

Dvar Torah Outline — Rosh Hashanah in Derech Hashem: “Gadol Siduro Meichiburo,” Din, Rachamim, and the Shofar’s Twofold Role

Abstract

Rabbi Shulman analyzes the Ramchal's organization in *Derech Hashem* (Chelek 4, Perek 8) to highlight a fundamental distinction between the שלוש רגלים (Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot) and Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur. The רגלים primarily reconnect us to past revelations, while Rosh Hashanah is a present, annual reality: a renewed judgment in which Hashem “restarts” the year and reassigns the world’s status. Rabbi Shulman then explains how the heavenly court system is structured as a merciful, relatable framework for human teshuvah—and how תקיעת שופר both draws down רחמים and “confounds the prosecutor,” operating within דין rather than negating it.

I. Reading the Ramchal through structure: “גדול סידורו מחיבורו”

A. The setup: a pre–Rosh Hashanah *Derech Hashem* shiur

- Rabbi Shulman frames the shiur as preparation for the ימים נוראים, learning *Derech Hashem* **Chelek 4, Perek 8**, where Ramchal discusses the חגים, and **Rosh Hashanah** appears in **אות ד**.

B. Methodological principle borrowed from Rambam-commentary

- Rabbi Shulman cites the idea (attributed to the Maggid Mishneh regarding the Rambam) that “גדול סידורו מחיבורו”:
 - The *placement* and organization of halachot in *Yad HaChazakah* can itself teach meaning and even halachic nuance.
- He argues the same is true for the Ramchal in *Derech Hashem*:
 - One can learn major יסודות by asking why the Ramchal placed topics where he did.

C. The glaring organizational question in Perek 8

- **אות א**: Pesach (חמץ ומצה)
- **אות ב**: Sukkot (ארבעת המינים with סוכה, לולב, נענועים)

- **אות ג**: Chanukah and Purim
 - Then unexpectedly:
 - **אות ד**: **Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur**
 - Rabbi Shulman: this ordering is a “glaring קשיא”—why insert Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur *after* Chanukah/Purim?
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II. A core distinction: “reconnecting to an event” vs. “a reality happening now” (2:06)

A. How Ramchal describes Pesach, Sukkot, and other festivals

- Rabbi Shulman explains that the Ramchal portrays the רגלים as:
 - historical **events of revelation** (e.g., יציאת מצרים),
 - followed by mitzvot that allow us to **tap back into** that revealed light.
- Chanukah and Purim similarly function as annual re-illumination of prior light:
 - Rabbi Shulman quotes the Ramchal’s theme: **“בענין חנוכה ופורים להאיר האור המאיר בימים ההם”** (to illuminate the light that illuminated then).

B. Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur are not primarily “memory festivals”

- Rabbi Shulman notes there *are* historical associations:
 - Yom Kippur: receiving **לוחות שניות**.
 - Rosh Hashanah: עקידת יצחק is invoked (e.g., shofar of an איל).
- But the Ramchal’s placement implies something deeper:
 - Rosh Hashanah is **first and foremost a day in its own right**—a present, ongoing reality.

C. Defining the category difference

- **רגלים**: re-access a **previous שפע** that entered the world (plug back in; bring it forward).
 - **Rosh Hashanah**: a **new yearly creation-cycle**, tied to the world’s creation and renewal.
 - Rabbi Shulman: this is why Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur do not fit as “post-event reconnection” holidays in the same way.
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III. The Ramchal's description of Rosh Hashanah: judgment and yearly renewal (6:00)

A. Text Rabbi Shulman learns inside

- Rabbi Shulman quotes the Ramchal:
 - “אך ענין השופר בראש השנה הוא, כי הנה ביום זה הקדוש ברוך הוא דן את כל העולם כולו.”
 - (“But the matter of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah is that behold: on this day, the Holy One Blessed be He judges the entire world.”)
- He emphasizes Rabbi Shulman's reading of “הנה” as indicating a revealed fact: this is an objective reality.

B. The “big chidush”: recreation / restart of reality

- Rabbi Shulman continues the Ramchal:
 - “ומחדש כל המציאות בבחינת הסיבוב החדש.”
 - (“And He renews all existence in the aspect of the new cycle.”)
- Explanation:
 - The year is not “assumed to continue”; rather, everything is **reassigned**—as at the original creation.

C. Heavenly courts and an ordered דין

- Rabbi Shulman cites:
 - “והנה נסדרים הסנהדריות ונערך הדין על כל היצור כפי סדרי הדין העליון.”
 - (“And the courts are arranged, and judgment is set for every created being according to the order of the higher judgment.”)
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IV. Why heavenly דין must be “relatable”: for teshuvah and as a system of רחמים (8:01)

A. Parallel: “מלכות של רקיע כעין מלכות דארעא”

- Rabbi Shulman references the Ramchal's earlier teaching (Chelek 2) that heavenly governance resembles earthly governance.
- Not because Hashem “copies” human courts arbitrarily, but because:
 - a person must be able to understand and respond to the process.

B. Practical goal: enabling effective teshuvah

- If the דין were totally foreign, Rabbi Shulman argues:
 - we couldn't arouse ourselves properly (חרטה, תשובה, improvement).
- Therefore, the system includes courtroom features humans grasp:
 - accusations,
 - opposing arguments,
 - a structured hearing time.

C. “Annual review” framing

- Rabbi Shulman describes the judgment as something like an “annual review”:
 - a sane person prepares intensely for an upcoming appearance before the ultimate Judge.

