



## TOWARDS MEANINGFUL PARENTING

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# Parenting Lessons from Malchuyot, Zichronot, and Shofarot

As Rosh Hashana approaches, it is worthwhile to begin taking a look at the Rosh Hashana Machzor and to prepare for this special day of Tefilla. The Mussaf Shemoneh Esrei of Rosh Hashana is composed of three important sections: Malchuyot, Zichronot, and Shofarot. Together, they form a framework for how we relate to Hashem — and a model for how we can approach our own roles as parents.

### MALCHUYOT: THE MANY FACES OF HASHEM'S KINGSHIP

In *Malchuyot*, we proclaim Hashem as King. But Chazal do not paint a one-dimensional picture of monarchy. Through ten different pesukim, we are shown the multifaceted

nature of Hashem's *melucha*. Here are some examples:

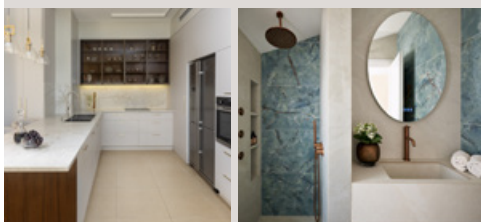
- **Majestic Ruler of Nature** – ה' מֶלֶךְ גָּאוֹת — לָכֵשׁ ... אֶף תִּכּוֹן תִּבְל בִּל תִּמּוֹט — Hashem dons grandeur, establishing the world on a firm foundation.
- **Judge** – לְשֹׁפֹט אֶת הָרָעָה — Hashem judges the nations with truth and precision.
- **Melech and Moshel** – כִּי לֹהֵם הַמְּלִיכָה — ומִשֵּׁל בְּגוֹיִם — Hashem is both democratic leader for those who accept Him willingly and dictator for those who resist His authority.
- **Parent and Child** – אֲנִי רֹאשׁוֹן וְאַנִּי אַחֲרוֹן — As the **Vilna Gaon** explains based on a Midrash in Shemot Rabbah, Hashem is “the first, the father to everyone who has no father, who is lonely, and the last, the son, to those who die childless.”
- **Friend** – וְתִרְוַעַת מֶלֶךְ בּוֹ — From the root *re'ah* (friend), Hashem is described as One who stands close, loyal, and supportive.

This variety of roles teaches that true authority is not one-dimensional. As parents, we too must wear many hats. At times we must

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be firm like a king, setting boundaries and expectations. At other times we serve as judge, evaluating situations with fairness. And at the same time, we are parents and even friends, offering love, warmth, and closeness.

*Malchuyot* reminds us that real leadership — whether Divine or parental — is a blend of strength and compassion, authority and closeness.

### ZICHRONOT: REMEMBERING WITH LOVE

In Zichronot, we ask Hashem to “remember” us for the good. Two of the pesukim chosen from Sefer Yirmiyahu show Hashem remembering us a loving parent:

- “כֹּה אָמַר ה' זָכַרְתִּי לָךְ חֶסֶד נְעוּרֶיךָ, אֲהַבְתָּ כְּלוּלוֹתֶיךָ, לְכַתֵּךְ אַחֲרֵי בְמִדְבָּר, בְּאַרְץ לֹא יְרוּעָה” - This pasuk recalls how Hashem remembers the *chesed* of our youth — the faith and devotion we showed when we left Mitzrayim and followed Him into the desert. What makes the pasuk so striking is its placement: it appears in the middle of Yirmiyahu’s harsh words of rebuke, after the decree of destruction had already been sealed and the Navi is describing the tragedies that will befall Am Yisrael. Suddenly, right in the midst of despair, comes a note of comfort. The message is powerful: no matter how far we stray or how badly we mess up, Hashem will continue to love us. He can always find the spark of good, the memory of our loyalty, and hold onto it as a source of compassion.
- “הֵבֵן יִקְרִי לִי אֶפְרַיִם, אִם יֶלֶד שֶׁעֲשׂוּעִים, כִּי מָדִי דְבָרִי בּוֹ זָכוֹר אֶזְכְּרֶנּוּ עוֹד, עַל כֵּן הִמּוֹ מַעֵי לוֹ, רַחֵם” - In this pasuk, Hashem describes us as a “precious son” and a “delightful child.” The imagery is striking: even when we have grown and stumbled,



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Hashem still relates to us as if we are His playful little child. **Rav Avigdor Neven-zahl** explains that this is like a mother who cannot stop speaking about her children — proudly showing pictures, retelling stories, and in the process constantly reigniting her own love.

**Rav Yosef Dov Soloveitchik** adds a deeper layer: The first pasuk reflects the love of a father, who remembers his child's early years with pride and nostalgia. The second pasuk reflects the love of a mother, who will always see her child as her baby, no matter how old. Together, the two pesukim remind us that Hashem embodies both aspects of parental love — cherishing our youthful devotion and continuing to view us with the tenderness of a parent who sees their child as forever young and beloved.

This is the essence of parenting. Our children will struggle and stumble, but our memories of their pure beginnings help us respond with patience and compassion. We look back at their “חסד נעורייך” moments and continue to see them as “ילד שעשועים” — precious and beloved even when imperfect. Just as we beg Hashem to remember us this way, we must learn to remember our children this way too.

## SHOFAROT: COMMUNICATION BEYOND WORDS

Finally, in Shofarot, the piercing sound of the shofar reminds us of three defining moments: the shofar of Har Sinai, the shofar that proclaims Hashem's kingship, and the shofar the future Geula.

The shofar is not words — it is a cry. It speaks directly to the heart when speech fails. As parents, we know there are times when words fall short, and what our children need most is for us to just be there for them. Sometimes our actions, attentive listening, or a heartfelt hug speak louder than any words ever could. The shofar teaches us that communication must come from the heart to be effective.

In conclusion, *Malchuyot*, *Zichronot*, and *Shofarot* together form a framework that mirrors many aspects of parenting:

- **Malchuyot** — The role of authority, expressed through its various facets.
- **Zichronot** — Memory suffused with love and compassion.
- **Shofarot** — Communication that comes from the heart

On Rosh Hashanah, we stand before Hashem as His children. We crown Him as King in all its aspects, we ask Him to remember us as His beloved children, and we cry out from the heart with the shofar. And in doing so, we learn how to crown ourselves with responsibility as parents — balancing authority and love, memory and compassion, words and heartfelt presence.

B'ezrat Hashem, may the ideas found in our Rosh Hashana Tefillot inspire us to parent with the same care and guidance that Hashem shows us. And in that merit, may we be inscribed for a year of growth and meaningful parenting. ■

Mazal tov to  
**Maya Tenenbaum** and the  
**Tenenbaum and Emerson**  
families on the occasion of  
**Maya Shoshana** becoming a  
**Bat Mitzvah**. May she continue  
מחיל לחיל