

Sefer Devarim

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IN MEMORY OF THE VICTIMS OF THE MERON AND SURFSIDE TRAGEDIES,
AND AS A ZECHUS FOR THE YESHUA OF KLAL YISROEL

ראש השנה

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

Judgement Day

Contents:

Part I. Iyov's Angels - 1

Part II. Judging Angels - 4

Part III. Living Angels - 6

Part IV. Lessons From the Angels - 9

Part I. Iyov's Angels

Terror and Shuddering

It's the last day of the year, the night before Rosh Hashana, and so together we are all now facing the Day of Judgement. And that means it's a serious time in our lives, very serious.

One of the outstanding features of *erev Rosh Hashana* is **סָמַר מִפְּחָדְךָ בְּעָרִי וּמִמְשֹׁפֵטֶיךָ יִרְאַתִּי** – *My flesh shudders from your terror and I am afraid of your judgments* (Tehillim 119:120). That's important for everyone to put foremost in his mind; the fear of the Yom Hadin. Even Dovid, Hashem's beloved, said, **וְאַל יִתְבוֹא בְּמִשְׁפָּט אֶת עַבְדְּךָ כִּי לֹא יִצְדֵק לְפָנֶיךָ כָּל הַיּוֹם** – “Don't

come in judgment with your servant because no living one will be righteous before You.” (ibid. 143:2).

There's so much that is necessary to say because we're facing not only the Day of Judgement – of course that's the foremost thing on our minds – but actually we're facing the rest of our lives too because so much is decided on these days.

Consequences of Judgement

Sometimes a person could be judged now forever. For instance, a man might be judged on Rosh Hashana that he is going to move into a good neighborhood; he might be sent some good *chaveirim* and he'll start going to the right *shiurim*. And so this man is now being given a *zechus* that will help him his entire life. It will help him in the next world too.

And it could be *chas v'shalom* the opposite. Hakodosh Boruch Hu is displeased with him and so He says, “Move to a far-off small town in New Jersey where there are very few frum Jews; your children won't have good opportunities to become frum. They will go to the local day school where everybody has TVs and they talk about actors and baseball heroes all the time.”

And what will happen to his wife? She will get modern ideas from the neighbors and after a while you become ruined. Your wife is ruined. Your children are ruined; your success begins to unravel *ingantzen*. And all of that happened on one Rosh Hashana. It means that we're talking now about a *psak din* for all of your life; and not only for this life but **לְאוֹר בְּאוֹר הַחַיִּים** – it affects *Olam Habo* too.

Words of Consolation

And therefore, it would be worthwhile to find some kind of formula, some *derech*, that would help us to succeed not only on this last day, but something that would help us to succeed for many many days to come.

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So we'll begin now with some verses from Iyov that relate to the Day of Judgement. Everyone remembers when Iyov was lying in great misery, sick and paupered; he had lost everything. His wife, his children, and his wealth were gone.

Now, Iyov was an *ish tam v'yashar*, a man of great righteousness, and therefore he complained that he didn't understand why Hakodosh Boruch Hu sent a disaster upon him and so a number of Iyov's friends came to visit him, to console and strengthen him.

Each one of them spoke valuable and precious words but after they finished there came one Elihu ben Barachel. He was certainly a Yisroel; the others, it's a question – it could be they were from the *chachmei ha'umos* – but Elihu ben Barachel was a Yisroel and so we'll listen to his words carefully.

Accusing The Judge

וְאֵךְ אָמַרְתָּ בְּאָזְנִי – “You, Iyov, spoke in my ears, וְקוֹל מְלִיךְ אֶשְׁמָע – and I heard the sound of your words.” And what are you saying in effect? You're complaining, וְהָיָה אָנֹכִי וְלֹא עוֹן לִי – “I am pure of any guilt, וְאֵיךְ בְּלִי פֶשַׁע – I am clean and there is no sin that can be held against me.” And therefore you're accusing Hashem: הֲנִי תְּנוּאוֹת – “Hashem is finding reasons to accuse me, וְעָלִי יִמְצָא – Hashem is finding reasons to accuse me, וְיִחְשְׁבֵנִי לְאוֹיֵב לוֹ – and He considers me as an enemy.”

Now we have to understand that this was not because of any disrespect. We would never say that about Hashem because we are not on the *madreigah* of *emunah* that the *kadmonim* were. For us “Hashem” is a word in the *siddur*, that's all, and nobody has complaints against a word typed on a piece of paper.

But in the ancient days they believed that Hashem actually was a personality – not a person but a personality – which He is. Only that He is a tremendous Personality that is *ein sof*, infinite, and He cannot be compared to anything else. אֵין לוֹ דְמוּת – “Nothing can compare to Him but it is an *ikar* of our *emunah* that Hakodosh Boruch Hu is an active personality. He thinks and He acts according to His thoughts. He reacts to our deeds – good and bad – and He judges us accordingly

Now the *kadmonim* felt this intensely, it was in their bones, and therefore Iyov felt that Hashem was unjustly blaming him. וְשָׂם בְּסֹד רִגְלֵי – He puts

my feet into stocks, like a prisoner, וְשָׂם בְּכָל אֶרְחוֹתַי – and He limits all my paths. Hashem had closed before Iyov all the paths of normal living, normal circumstances. He didn't even have a home anymore. He was lying on the public garbage heap, the *ashpah*. He was ruined! And he was pointing his accusing finger at Hashem.

