



Sincerity is the language of the soul, Rosh Hashanah 2020

The Rosh Hashanah Perspective is in memory of Shlomo Ben Edward. May his soul be uplifted and may his entire family have a happy, healthy, and successful new year!

The Rosh Hashanah Perspective also is dedicated by Zev Yisrael Ben Chaya Leah in honor of his grandmother, Ettel Maya Bas Helen. May her soul be uplifted and may the Segel family be blessed with a year of health, true happiness, and prosperity.

We are entering the most unique set of high holidays in recent memory, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur during a pandemic. Instead of the familiar Shul experience where we pray in unison and sing together with friends and family. When we enter Shul this Rosh Hashanah, it might seem different.

Even though it will be hard, while we pray, we will follow many distancing guidelines that can save many lives. This will test the limits of our motivation, effort, and focus. Nevertheless, the message, meaning, and lofty significance of Rosh Hashanah will still be the same. To crown our father in heaven, as our King once again.

There is an amazing story about the Baal Shem Tov, the founder of Chassidus, that will hopefully give us some perspective. Once there was a young man from a small village, who had come for the holidays to the Baal Shem Tov. He was completely uneducated, and he stood the whole time looking at the ark without saying anything.

At the end of Yom Kippur, during the Neilah prayer, the Baal Shem Tov cried more than usual. His students understood that there was a significant prosecution above and intensified their prayers as well.

The young boy saw the congregation's intensity and wanted to join in as well. However, all he knew was the sounds made by different farm animals. So he began to crow like a rooster!

The students of the Bal Shem Tov were confused to hear a voice crowing like a rooster, and a few of them started to quiet him down. But the Bal Shem Tov turned around and told them to continue the Neilah prayers.

As Yom Kippur ended, the Baal Shem Tov's face glowed with radiant light as he told his students that there was a bad decree written in heaven. But no matter how hard he tried to fight it, he was unsuccessful. However, when heaven heard the young boy's crying out with all his heart like a rooster, the evil decree was canceled!

During this unprecedented Rosh Hashanah, as we crown Hashem as the one and only true King, you must know that no matter where you find yourself, it is your sincerity that truly counts. Whether you are in shul, at an outdoor minyan, or home alone, it is how genuine and heartfelt you are that actually matters to Hashem.

May we all be blessed with a year of purpose and meaning. A year of strength and health. A year of true happiness and prosperity!

*Ksiva V'chasima Tova L'shana Tova Umesuka,
Rabbi Sholom Yemini*