos* and *yeshuos* for all of Am Yisrael.

Long before Har Sinai, long before anyone had heard the words Rosh Hashanah, Hashem gave Avraham Avinu a single instruction. He told him: *הִתְהַלֵּךְ לִפְנֵי יְהוָה תָּמִיד*. "*Walk before Me, and be tamim*."

I would like to suggest that this apparently simple instruction is the real subject of everything we will say and do this morning.

The **Bnei Yissaschar**, in his *Agra D'Kalah*, writes that תמים תהיה, the commandment for *Klal Yisrael* to be *tamim*, is the theme of the *Yamim Noraim*, the days of awe:

אגרא דכלה, דברים, פרשת שופטים תמים תהיה עם י"י אלקיך. ירמוז על הימים שמן ראש השנה עד הושענא רבה באשמורת ב' שעות קודם היום... ויש בהן ת"צ שעות מנין תמי"ם תהיה, בכל השעות הללו עם י"י אלקיך ...

"You shall be tamim with Hashem your G-d — this alludes to the days from Rosh Hashana until Hoshana Rabbah... There are 490 hours in that period, corresponding to the numerical value of the word tamim. These are the hours in which we are called to be completely with Hashem."

Targum Onkelos translates *tamim* as *shalem* — whole, complete:

תרגום אונקלוס, דברים יח: יג. שְׁלִים תְּהִי בְּדַחֲלָתָא דְּיְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ .

Be shalem with Hashem. Whole. Complete. Undivided.

Rabbeinu Bachai, commenting on this command to Avraham, gives us what I believe is the clearest (and most demanding) definition of *temimus*:

רבינו בחיי, בראשית יז: א ודע כי נקרא "תמים" מי שתוכו כבדו, ופיו ולבו שוים, ומפני שאברהם אבינו ע"ה היה שרש האמונה, וראש כל מיחדים, וענין היחוד צריך שתהיה עדות הלב והפה שוים, על כן הזכירו הש"י "והיה תמים", הוא הדין בכל שאר עבודות הש"י יצטרך האדם שיהיו פיו ולבו שוים

*"Know that a person is called tamim when his **inside matches his outside, and his mouth and heart are equal**. Because Avraham Avinu was the root of faith and the first of those who proclaimed God's unity, and the concept of Divine unity requires the testimony of the heart and mouth to agree, Hashem therefore said to him, 'Be tamim.' The same is true of all other forms of Divine service: a person's mouth and heart must agree."*

That is the standard, and it is worth contemplating how demanding it actually is. Hashem is telling Avraham what He expects. Not intellectual belief. Not correct behavior performed on schedule. A person whose mouth and heart are totally in agreement. Thought, will, speech, and action all perfectly aligned.

Temimus does not mean perfection. It means integration of mouth and heart. Not a person without struggle or contradiction, but a person who refuses to make peace with being inconsistent.

I want to suggest this morning that everything *Chazal* built into the structure of the Rosh Hashana *Mussaf* is, at its core, a three-part test of exactly this one thing. Rosh Hashana *Mussaf* has a structure unlike any other Yom Tov, three distinct sections: *Malchuyos*, *Zichronos*, *Shofaros*. And each, I believe, tests, from a different angle, the very same command Avraham was given: *והיה תמים*...that our mouth and our heart reflect the same thing.

Although the **Rambam** does not count being *tamim* among the 613 *mitzvos*, the **Ramban** does:

השגות הרמב"ן לספר המצוות, שכחת העשין, מצוה ת מצוה שמינית שנצטוונו להיות לבבנו תמים עמו ית' והוא שנאמר תמים תהיה עם י"י אלהיך.

The eighth omitted mitzva is that we are commanded that our hearts be whole with Him, as it says: 'You shall be tamim with Hashem your G-d.

The **Ramban** explains why the Rambam omitted it— not because it is minor, but because it is a כוללת mitzva, an all-encompassing charge standing behind every other mitzva:

ואולי חשב הרב שהיא צוואה כוללת המצות כולן ללכת בדרכי התורה ...

"Perhaps the Rav considered it an all-encompassing charge, [equivalent to] all the mitzvos together, to walk in the ways of the Torah."

We open *Mussaf* with *Malchuyos*, by declaring Hashem as our King. Our mouths declare this in many ways:

ואנחנו כורעים ומשתחוים ומודים לפני מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא...

ה' ימלוך לעולם ועד...

כי לה' המלוכה ומושל בגוים...

מי הוא זה מלך הכבוד, ה' צבקות הוא מלך הכבוד סלה...

מלוד על כל העולם כולו בכבודך...

But the question *Malchuyos* really asks is whether our hearts agree with our mouths. Are we really תמים?