Painless Hints

But Elihu didn't let Iyov off the hook so easily and he said, הֲנִי זֹאת לֹא צְדִיקָה – “In these complaints you are not righteous, וְאֶעֱנֶנְךָ – and so I will answer you. You are not right and I am going to set you straight. כִּי יִרְבֶּה אָלוֹהַּ מֵאֲנוֹשׁ – Can a man be greater and better than Hashem?” When it comes to a quarrel between Hashem and a person, can the person ever be right? מָדוּעַ אֵלֵינוּ רִיבוֹתָ – Why did you quarrel with Hashem, כִּי כָל דְּבָרָיו לֹא יֵעָנֶה – when the truth is that you're not going to be answered in a way that you imagine.

Now, he begins explaining: What Hakodosh Boruch Hu is doing is for your benefit. In order to improve people Hakodosh Boruch Hu sends them messages and they shouldn't be ignored. The first step is the most lenient and the easiest step. בְּחֵלוֹם – In the dream, בְּחֻזִּיּוֹן לַיְלָה – in a vision of the night, בְּנִפְלָא בְּתַרְדֵּמָה עַל אַנְשִׁים – when slumber falls upon people, בְּתַנּוּמוֹת עַלֵי מִשְׁכָּב – when they are lying on their beds, then Hakodosh Boruch Hu sometimes gives them a hint of what He is displeased with them, of that which they have to try to change.

Now that's the most painless kind of a hint. אָז יִגְלֶה אָזְן אַנְשִׁים – He uncovers the ears of man; in their dreams they see their wickedness. And the purpose is to help man discover his faults. לְהַסִּיר אֶדָם מֵעֲשֹׂה – to remove a man from doing wrong things, וְגוֹהַ מִגְּבַר יִבְסָה – and to remove pride and arrogance from a person. Sometimes a person doesn't realize what a *baal gaavah* he is, but in his dream he lets go and he says and does certain things that only a very great *baal gaavah* would do. Now, although he didn't do it because he doesn't want people to think ill of him; he wants people to think well of him, but in his heart it is nesting there. And so Hashem uses a dream to uncover his mind so that he should see what is wrong with him.

Revealing Dreams

Let's say in his dream a person gets angry and he hits somebody – actually he wouldn't do it while he is awake, but the fact that he dreamed that shows that he has the violence in him. Sometimes he might commit a big sin in his dream, immorality. Now he wouldn't do such a thing while awake, but it shows that in his mind he is harboring wrong ideas.

I remember years ago I once dreamed I was sitting in a bathtub full of money. It was a dry bathtub packed with money. It was a pleasant dream but in the morning I asked myself, "Why is it that I don't dream about Hashem?" A very big *kasha!* Why don't I dream about Hashem?! Maybe that Hashem spoke to me, something else maybe. It never happened! Years and years pass by and nothing. I talk about it all the time but I never dreamed about it.

The answer is now I see what a hypocrite I am. **אֵין מְרַאֵין לוֹ לְאָרֶם אֶלֶּא מֵהַרְהוּרֵי לְבוֹ** – a man is shown in a dream what he really thinks about (Brachos 55b). It tells you the truth about yourself. You understand that? A dream sometimes reveals to you important things about yourself.

And what's the purpose? The purpose, **יְחֻשֵׁהוּ נַפְשׁוֹ** – Hashem wants to save this man from the grave, **וְחַיָּתוֹ מֵעֵבֶר בְּשֵׁלַח** – and his *neshama*, it means his life, is being protected from passing through the sword. Otherwise the man will continue becoming worse and he'll have to leave this world. Who knows what would happen to him if the dream hadn't put him on the right path? "And so," Elihu said, "it is for our benefit whatever He does because He is pointing out to us those things that we must improve."

Stronger Hints

Now, suppose he didn't pay attention to the dream; then Hakodosh Boruch Hu takes the next step. **וְהוּכַח בְּמִכְאוֹב עַל מִשְׁכָּבוֹ** – He will be rebuked with sickness, with pain, on his couch. He will be lying in bed suffering pain. **וְרֹב עֲצָמָיו אֶתָּן** – and most of his bones will turn hard, they will become ossified and he will have pain in his joints. **וְזָהַמְתוּ חַיָּתוֹ לָחֶם** – And his soul refuses any food. He is lying sick he can't even eat. **וְנִפְשׁוֹ מֵאֲכָל תְּאֻוָּה** – Even dainties which ordinarily everyone loves, he can't look at them because he is so sick. **יִכָּל בְּשׂוֹ מְרַאֵי** – His flesh is consumed; it becomes

very thin and he is down to his bones, **וְשָׁפוּ עֲצָמוֹתָיו לֹא** – and his bones now became scraped; even the bones are misshapen. He is suffering in the joints and crookedness of the bones.

Because he is not taking the hint Hakodosh Boruch Hu is increasing the reminders from all sides. It's one thing after another. **וַתִּקְרַב לְשַׁחַת נַפְשׁוֹ** – His life is approaching the grave, **וְחַיָּתוֹ לְמִמְתֵּיתִים** – and his soul is being given over to destroyers on all sides. The wind blows and he catches a cold. When he walks he falls down and breaks a bone. And now he's in bed for a few weeks. On all sides Hashem is causing things to destroy him.

