



REFLECTIONS ON ROSH HASHANAH

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In Rosh Hashanah, we celebrate the beginning of a new year, but we also celebrate the birthday of the human being who emerged in history on this day, thousands of years ago. According to the Book of Bereshit, shortly after being created, man and woman committed the first sin by eating from the tree of knowledge, which then allowed them to discern between good and evil. Due to this act, God expelled Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, and since then, the human being has had to confront the world, to "dominate" it to survive. In his favor, at least, the human being has had the knowledge of what is good and what is not, supposedly. Looking back, observing everything that has happened in the history of humanity, I ask myself: How were we able to commit such atrocities against nature, against other human beings, against ourselves? Were not we supposed to know "good" from "evil"?

When these thoughts with a pessimistic tinge come to my mind, it comforts me to think about the work we do as educators in the tnua. Especially at a time when the "SELF" and the "NOW" are at the center of attention, I admire the fact that, across the world, there are madrichim committed to the Jewish, Zionist and humanist education of other youths. Moreover, I admire the fact that all their dedication and care, all the investment of time and energy from the heart, is carried out today, while thinking about tomorrow.

In my opinion, all the above is deeply related to Rosh Hashanah and the messages that derive from this chag. Why? Because, in Rosh Hashanah, we tend to introspect, to do a profound and brave analysis of what has happened in the year that has ended. Generally, the emphasis is put on the mistakes, on the bad things we have done, on what did not go well or as we would have liked. Yet, Rosh Hashanah does not end there. We could say that this is the simple part. After reflecting, it is time to think about what we will do differently so that everything we regret will not happen again in the coming year. Rosh Hashanah is time for introspection, but it is also a plan of action – action which suggests a change, a change for the better.

In this context, I believe that the tnua has taken a beautiful task upon itself. The tnua is the institution that, for ninety years, plants in the hearts of our chanichim a seed of commitment that encourages them to feel responsible for nothing more and nothing less than the repair of the world (Tikun Olam). Indeed, it sounds "naïve", "ideal", utopic"; I know. But it is real – beautifully real. In many of my peulot with chanichim, when I ask them "Why do you educate; why do you invest so much effort in your activities in the tnua?", the answer is always "Our task is to shape a whole human being, to make this world a better place."



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And there, I cannot help but feel optimistic. And I smile, thinking how sincere, profound and relevant are these words in the Darkenu:

"Our faith in the human being, in his ability to train, correct and perfect his way, along with our deep conviction regarding the scale of values of the Tnua, are the factors that, in our opinion, grant us the right to educate."

It is true, human beings have the ability to discern between good and evil, but that does not mean that all human beings choose and opt for the good. Therefore, in Rosh Hashanah, I thank all the madrichim of the tnua who, with great love, build educational processes based on values, ideas and principles worthy of admiration, who provide their chanichim with countless tools to form their own paths based on our ethical set of values. And most importantly, I thank them for serving as an example and showing our chanichim that we do not surrender, that beyond just "imagining" as Lennon would say, we can make this world a more just, empathetic and united place. And although we make mistakes at times, the important thing is to be able to learn from our experiences and improve. At the end of the day, this is what our journey in the world is all about: do, live, learn, dream.