Malchuyos cannot tolerate division. A king whose subjects are loyal to him only five days a week, but act independently the other two days is not really a king.

The **Netziv** identifies exactly this failure at the heart of *cheit ha'egel*:

העמק דבר, שמות לב: כו מי לה' אֵלֵי. אֵין הפִּנְיָה מִי הוּא שְׁלֹא עֲבַד עֲבֹדַת פִּזְכִּים... אֵלֶּא מִי יוֹדֵעַ בְּעַצְמוֹ שֶׁהוּא אֵךְ לֵה'...

'Who is for Hashem, join me' — the intent is not to ask who did not worship idols. Rather, Moshe was asking who knows himself to belong only to Hashem."

The standard Moshe was looking for was 'אך לה' wholly Hashem's, without a reserve clause in their allegiance.

But perhaps there is another, subtler kind of reserve clause, subtler than the golden calf.

The **Bechor Shor** writes:

בכור שור דברים פרק יח פסוק יג (פרשת שופטים): (יג) תמים תהיה: כאיש תם שאינו מדקדק ומערים עם בוראו, אלא מה שהקב"ה מביא לידו לוקח, ואינו מצפה כי אם לרצונו הן טוב הן חילוף, ויאמר: "ה' הוא הטוב בעיניו יעשה".

'Tamim tihyeh' — [be] like a simple man, who does not scrutinize or act manipulatively with his Creator.

Rather, whatever the Holy One, blessed be He, brings into his hand, he accepts — and he hopes for nothing but His will, whether it is what he hoped for or its opposite, and he says: 'Hashem — let Him do what is good in His eyes.

Sometimes we accept Hashem's Kingship, but on the unspoken condition that the kingdom more or less conforms to the world we expected Him to give us. We often say: *If my children were different... If my marriage were easier... If my health were better... If I had more money... If the world were less frightening... If Israel were more secure... If I were 20 years younger... then I could be the Jew I am supposed to be.*

Malchuyos says: **No. This is the kingdom that you need to deal with.** Not because everything in it is good. We are charged with fighting evil and pursuing justice. Accepting Hashem's *malchus* does not mean we stop trying to change what needs to be changed. But it means something more fundamental: this is the reality within which Hashem has asked me to serve Him. To accept Hashem as King is to relinquish the fantasy that I would serve Him perfectly if only He had given me a different kingdom. Instead, we need to reorient ourselves, to say “I do not need a different life in order to serve Hashem. I need to discover how to serve Hashem within the life He has given me.”

And perhaps that is why **Rashi** defines *temimus* this way:

רש"י, דברים יח:יג תמים תהיה עם ה' אלהיך — התהלך עמו בתמימות ותצפה לו, ולא תחקר אחר העתידות, אלא כל מה שיבא עליך קבל בתמימות, ואז תהיה עמו ולחלקו.

*Walk with Him in wholeness and place your hope in Him. **Do not investigate the future.** Rather, whatever comes upon you, receive it with temimus, and then you will be with Him and become His portion."*

Not because I know what tomorrow will bring. Not because I know that tomorrow will look the way I want it to look. But because it will be exactly how Hashem wants it. The **Chazon Ish** famously warns against a misunderstanding of *bitachon*: *bitachon* is not confidence that the outcome I want will occur. It is the conviction that אין מקרה בעולם — there is no coincidence in the world — that whatever occurs is not outside Hashem's providence.

חזון איש, אמונה ובטחון ב:א טעות נמשנת נתאזרה בלב רבים במושג בטחון... אבל ענין הבטחון הוא האמון שאין מקרה בעולם, וכל הנעשה תחת השמש הכל בהכרזה מאתו יתברך.

"An old mistake has become entrenched in the hearts of many regarding bitachon... Rather, bitachon means the conviction that there is no coincidence in the world, and that everything that happens under the sun is entirely by His proclamation."

Similarly, *Malchuyos* does not mean: tomorrow will be the way I want it. It means: whatever tomorrow brings, **Hashem will still be Melech. It is His world...**

Our mouths say *ein od milvado*. *Malchuyos* asks whether our hearts have quietly kept a second address on file, just in case — and sometimes that second address is not another god, but another power, or another source of security. Sometimes, it is simply the world as I insist it ought to be. *Malchuyos* does not ask us to approve of everything that is. It asks us to stop making our loyalty to Hashem contingent on reality becoming what we want it to be.

And perhaps that is why *Malchuyos* does not stand alone this morning. It is followed by *Zichronos* and *Shofaros*. Because accepting Hashem's Kingship is only the beginning of what it means to become *tamim*.