Now the man is close to the brink of death and it's the day of judgement. What should be the next step? "I tried first with dreams," Hashem says, "then with minor illnesses, and now major illnesses and all kinds of troubles and disasters; but he hasn't changed yet. It seems like he doesn't listen to anything. What can I do with this man?"

The Great Assembly

So Hakodosh Boruch Hu summons together a whole assembly of *malachim* and all together, with Hakodosh Boruch Hu at the head they are going to judge him: What is the next step? There doesn't seem to be any hope for him.

And so we'll set the scene the way it's presented in Iyov. There are a thousand *malachim* there and they are all looking glum; nobody is approving of this man and it looks bleak. But then, all of a sudden, from the back, one of the *malachim* pipes up. **אִם יֵשׁ עָלָיו** – One *malach* out of the thousand speaks up and says, **לְהַגִּיד לְאָרֶם יִשְׂרוֹ** – "I can relate some righteousness of this man."

Salvation

Somewhere in that congregation of *malachim*, a lone voice is heard, "I have a good word to say about him."

So now there's complete silence in the Great Tribunal and all the *malachim* turn to the Judge. And the voice of Hashem thunders forth: "Stop! Let's listen to him!" **וַיֹּאמֶר** – And Hashem says, **פְּדֵהוּ מִמְדֵּת** – "Redeem him from going down into the grave of destruction, **מִצְּאוֹתֵי כְפָר** – I have found a redemption."

וַיִּחַנְנוּ - And Hashem spares him. He doesn't push him over the brink into the grave.

What happens now? רָטַפְשׁ בְּשׂוּרוֹ מִנְעָר - He begins to recover. Because of this one *malach* who spoke up and defended him, this very ill man's flesh that was wasting away because of his illness, becomes youthful and ruddy. יָשׁוּב לְיָמָיו עָלּוּמָיו - He becomes young and well again.

Part II. Judging Angels

Your Malachim

And with that we begin our subject for tonight. Because that's what happens on Rosh Hashana. The Gemara (Shabbos 32a) says that when the Day of Judgment comes, every person gets his day in court. On the Yom Hadin all the *malachim* assemble in the Great Tribunal to testify about a person and they all have what to say.

Now, before we continue a question has to be asked. Who are these *malachim* that are able to sit in judgement? Actually Hakodosh Boruch Hu has all kinds of *malachim*: עָשָׂה מְלָאָכָיו רוּחוֹת - He makes the winds His messengers, מְשַׁרְתָּיו אֵשׁ לְהֵט - the burning heat of the sun can be His messenger. But in this instance, the word *malach* means an angel. *Malach* means a messenger but when it's a messenger of Hashem we call it an angel. But the question is why should these *malachim* have anything to say about a person?

And the answer is, these *malachim* are the creations that the person himself made. הָעוֹשֶׂה מְצָוָה - אַחַת, קוֹנֶה לוֹ פְּרוֹקְלִיט אֲחֵד - When a person does a mitzvah he acquires one *malach* that will speak for him; if he does an *aveirah* he acquires a *kateigor*, a prosecuting *malach* (Pirkei Avos 4:11).

And therefore, when we consider who are these *malachim* that are speaking up in the Beis Din Shel Maalah we understand that they are the handiwork that you created by means of all of the things that you did.

Creating Angels

Once a man was trying to bring a heavy load, let's say from the Lieber's chocolate company or the

Paskesz candy company. He was carrying boxes into a store but he couldn't open the door. And you stepped over and you held the door open for him for a second. עָזַב תְּעֹזֵב עִמּוֹ - you helped a fellow Jew. A *malach*!

Or a person was walking in the street in front of you and he dropped a dollar. You say, "Mister stop!" It's a mitzvah if it's a *frum* Jew. "Stop! You dropped a dollar." On the spot, a *mitzvah d'oraisa* of *hashavas aveidah*. Another *malach*!

Maybe your *chaver* in the yeshiva said a sharp something to you and you had what to retort but you remembered Hakodosh Boruch Hu and you turned away. "Oh," Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "That is a *malach*." וְנִפְשֵׁי בְּעַפְרָא לְכָל תְּהִיָּה - "No matter what they say to me, I will just be *afar*, I will let him step on me." Let people step on you, that's another *malach*.

Now, these *malachim* are all there on the Yom Hadin; they are gathered together to judge you. There are other *malachim* there too who are saying the opposite, other angels created by other not so good deeds. And each one has something to say.

Tip The Scales

And that's what the *possuk* says in Iyov: אִם יֵשׁ עָלָיו מְלָאָךְ מְלִיץ - "If there's a *malach* that speaks up on your behalf." That's very important! You need advocates! You need *malachim* to defend you! Even one *malach* might tilt the scales in your favor. A person is נִדוֹן אַחַר רְבוֹ - he is judged according to the majority of his deeds and you never know.

By the way, that's why it's important before Rosh Hashana and during all of the Aseres Yemei Teshuva, if you can get in some more good deeds, grab the opportunity! You can never tell; it might be that your scale is *shoveh b'shoveh* - the *zechuyos* and not *zechuyos* are exactly balanced - and that's dangerous.

