

Rosh Hashanah- A Good Yom Tov!

By Rabbi Eliyahu Kirsh

Rosh Hashanah is a Yom-Tov in the full sense. As far as melacha, forbidden labors are concerned, the prohibitions are the same. Whatever we cannot do on Yom Tov we cannot do on Rosh Hashanah. We make Kiddush and Hamotzie over two loaves, lechem mishna as we do every other Yom-Tov. While there are various added foods we eat on Rosh Hashanah night and there is the custom to dip our piece of Bread from Hamotzie into honey, as far as the requirements of Kiddush and Hamotzie are concerned, there is no difference from the other Yomim Tovim.

Should we say Moadim lesimcha in our davening and in Kiddush? The Shulchan Aruch 583: says we do not say Moadim lesimcha or Vehasiainu. The Mishna Berurah explains that this statement of the Shulchan Aruch is to codify the Halacha to exclude the view of a number of Rishonim who held it should be said.

The Rosh on Maseches Rosh Hashana Chapter 4 first quotes the sources for saying things which we associate with Pesach Shavuos and Sukkos. He quotes Rabbeinu Yitzchok from Mogenz in the name of Rabbi Eliezer Hagadol and Rabbeinu Meshulam in the name of the Rosh Yeshiva of Yerushalayim to that we should say *vehasianu*. However, Rabbi Yitzchak Halevi of Germayesh[Germany?] said not to say *vehasiainu* because of the expression *birkas Moadecha*, blessings of the season, which only apply to the three Yomim Tovim that going to the Bais Hamikdash was required in order to receive Hashem's blessings. Rabbeinu Shaltiel also says not to say *birkas moadecha* on Rosh Hashanah because that phrase only applies to times a chagiga offering is required which is not the case on Rosh Hashanah. The Rosh then brings the Rivya who asked his Rebbe that when the first day of Rosh Hashanah is on Shabbos, should *Vatodeeainu* be recited in the Shmone Esrei of Maariv on the second night. The paragraph *vatodeeainu* uses the expression *Chagigas regel*, celebration of regel which Rosh Hashanah is not. He was told to recite it and not to change the phraseology in the paragraph just as we do not change the phraseology of the special havdalah in the Kiddush to separate Shabbos from Yom Tov. Then the Rosh quotes Teshuvos Mar Shalom who writes that we do say *moadim lesimcha* since Rosh Hashanah is one of the *moadai Hashem*, appointed times, talked about in the Torah together with Pesach, Shavuos and Sukkos. After quoting a few opinions on the subject, the Rosh says we follow Rav Hai Gaon who held not to say mention the concept of gladness in the davening and this has become the custom everywhere.

While we do not mention simcha outright in the davening, it is there on Rosh Hashanah. Perhaps in the davening we need to focus on the judgment aspect of the day and our proclamation of Hashem as Our king and ruler. However, from Nehemiah 8:10 we are told that on Rosh Hashanah we are not to be sad and to eat good rich things, send portions of food to those who do not have, and not be sad because the day is holy and happiness before Hashem is our strength. As stated before, we make Kiddush before every meal, have lechem mishnah and in addition dip our bread in honey. Indeed, our tefilos have special power before Hashem when we maintain an inner happiness and sense of Hashem's closeness to us. May all of Klal Yisroel be written up for a good, productive and sweet year and Good Yom-Tov to all.