Zichronos turns the question inward. *Zichronos*, of course, speaks first about Hashem remembering us. But perhaps standing before the God Who remembers everything about us forces **us** to confront something we ourselves have forgotten. Hashem remembers not only what we did this year. **He remembers who we were created to be. And we must remember that, as well.**

The **Ramban**, commenting on the Pasuk לא רחוקה היא... כי המצוה הזאת... "this *mitzva* is not distant from you, identifies "this *mitzva*" as *teshuva* itself. *Chazal* tell us that before a child is born, an angel teaches him the entire Torah, and before birth he forgets it. **Rabbi Akiva Tatz**, in *Living Inspired*, develops a beautiful implication of that image: perhaps what appears forgotten is not truly lost. It has been driven beneath the conscious surface, where it lies buried, intact, waiting.

It is closer than we think... כי קרוב אליך הדבר בפיך ובלבבך לעשותו

This is, I believe, what **Rav Kook** means in one of the most striking lines in *Orot HaTeshuva*:

אורות התשובה, פרק טו התשובה הראשית שהיא מאירה את המחשבים מיד, היא שישב האדם אל עצמו, אל שרש נשמתו, ומיד ישוב אל האלקים.

"The primary teshuva, which illuminates the darkness immediately, is that a person returns to himself, to the root of his own soul — and immediately, he returns to G-d."

Notice the order of that sentence, because the order is the entire *chiddush*. Rav Kook does not write: return to Hashem and thereby discover your truest self. He writes the opposite. Return to yourself first, and the return to Hashem has already happened, because the root of your soul and your connection to Him were never two separate addresses.

There is a difficult, arresting story in the *Gemara in Avodah Zarah* about a man named Eleazar ben Durdaya, a notorious sinner who finally resolved to do *teshuvah*. He appealed for help to the mountains, then the heavens, and finally the stars and received no positive response. The response was silence, again and again and again — until he finally understood: *אין הקב"ר תלוי אלא בי*, the matter depends on no one but myself. And he placed his head between his knees, and wept until his soul departed. I have always been struck by that posture, his head between his knees, reminiscent of an unborn child. His *teshuvah* was not the invention of a new self through sheer force of will. It was a physical return to the person he was before a single choice, good or bad, had ever divided his mouth from his heart.

Zichronos is not merely a Divine ledger recording our successes and failures. It is Hashem holding us up with something closer to tenderness than accusation, the *tamim* person He always knew we were capable of being — and our own chance to remember that same person ourselves.

And then, at last, no more words at all. *Shofaros*. Just sound.

Rabbeinu Bachai's definition of *temimus* — mouth and heart in agreement — reaches its final and most literal test here, because the *shofar* strips away the mouth entirely. Just a cry. **When every word is stripped away, what actually comes out of us?**

All year long, we have words. Explanations. Justifications. Rationalizations. Reasons why we did what we did and why we are not yet the people we hoped to become. When defending the distance between our ideals and our lives, we can be remarkably articulate.

And then comes the *shofar*. No explanations. No qualifications. No defense. Just the sound that emerges when there is nothing left to hide behind. Perhaps even an echo of that first Divine breath, *ויפח באפיו נשמת חיים*, the breath of life before all our explanations and justifications began.

Does that sound match the person I say I am? Perhaps that is what *Chazal* built into these three great *distinct sections*. *Malchuyos* asks us to remember where we belong. *Zichronos* asks us to remember who we are, the *tamim* person buried beneath this year's debris. And *Shofaros* strips away all the words and asks whether the voice that emerges from within us is finally the voice of that same person. In a few moments, we will hear that voice of the shofar. It asks us to listen to ourselves. Beneath all the words we have accumulated this year, what voice is actually there? Is it *tamim*?

Rav Hirsch writes on the *mitzva* of *temimus*: "*This wholeness is the direct result of our awareness of God's unity...Not even the smallest fiber of our lives shall be detached from God; we must be with God in our entirety...His will is the sole criterion by which we are to decide what to do and what to refrain from doing.*"

Perhaps that is the deeper message of all three.

***Malchuyos* tells me: I do not need another world.**

***Zichronos* tells me: I do not need another self.**

***Shofaros* tells me: I do not need another voice.**

I do not need to wait for a different world in order to serve Hashem. I need to serve Him in this one. I need to recover the self He placed within me. And I need to allow the deepest voice of that self finally to be heard. All this traces back to those four words spoken to Avraham: *התהלך לפני יהיה תמים*. *Walk before Me, and be whole*. Be whole. Not perfect. Not without contradiction or struggle. Less divided. More able to say what we mean, to mean what we say, and to live as the people we know, somewhere deep within us, we were created to become. *Teshuvah* does not ask us to invent somebody new. It asks us to come home. May the shofar bring us there this year.