That's why it pays tomorrow or tonight even, to be busy writing out checks. You want to get as much merit as you can earn before the Day of Judgment. Whatever you can do on the last day in the year, do. Write checks for good causes because each check will have wings and it will fly. Or, if you sit down to learn five minutes, that is a *malach*. It's a *malach* and it will speak with a big mouth on your behalf. And so

- two times, שְׁלוּשׁ - and three times, עִם גְּבַר - with a man, לְהַשִּׁיב נַפְשׁוֹ מִי שְׁחָת, - to save him from destruction, לְאֹר בְּאֹר הַחַיִּים - and he should use the happiness of life in this world and in the next world.

It means this. Nobody is permanently rescued because of one thousandth of a *malach*. But he gets a temporary reprieve, Hakodosh Boruch Hu withholds the *gezar din* because of this *echad mini elef*. He's waiting for a person to come back to Him and so He'll listen to that *malach*. It's not forever - it's only a temporary expedient, but it's a lifesaver.

So now we are learning that it could be on Yom Hadin a person is *rubo chayav*, but since there was something good in him, a genuine merit that he has, even if it's a small item, one thousandth of a deed, Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, "Because of that one thing I am going to give him another chance. I'll give him health and *parnassah* and good times too, and maybe during this next year he will improve."

It's true, the principle of נְדוֹן אַחַר רְבוּ is in general a principle and for a person's entire life it will hold good. But if a man has a little genuine real *zechus* in him, it can help him temporarily in order to get another chance.

Joyful Salvation

Now, when we look at the *pesukim* in Iyov, we see how this man - that's us - should make use of his reprieve. יַעֲתֵר אֶל אֱלֹהִים - He prays to Hashem; he says, "Hashem help me, let me continue this way." It's true that he recovered his good health, but now he is praying to Hashem, "Hashem forgive me for what I did. I love you Hashem. I am grateful to you. Please help me continue to be deserving of Your mercy." וַיִּרְצֶהוּ - and Hashem will accept him. Now that he shows that he is going to utilize his good health to return to Hashem fully, so Hashem said, "I have accepted you. I will favor you from now on."

וַיִּרְא פָּנָיו בְּתִרְעָה - And he sees the face of Hashem with shouting of joy, with sounds of the trumpet. He recognizes the King now - that's what the *teruah* means, it's a blowing of the *shofar* at the coronation of the king. וַתִּרְעַת מְלֶכְךָ בּוֹ - It is a day when the trumpets shout for the king. After his day of judgement, he comes out alive, he made it, and so he redoubles his efforts to recognize the King.

He won't wait till the last minute this time. Rosh Hashana is over soon. Yom Kippur will come and then Succos and then it's wintertime, and he knows that he's living on borrowed time. And so he'll utilize the reprieve that he was granted in order to get busy restoring himself to the full favor of Hakodosh Boruch Hu. And it all began with that one *malach* that reported back to Hakodosh Boruch Hu, the one *malach* who had one little thing to say about this man.

Part III. Living Angels

Two Answers

Now the question has to be asked, why does Hakodosh Boruch Hu need the *malachim* to report back to Him; to speak up and be *melamed zechus*, to say something good about a man and save him from destruction? The whole thing seems so anthropomorphic; you're putting Hashem like a human king who needs advisors, people who speak up. Hakodosh Boruch Hu knows! הַשֵּׁם יוֹדֵעַ מִחֻשְׁבוֹת אָדָם - He knows all people's thoughts. And so what can *malachim* tell Him more than he knows Himself?

Now there are two answers to this question and both are right. It could be there are more, but at least these two understandable answers we'll talk about now.

One answer is that the whole thing is nothing but a *charade*. Although Hakodosh Boruch Hu calls together *malachim* it is not because He needs them; it's not because they have any input in the judgement. He judges entirely from His own tremendous mind, from His own thoughts. So who are the *malachim* for?

The Secret of Angels

Once, a *rosh yeshiva* asked one of his *talmidim*, "What are the *malachim* doing all the time?" The *talmid* didn't know what to say; how should he know?

The *rosh yeshiva* said, "You say it every day. תָּמִיד קָל מְסַפְּרִים כְּבוֹד קָל - they are always speaking about the glory of Hashem. That's what the *malachim* are doing."

“Alright,” the *bochur* said, “So that’s what they’re doing. What’s that got to do with me? What’s it my business what the angels are doing up there in *Shomayim*?”

And the answer is that the creation of the *malachim* was only for us – the *malachim* are in the world only because of the Am Yisrael. That’s a secret that many people – even good people – never learned. The *malachim* don’t accomplish anything on their own; they have no free will, no reward, no punishment. Whatever they are doing, which is reported to us by the *nevi'im* and the *chachomim*, it’s only for us.

An Explosive Teaching

And that means that the calling together of a thousand *malachim* is intended to be a lesson for us, so we should learn what a mitzvah is. A mitzvah is not like we think, just something that we once did, or thought or said. No; every mitzvah is an especial kind of creation. That’s what the Kuzari says. He says that a mitzvah that is performed is a living entity, an actual creature. Now the Kuzari you have to know is a Rishon; he doesn’t go into fantasies. He is practical and his every word is counted and so we have to listen to that – even the smallest mitzvah is a living being that will stand in the *Beis Din Shel Maalah* and advocate for you.

