



27 Elul 5780 - Wednesday 16 September, 2020

Rejoice When There Is Trembling

Rosh Hashanah is the Day of Judgment for all mankind. Any person awaiting a court case by a human judge, is extremely apprehensive of the appointed day of his trial, for that is the day that will determine whether he will complete his life behind bars, or continue living as a free man. How much more so when a person stands trial before the King of Kings before Whom all is revealed and known! All the sins and iniquities that we transgressed throughout the year should make us concerned and tremble in fear.

However, since this day is also called a Chag, we are obligated to rejoice on this day as on all the other Chagim. It is necessary to contemplate and understand how a person can feel happy and celebrate on this day when he is about to be judged and his entire future is hanging in the balance.

The answer seems to be that if in advance of the trial, the judge would approach the offender and give him his personal phone number, telling him not to hesitate to call him for any problem, and that he will try his best to find prerogatives within the scope of the law to lessen the severity of his punishment. Even though he knows that the judge has no choice but to judge his case according to the law, he will certainly rejoice with the judge's inclination to be kind to him and with the knowledge that he will conduct the case with as much compassion as the law allows.

So too on Rosh Hashanah, although the trial is one of justice and truth, we know that Hashem is a Merciful Father who will incline the judgement to kindness and mercy. This is how we can feel happy on this day since Hashem is the One who is our Judge and He can discern in the depths of our heart how much the Yetzer Hara stood in our way. If the person truly and sincerely intends to repent and not repeat his bad deeds, Hashem will declare him innocent.

A wonderful story with a certified source is told about my grandfather, Rabbi Chaim Pinto Hagadol

zya"א, whose hilula we observed just two days ago. My grandfather zya"א had a talmid called Rabbi Eliyahu Benamozegh, and after being ordained by his Rav to become a Dayan (judge under Jewish law), Rabbi Eliyahu left Mogador and moved to Livorno in Italy, where he served as the Dayan.

One day two Jews came to a Din Torah and the Sages ruled according to their discretion. However, Rabbi Eliyahu Benamozegh said that he had received from his Rav, Rabbi Chaim Pinto, a different approach. When they heard Rabbi Chaim's zya"א ruling, the two Dayanim withdrew their ruling in favor of Rabbi Eliyahu's, despite not being obligated to change their minds.

Late that night Rabbi Eliyahu Benamozegh was studying in his home when suddenly he heard knocking on his door. To his surprise and joy, his master Rabbi Chaim together with his faithful attendant, were standing by his door. He was very excited by this surprise visit and woke up his wife, asking her to see to all the needs of his distinguished guest. After that, they sat down and discussed all the recent halachic queries that had arisen in Livorno, and when Rabbi Chaim heard how a certain Din Torah had been ruled in his name, he told R' Eliyahu that he was mistaken and the two Dayanim were the ones who were correct. "You must rectify the mistake as soon as you can," Rabbi Chaim concluded.

The next day Rabbi Eliyahu announced the surprise visit from Rabbi Chaim Pinto, and all the townspeople wished to see him and request his blessing. Despite searching for him in the entire town, they could not find R' Chaim. Several days later when they heard that Rabbi Chaim zya"א had passed away, they understood that the possibility of him being in Livorno several days before his passing was not feasible. However, with his powers of holiness, he had presented himself in Livorno so as to correct the mistake that had been ruled in his name.

David Chananya Pinto



קול חיים - רעננה