

A Message for the New Year 5773

ON ROSH HASHANAH, THE JEWISH NEW YEAR, we traditionally eat foods whose names carry a positive symbolic connotation. Just as we taste foods as positive symbols at the festive table on *Rosh Hashanah*, so we can find good signs in the year's number too. As *Rosh Hashanah 5773* (ה' תשע"ג) approaches, let's take a look at the good signs that this year's number reveals to us.

Firstly, 773 (תשע"ג) is the numerical value of the phrase, "Open my eyes and I will see wonders [of Your Torah]" ([מתורתך] גַּל עֵינַי וְאֶבְיטָה נִפְלְאוֹת (Psalms 119:18). Moreover, the initial letters of just the first two words in this phrase, "Open my eyes," (גַּל עֵינַי) equal 73, thus the sign of the initial letters of the new year 5773 can be interpreted as "May it be a year of *Gal Einai*" (תְּהֵא שְׁנַת גַּל עֵינַי). We join in King David's prayer that God will open our eyes to see wonders, both the wonders of the Torah by revealing its most profound secrets, and miraculous wonders with every step that we take by power of the Torah.

The plural "wonders" refers to two types of wonder within God's wisdom imbued in the Torah. The first is that the Almighty's own supernal pleasure manifests as the Torah's wisdom. Pleasure is the most ethereal super-conscious sense of the soul, yet it hiddenly motivates all the soul's conscious powers. The Creator's pleasure, as it were, is the motivating force behind creation and God's guidance of reality. The wonder is that this pleasure itself becomes the Torah's wisdom and can actually be comprehended in our human minds allowing us in turn to take delight in God.

The second type of wonder is that the Torah's wisdom descends further and serves to unite between different extremes. We hope and pray that this year we will see true unity amongst Jews, of all hues and opinions.



ANOTHER PHRASE THAT EQUALS 773 (תשע"ג) is, "My heart tingles with something good" (רַחַשׁ לִבִּי דָבַר טוֹב) (Psalms 45:2). While the verse, "Open my eyes" focuses on eyes and wisdom, this phrase focuses on the heart, tingling with something good that is about to issue forth from the heart. This phrase calls upon us to initiate a movement in the innermost depths of our heart, bringing with it a profound demand to seek God's revelation as in the verse, "For Your sake [God] my heart says: 'Seek My countenance'; Your countenance, God, I shall seek" (Psalms 27:8).

What is the good thing stirring in our heart? The verse continues, "I say: 'My deeds are for the king, my tongue is a quick writer's pen.'" All that I do is for the sake of the king, for the sake of *Malchut Yisrael* (the kingdom of Israel), which reveals God's sovereignty over the world.

This verse is particularly connected with *Rosh Hashanah*, the day on which we coronate God as King over us, the day on which good thoughts, good words begin to stir, to move, and to flourish within us. Every *Rosh Hashanah*, a new light descends into the world that has never been experienced before; it is like the birth of a new soul. This is why *Rosh Hashanah* is an opportune time for the barren to conceive, as the sages teach us that "On Rosh Hashanah, Sarah, Rachel, and Channah conceived" (*Yevamot* 64b). Indeed, the initials of these three names (רַחֵל חַנָּה שָׂרָה) spell the word "tingles" (רַחַשׁ).

The most important birth that we anticipate is the birth of Mashiach. He is the subject of "My deeds are for the king," he is the one to whom this entire psalm is dedicated. Mashiach is the "something good" that will happen to the Jewish people and to the entire world. Furthermore, the word "something" (דָּבַר) in the sages' terminology, also alludes to a leader, as in the idiom, "A generation has [but] one leader" (דָּבַר אֶחָד לְדוֹר) (*Sanhedrin* 8a).

The *gematria* of "something good" (דָּבַר טוֹב) is equal to that of the phrase, "this is the thing" (זֶה הַדָּבָר) the introductory words to *Moshe Rabbeinu's* prophecy, indicating a clarity and precision in hearing God's words not merited by any other prophet. The coming of Mashiach unveils the very same level of Divine certitude that can erase all the doubts and delusions plaguing our faith.

Together with our prayers for the revelation of the Torah's wonders and the miracles in reality they will bring, let us decide to act diligently and conscientiously on behalf of *Malchut Yisra'el* (the kingdom of Israel) and for true unity amongst Jews that will, God willing, bring about the revelation of Mashiach, speedily and in our days.

With blessings for a good and sweet year and for a *ketivah vechatimah tovah* (a good inscription and seal) for the entire Jewish people,