It doesn’t have to be something with wings – the wings are just a form of vision that is granted to us, so that we should see them and be impressed by them. A living mitzvah is higher than wings; it’s something of *ruchniyus* that is of tremendous power – it doesn’t need any wings to propel it.

Now that’s an explosive teaching! A mitzvah is a living being! It’s stunning! A little kind word you said to your wife, a nickel you put into the *pushka*, is a creation.

Little Things Count

And that’s why the *malachim* appear before Hashem in the *Beis Din Shel Maalah*; it’s to let us know how important it is to create such *malachim* that will defend us. We’re expected to look in *Iyov* and study this charade of the *Beis Din Shel Maalah* and learn how important it is to try to utilize even the smallest and seemingly insignificant

opportunities to be good; that’s what the *malachim* teach us – that *nothing* is insignificant. There’s no question that this awareness is the key to greatness.

I’ll give an example. Suppose you would like to be a good man but you know you’re not. You’re mean. You’re selfish. You’re a *baal gaavah*. You’re thinking about yourself all the time. That’s the truth but you don’t want to go into Rosh Hashana like that. You don’t want it to be *erev Yom Kippur* and you’re still the same old you.

So you remind yourself about this *mashal* and you think, “All is not lost. I have to make a start somewhere – even the smallest thing.” You want to break your selfishness so you do a little favor for another Jew. “Oh,” Hashem says, “I’m listening now. You are doing something for another Jew; that is a good beginning.” It’s an excellent beginning! You can’t tell what is going to happen. That one Jew, that little one thousandth of a *malach*, might show up some day on the Yom Hadin and be the *malach* who will rescue you.

Start Bluffing

And so if a man makes it his business to fight against what he really is; in his heart he knows he’s really a cad but he says, “I’m going to make a bluff from time to time. I’ll come home tonight and act nice to my family.”

They’ll see through you? They know it’s not so? Who cares?! Because the *gemara* says, if one *malach* speaks up for you – and not only if one *malach* speaks up and 999 speak against you, but even if in that same *malach* 999 parts of him speak against you, only one thousandth of him speaks up for you – it’s also an accomplishment. So 999 parts will say, “Oh, he’s just doing it to show off. He was by Rabbi Miller’s lecture and he heard something so he’s trying it out.” No matter! Because that other one thousandth will speak up for you. And that will be your salvation.

And so if your family will say, “Tonight he was a nice fellow,” it’s an accomplishment. If you can come to the synagogue and fool the rabbi and make him think you’re a nice fellow, very good. You’re going into a grocery store? Fool the grocer. If you deal with people and put up a front and so there are people who will speak up for you, you must know you have

accomplished something; you have gained advocates who will speak for you. Of course the more that speak up the better you are, but everything is important.

Make A Good Impression

אַל תְּהִי בֹז לְכָל אָדָם - *Don't scorn any person* (Avos 4:3). Nobody is unimportant! Sometimes you are passing somebody on the street and you bump into him by accident. You keep going; you mumble something maybe. No, stop and say, "Excuse me please. I am so sorry." Not one person should ever be insulted by you. Sometimes a person is a *chatzuf* and you lose patience with him and you think, "I am going insult him." Oh, don't do it; you can't tell if that one person might be the one who speaks up against you on the Yom Hadin. Or, if one man was favorably impressed by you, that advocate will speak up for you to Hashem. *And He'll listen.* Watch out for people! On the Yom Hadin he might be the one!

Or somebody told you his troubles, let's say. You don't know what to do? Just say a few words of consolation; tell him, "Look, you'll outlive it. It will pass by; don't worry about it." Console him; it doesn't cost any money to say it. You can never tell. Words of encouragement and a smile are a balm for the troubled soul. מְעוֹדֵד עַנְוִים הַשֵּׁם - Think, "Hashem encourages people so I am going to encourage people too."

Encourage People

Sometimes when people are discouraged you can write them an anonymous letter. You don't have to sign your name. And tell him, "You have a very good name in this neighborhood; people think well of you." It will lift his spirits. I once did that. There was a person who took a *rabbonus* in an out of town shul; he had a lot of trouble there from his congregation – they were fighting with him about the *mechitza* and it was discouraging for him. So I wrote him a letter – I didn't sign it; I wanted him to think it was from somebody important – and I told him that he's doing a good job, that he'll soon see the fruits of his labors.

Ever thought about that? With 32 cents, sometimes you can do a very big mitzvah of encouraging people. Just try it once; write a letter to

somebody, even to your Rebbe. He has enemies, no question about it. Every Rebbe has enemies, that you have to know. So write him a letter, encouraging your Rebbe. Say, "We are all for you. We are all loyal to you." It will make him feel good. Don't think it is a small thing.

Encourage your *rebbe* in the *mesivta*. He's working hard and he needs the *parnassah* too, so make sure not to discourage him. Honor him and make him feel good. And after the *shiur* walk over to him and say, "Rebbi, I enjoyed your *shiur*" – even though you didn't. It's a mitzvah to be *mi'oided anavim* so make sure to encourage him.

Five Minutes!

Not only people you shouldn't scorn. וְאֵל תְּהִי מִפְּלִיג לְכָל דְּבָר - *Don't scorn even the smallest opportunity* (*ibid.*). You say, "Well, I only have five minutes left; there is no use trying to learn." Oh no! Open a sefer and get in five minutes of learning. Five minutes of learning is a tremendous achievement.