D. The system is not only understandable; it is merciful

- Rabbi Shulman stresses the Ramchal's יסוד:
 - these “procedures” are מהלכים of רחמים—paths Hashem uses to produce mercy within judgment.
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V. The shofar's two functions: draw down רחמים and confound the קטיגור (13:33)

A. Prosecutor prepared; shofar commanded

- Rabbi Shulman quotes the Ramchal's courtroom language:
 - “זה קטיגור מזומן, לקטרג כפי עונותיהם של בני אדם.”
 - (“And the prosecutor is ready to prosecute according to the sins of people.”)
 - “והנה ציונו הקדוש ברוך הוא לתקוע בשופר, והכוונה בו להמשיך ההנהגה ברחמים ולא בתוקף הדין.”
 - (“And the Holy One Blessed be He commanded us to blow the shofar, and the intention is to draw the conduct in mercy and not with the force of strict judgment.”)

B. Rosh Hashanah as a merciful “appointed hearing date”

- Rabbi Shulman explains another mercy embedded in the system:
 - the prosecutor cannot bring claims whenever he wishes; there is a scheduled “court date,” buying time for preparation.

- He adds a psychological/spiritual point:
 - if shofar were constant, people would become desensitized; concentrating intensity into one day enables real spiritual impact.

C. Distinguishing Elul shofar from Rosh Hashanah shofar

- Rabbi Shulman clarifies:
 - Elul shofar: to awaken and prepare.
 - Rosh Hashanah shofar: to actually affect the דין (soften it).

D. Two distinct effects within תקיעת שופר

1. **To bring down** הנהגת רחמים (the “Judge,” so to speak, relates with mercy).
2. **To confuse the prosecutor** — “ולערב הקטיגור שלא יקטרג.”
 - (“And to confound the prosecutor so that he not prosecute.”)

E. Support from Gemara and Ritva (two sets of blasts)

- Rabbi Shulman invokes the sugya of תקיעות דמיושב and תקיעות דמעומד:
 - The Ritva explains the “confounding Satan” element is specifically tied to the extra earlier blasts (מיושב), not merely the obligatory later ones (מעומד).
- Rabbi Shulman uses this to show the Ramchal’s two-part model is reflected in halachic practice.

VI. דין cannot be negated; רחמים must operate within משפט (19:00)

A. A key philosophical question raised

- Question (as Rabbi Shulman presents): If we want רחמים, why do we need “דין within רחמים” at all?

B. Rabbi Shulman’s answer: דין is an unshakeable reality

- .means “must be so”; it cannot be suspended even once דין
- He contrasts:
 - ,can be occasional חסד
 - but דין is absolute (e.g., theft, wages owed).

C. Example: דור המבול and the primacy of monetary injustice

- Rabbi Shulman references the חז"ל/Rashi idea that despite עריות, the decree was sealed due to חמס:
 - violations of financial דין force immediate reckoning.

D. Danger of calling Hashem a "וותרן"

- Rabbi Shulman cites חז"ל:
 - one who claims Hashem simply overlooks wrongdoing is effectively denying דין.
- Consequence described:
 - קישקעס, i.e., responds with maximum exactitude (he explains this as being judged "in the דין with extreme scrutiny).

E. The legitimate appeal: מידה כנגד מידה

- The correct claim is not "Hashem ignores דין," but:
 - "I acted with forbearance; it is just that I receive forbearance."
- Rabbi Shulman ties this to Rosh Hashanah davening:
 - invoking the עקידה as a paradigm of one attribute "overcoming" another, and asking that רחמים overcome דין in an appropriate way.

VII. The Ramchal's formulation: רחמים itself can be a דין-based outcome (27:00)

A. Rabbi Shulman's reading inside: mercy as משפט

- Rabbi Shulman explains the Ramchal's logic:
 - certain actions can justly warrant a softened judgment.
- He quotes:
 - **"ונמצא שמנהגים עמו ברחמים וזה עצמו מידה מידת משפט."**
 - ("It follows that they act with him with mercy—and this itself is an attribute of justice.")

B. Not only "forbearance"—a broader principle

- Rabbi Shulman quotes:
 - **"ואמנם, לא המעשה הזה לבד יגמל על דרך זה אבל כל מעשה שתגזור החכמה העליונה עליו היותו ראוי ליגמל כך, יגמל כך."**
 - ("In truth, not only this act is recompensed this way, but any act that the higher wisdom decrees worthy of being recompensed thus, will be recompensed thus.")

C. תקיעת שופר as a prime example

- Rabbi Shulman concludes with the Ramchal's application:
 - “ומכלל זה מצוה זו של תקיעת שופר... להיות ממשיכים עליהם הנהגה ברחמים... וכשישמרו אותה כראוי זה יהיה הפרי שיוקטו ממנה.”
 - (“Included in this is the mitzvah of shofar-blowing... to draw upon themselves conduct of mercy... and when they guard it properly, this will be the fruit they glean from it.”)
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In Summary

- Rabbi Shulman explains that the Ramchal's *placement* of Rosh Hashanah/Yom Kippur after the festivals teaches that these days are not primarily reenactments of past revelations, but a present annual reality of דין.
- Rosh Hashanah includes not only judgment but “ומחדש כל המציאות בבחינת הסיבוב החדש”—a yearly restart of creation's cycle.
- The heavenly court is structured to be **relatable** and thereby a merciful framework that empowers teshuvah.
- has a **twofold effect**: it draws down רחמים ונהגת רחמים and also “ולערב הקטיגור”—disrupting prosecution within the judicial system.
- rather, certain merciful outcomes are themselves an expression of דין; is not a denial of רחמים justice through מידה כנגד מידה.