

YOU CANNOT HIDE

by Rabbi Raymond Beyda

There once was a French Emperor who was fleeing from Russian troops that wanted to kill him. He ran into a shop owned by a Jewish fabric merchant. The merchant hid the Emperor under piles of fabric and the soldiers were unable to find him. After the enemy had left the Emperor thanked the merchant saying: "Ask for any three things that your heart desires and I will do all in my power to fulfill your requests".

The poor tailor thought for a moment and then said: "It would be wonderful if the Emperor could arrange to have the leaky roof in my shop repaired".

The Emperor responded angrily: "Is that all you can think of for a man of my stature and wealth to do for you. That is embarrassing for me."

"Well," said the simple peasant, "perhaps Your Majesty could remove the merchant who occupies the store opposite mine and eliminate the competition that affects my financial well being so negatively."

Again the ruler retorted in anger: The poor fabric merchant then presented his third wish. "Maybe the Emperor can reveal to me how he felt when the enemy troops were searching my premises and the King was lying motionless under the piles of piece goods."

"You arrogant one", cried the angry despot, "you will pay for your behavior with your life".

One minute before the executioner carried out the sentence the Emperor ordered him to release the prisoner. The Emperor turned to the trembling peasant and said, "Now you know how I felt while lying under the yards and yards of your fabric while my pursuers searched for me."

Rabbi Yaakov Naiman zt'l explains: When we pray to Hashem we ask for sustenance and a good, comfortable life. It is not proper to waste the opportunity to speak to the King of Kings about such petty matters. The top of our "wish list" should be: "Reveal the glory of your sovereignty upon as speedily". The halakha does not require one to go back and repeat his or her prayers if one were to neglect to recite the High Holy Day insertion of "Remember us for life". However, should one forget to say: "And therefore place your fear upon all of your creations..." one must repeat the Shemoneh Esre - because it is the essential thought of the entire Rosh Hashanah service. If we merit this then we have it all. It is as if a King asked a man what he would like. A wise person would request the hand of the princess in marriage and all other good things would follow naturally. So too -- we

should pray for Hashem to reveal His sovereignty and power and all other good things would follow "naturally".

If one prepares the prayers for the crucial days of Tishre one will notice that although everyone is being judged on Rosh Hashanah one only praises Hashem's sovereignty at this crucial time. No phrases of remorse or repentance are mentioned just praise to the King and request that He reveal Himself to the entire World. If He should respond positively to this noble request -- THEN all good things would follow.

May we all focus our prayers properly and may Hashem respond positively by revealing His power and His love for us and may we see only good and blessing in the new year with the coming of Mashiah speedily in our days. Shanah Tobah.

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