In the Kelmer Yeshiva, they had a special learning *seder*. After they finished learning and davening *maariv* all the *bachurim* went home for the day. And then they had to come back to the *beis medrash* again once more and learn five minutes. And then they went home again. They did it in order to train themselves to know that five minutes of learning is precious; that even the smallest of things shouldn't be disdained.

Rescue It!

Let's say you said *shemone esrei* and you were wandering someplace in the jungles; you were travelling all over the world as your mouth was mumbling the *brachos*. Then you came back at the end of *shemone esrei*; you're almost finished the whole *shemone esrei* and you accomplished nothing. At the very end do something. Rescue something! At least the last *brocha* say with *kavanah*. Save something from the whole destruction! At least a little something – even if it's only one thousandth of something – should remain from how you ruined the entire *shemone esrei*.

Sometimes you went through a whole *birchas hamazon* and you weren't thinking. Don't scorn

whatever you could salvage. Even if you already finished, utilize the *tefillos* at the end. הַרְחֵמֵנוּ הוּא יִזְכְּנוּ. לַיְמֹת הַמְּשִׁיחַ וְלַחַי הָעוֹלָם הַבָּא. Ooh wah! That's important! Be *mechavein* these words. Did you ever stop and ask Hashem, "Hashem please give me Olam Habo?" So at least that little bit you can salvage from *birchas hamazon*! "Harachaman! Please give me the merit to see You in Olam Habo!" You saved something from the *birchas hamazon*. You asked Him for Olam Habo. That's what the *tanna* is telling us, וְאַל תְּהִי מִפְּלִיג, לְכֹל דְּבָר – don't consider anything unimportant.

Exercise Your Options

And so this *mashal* of the angels gathered in judgement – I won't say it's only a *mashal*; we will call it a play, a charade – is for the purpose of emphasizing every small thing. Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants us to see the importance of any small thing you do. If you walk in the streets, why waste time? Say "From here till the end of the street, I'm going to think about Yetziyas Mitzrayim."

Isn't that a wonderful thing? It's not Pesach; it's Wednesday in the middle of the year. לְמַעַן תִּזְכֹּר אֶת יוֹם. צִאתְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרַיִם כֹּל יְמֵי חַיֶּיךָ – You should remember the day that I took you out of Mitzrayim all the days of your life. Of course it means morning and night but during the day time it's also a mitzvah, an optional mitzvah. זָכְרוּ נִפְלְאוֹתָיו אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה – Remember His wonders that He did.

As you're riding in the subway holding on to the strap don't think that your opportunities now are not important. One minute of thinking! "I'm going to think now about the *mann* that fell in the *midbar*." Of course, keep your hand on your wallet. One hand is holding on to the strap, the other hand is on your wallet, and you're thinking about the food that Hashem sent down from the heavens. Those thoughts are creating a *malach*. And so all the *malachim* of all of your wasted minutes during the day will be quieted when this one *malach* pipes up.

It's All About You

There's so much to think about, so many opportunities. What about thinking about the most important subject of all? Hakodosh Boruch Hu! On the way home, even if you will just think about Hakodosh Boruch Hu for a second, it's a mitzvah.

הַשְׁמֵר לְךָ פֶּן תִּשְׁכַּח אֶת הַשֵּׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ – Don't forget Hashem! And even one second is something. אֵלֹהִים בְּרִימָה שְׂאִין לָהֶם. שְׂעוֹר – there is no limit how much. It is a very big mitzvah to think of Hakodosh Boruch Hu for one minute. It's a small thing and it's easy to do.

Now there are very many things to do; there are countless gems in life that a person can find if he would just bend over and pick them up and use them. Of course, if you keep that in mind all the time and make *everything* important, *mah tov* – very good! But the *mashal* of the *malachim* that appear before Hashem in the *Beis Din Shel Maalah* is to let us know how important even that one solitary thing might be.

That's the reason we find it portrayed in such a way; it's a great Sanhedrin with Hakodosh Boruch Hu *yoshev b'rosh* and each *malach* speaks up to talk about you. About you, Chaim Yankel. About you, Chana. And even though you might not have *rov zechuyos*, but you showed something in you, some decency, a little bit of *ehrlichkeit*, some righteousness, that there is a possibility for you to do something for the new year that will be different from the old year.

And so when the *malach* opens his mouth Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, פְּדֵהוּ מִיָּד שְׁחַת – *redeem him from going down to the grave*, מִצְּאֵתִי כִפֹּר – *even though it is only a small thing, I have found redemption*. I see that in your mind there is stirring a *havah amina*; I see there is the possibility that you might do these things in the year to come, and if that is the case, I will give you another chance."

Part IV. Lessons From the Angels

Emulating the Models

And now we come to a second, more general and more important answer to the question we asked, what's the purpose of these *malachim* that are speaking up for us if Hashem knows it anyhow?

We know why *malachim* exist; they were created for us to learn from. That's what the Rosh Yeshiva told the *bochur* – whatever the *malachim* are doing, it's being done for us to see. If the *malachim* are *tamid misaprim kevod Keil*, if they are busy saying all kinds of *tishbachos* to Hakodosh Boruch Hu, so we

have to study their *shirah* and emulate them. And if they're doing it *b'kol raash gadol*, if they're very excited about it, so we have to do the same. נְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת שְׁמֵךְ בְּעוֹלָם כְּשֵׁם שְׁמֵךְ יְיָ אֱתוּ בְּשֵׁמִי מְרוֹם – We'll say *kedusha* to Him just like the *malachim* do. If our models in *Shomayim* are doing it, then that is what we have to do too.

And if that's the case then we have to study the *malachim* as much as possible; as we learn from the *Neviim* and *Kesuvim* and *divrei chazal*, whatever we see about the *malachim* we're expected to try to emulate their ways.

Speak Up!

Now we come to one of the most important elements in the entire subject of Rosh Hashana, an element which will have a strong bearing on the Yom Hadin.

This story of the angel who speaks up – no matter what others are saying; even if 999 other *malachim* are speaking not good; and even if this *malach* himself, it's only one part out of 999, still he speaks up for you – that's meant as a model for you to emulate. No matter what, you're going to get busy speaking up for the Am Yisroel. And just like when the *malach* speaks up on your behalf, Hashem listens, so Hashem will listen to you too! The Oheiv Amo Yisroel listens intently to those who speak up on behalf of the Am Yisroel!

And that's one of the most important purposes of that great event that's taking place right now in *Shomayim*, in the *Beis Din Shel Maalah*. Those *malachim* who are speaking up for the Am Yisroel are teaching you how you should react to the Yom Hadin. Speak up for the Am Yisroel!

Worry More!

You know, on Rosh Hashana everybody is busy; they're worried about the future. And that's very good! That's how it should be! כְּמָה דְּכַיִף אֵינִישׁ דְּרַעְתָּהּ טָפְי כְּמָה דְּרַעְתָּהּ טָפְי – The more you worry about the Yom Hadin, the better off you are (Rosh Hashana 26b). That's part of the *avodah* of Rosh Hashana. Only that what happens? Everyone is thinking only about himself. I'm talking about the good ones; they're thinking about 'Me, me, me'.

But Hakodosh Boruch Hu wants us to learn how important it is for us also to speak up for other people and to be *melamed zechus* that others should be *zocheh badin*. We should be worried about everyone else too! We want all *frum* Jews to be blessed; we want that all *frum* Jews should have a good year. You want your neighbors to have a good year. Your mother-in-law should be blessed. Your daughter-in-law too. You want them to have a good year.

Your competitors in business. Your competitors among the *chassidim*. Even though they are *chassidim* of a different Rebbe, they are all *frum* Jews and they deserve a good year. You want everyone in Lakewood to be *matzliach*. Satmar too. And all the Chaim Berliners and the Mirrers and Torah Vodaas. Everyone in Monsey and Passaic and Bnei Brak and Yerushalyim. You are thinking about them; you want them to all have a good year.

A Unique Nation

Oh, you really want that? So get busy being a *malach meilitz* for them. On Rosh Hashana speak up for them; talk constantly about the virtues of our people. "Hakodosh Boruch Hu, look how charitable the Am Yisroel is! They're giving *ma'aser*, a tenth of their income, some even more! They're *rachmonim bnei rachmonim*. They're compassionate! Even on gentiles; Jews have more pity on gentiles than gentiles have. Where can you find a nation like that, Hashem?"

Don't think these words – say them! "It's a people who give up pleasures for You, Hashem. They come at night to the *beis hamedrash* to learn! Night after night! Jewish women don't go into movies; they don't look for entertainment. They're happy with their domestic duties; find their pleasures in the homes raising children to serve You. Jewish women don't traipse out for entertainment; they don't mix with other people! *Frum* Jewish fathers and mothers are busy day and night raising children for You, Hashem. They sacrifice their lives for that.

"They deny themselves pleasures. When they are traveling out of cities and there are no Jewish restaurants, they don't eat. Period. They're hungry, they want to eat, but can't go into that restaurant.

Where do you find a nation that's willing to suffer for its ideals?

A Holy Nation

“And they have to have non-*shatnez* clothing. Every Jew when he buys a suit, he must see that it's guaranteed non-*shatnez*. A *frum* Jew cannot talk *loshon hara*. Very many people guard their tongues. Today, very many Jews are careful with what they talk, not to slander any fellow man. Self denial. A holy ideal, *kodesh kadoshim*! Where do you find such things? How decent *frum* Jews are!

Do you have a *lav* of *yichud* among *goyim*? A man comes and he wants to sleep in your house and you say, “Well, I have to go to work in the morning. Will you get up early in the morning to go to work with me? I can't let you stay alone in the house with my wife.”

Now among gentiles, it would be unthinkable. It would be so unpleasant and impolite, but Jews speak openly about *yichud*. They call up the rabbi and ask *sha'alos* about *yichud*. A man's wife is in the hospital, in the maternity ward. He's left with little children and his wife's sister is coming to stay with the children. He calls up, what should he do? So the Rav says, “You have to move out of the house.” You ever hear of such things among gentiles? It's an *am kadosh*! A holy nation! Constantly Jews are beset by such problems and they fulfill the laws!

Speak For Your Kehilla

Now, I'm not telling you this just for my own sake – I'm telling you what *you* should be saying! Speak up! Of course, you think about yourself too; *הַיְיָ קוֹדֵם* – certainly think about yourself. But in addition to yourself, don't think that it is enough; you must be worried not only about your wife and your children, not only your *eidim* and the *shnier*, but also *all your people*.

That's why we are *mispalet b'lashon rabim*; because we *care* about the *rabim*. First of all, your own *kehillah*. *בְּרַבְנֵנוּ אָבִינוּ בְּלֵנוּ בְּאַחַד בְּאוֹר פְּנֵיךְ*. All of us here! In your *kehilla*, on Rosh Hashana. Pray for them. “Hakodosh Boruch Hu! Have *rachmanus* on my *kehilla*! They come in every day, three times a day to *daven*. These ones come in the evening to learn.

These come early in the morning before *davening*. These come both of those times. They're coming for You Hashem.”

And so, while everyone is sitting and singing the *niggunim* of Rosh Hashana, you're also participating in the singing – why not? You like the *nigunim* – *tra la la*; *oy yoy yoy yoy* – but don't forget to look around at all the people in your Bais Haknesses and your Bais Hamedrash and speak up for them.

Becoming an Angel

Not only *bederech klal*. As much as you can, be *mifareish* the *bracha*, be expressive. You see a *chaver* across the room, pray for him: “Ooh, Hashem! He's a good man! That man is working all day in the office for You. He would love to sit on the couch all day but he gets up early in the morning and runs out to the office to make a living. For what? For who? He's working so that he can fulfill the promise he made in the *kesubah*. He's bringing home money for rent so that he and his wife can build a *beis hamikdosh*.

“He's working to pay *schar limud*, so that his children can go to the *yeshivos* and *Beis Yankevs*. It's a lot of money, tuition. And the liberal Jews don't make it any easier by fighting against the *frum* schools getting money from the government. But no matter, he's paying. And to continue to pay big money for kosher food? Kosher food costs much more than gentile food. He deserves good health! *Ribono Shel Olam*, give him a good year!”

“Oh,” Hakodosh Boruch Hu says, “you are learning from the *malachim*. That is why I made *malachim*. I don't need them but I made them as a model for you, you should learn from the *malachim*. Just like the *malachim* speak up and you see I pay attention to them, I'll listen to you too. You're defending somebody; you're being a *malach meilitz* now!

Want Zechus?

And there's more to it because it'll save you too. It's a good investment when you train yourself to speak up for other Jews because *הַדָּן אֶת הַחֵבֵרוֹ לְכַף זְכוֹת* *הַדָּן אֶת הַחֵבֵרוֹ לְכַף זְכוֹת* – *One who judges his fellowman favorably, will be judged favorably by Hashem* (Shabbos 127b). “Oh,” Hashem says, “you want him to

be a *zakai*? You're interested in the good fortune of My people? Then I'm interested in your good fortune. If you're a *malach meilitz* for him so I'll listen to the *malach meilitz* who speaks up for you.

And so, if a person adds this element of being a *malach meilitz* to his *avodah* of Rosh Hashana – if he is *misparallel* for his fellow Jews and judges them *l'kaf zechus*; he wants them to have a *hatzlacha* and be *zocheh badin* and he therefore speaks up for them, so Hashem says “That is the *zechus* that is going to give you a *zechus*. I see you're a person who learned the lesson from my *malachim* and just for that you deserve to be *zocheh* to a *kesiva vachasima tovah*.”

לְשָׁנָה טוֹבָה תִּכְתְּבוּ וְתִתְחַמְּוּ

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

Resolutions for Rosh Hashana

When Rosh Hashana comes near I have to do whatever I possibly can to add on to my merits and the angels who gather before the Melech Hamishpat teach me a path to success:

The one thousandth of a *malach* teaches us that even the smallest thing will speak up in my favor and therefore from now until Yom Kippur I will *bli neder* choose to do three extra small things every day to get into the habit of appreciating how important even the smallest thing is.

The *malach meilitz* also taught me that Hashem wants us to speak up on behalf of our fellow Jews and therefore this Rosh Hashana I will *bli neder* spend two minutes during the *tefillos* speaking up for the Am Yisroel – the nation as a whole and for individuals as well.

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

שאל אביך ויגדך זקניך ויאמרו לך

Q:

The Rav said tonight that we should get busy before Rosh Hashana remembering all the good that Hashem has given us since last Rosh Hashana. But don't we have to spend the time we have left thinking about our sins and making resolutions for improving this coming year?

A:

You'll recall that I said the words, “as part of our work.” Really, there's so much work to be done that we don't have time in the ensuing period, until tomorrow at sunset, to do what has to be done. But remembering all the good that Hakodosh Boruch Hu has given us this past year and thanking Him for it is most surely a very important part of our preparation.

So instead of worrying about fitting it all in, I'll tell you what to do. You make sure to think for five minutes about the past year – about all the good that Hashem has given you since exactly one year ago. Do that and you'll be a great man. And then another five minutes about resolutions for the coming year. And then you'll be an even greater person. Those ten minutes will be a great accomplishment.

If after sitting here for an hour and a half you'll go out and think for five minutes, you should know that you're an exception. You're a *dagul mei'rivavah* – you're one out of ten thousand. There's nobody like you.

Who thinks for five whole minutes about gratitude for Hashem for the past year?! And who thinks for five minutes about making resolutions for improving himself in the coming year?! People talk about it. But that's all. That's why I said in the beginning of our talk, that if you do this on a small scale, then you shoot up and your head is way above everybody else.

TAPE #138 (September 1976)