

Rabbi David Eshel
Wilshire Boulevard Temple
Rosh HaShanah 5780/2019

Ah love... for us in southern california the wedding season is all year long. So many couples, I dare say the majority of couples I marry are meeting online... Jdate, Match, ok cupid, tinder, eharmony, Jswipe, and my ultimate favorite?... at least by name... Saw You at Sinai!

The idea behind the name is all Jewish souls, stood together at sinai, that each and every one of us was there standing together entering into our covenantal relationship with God. We chose to become part of something greater than ourselves, God promising blessing and purpose and meaning and we promise a life of responsibility and intention and action.

And in this relationship, God is sovereign...But God's sovereignty, kingship... or in hebrew, malchuyot was bestowed upon God, by us. As our Talmud states about this day... Say in My presence on Rosh Hashana [verses of] Kingship, - so that you make Me King over you. Hence the name of this section of the shofar service: Malchuyot. We actively choose to be part of this relationship thus committing ourselves everyday to live up to this standard. As Jews in this relationship with God we are not merely passive receivers of God's will but rather active creators in partnership with God to repair our world... we often speak of tikkun olam, repairing the world... it is found in our rosh hashanah liturgy, and our daily and shabbat prayers... litaken halom b'malchut shaddai "when the world shall be repaired under the kingship of God", Thus malchuyot forces us to take ownership of our world.

And still, this idea of a king and kingship can be troubling to our modern sensibilities.

There is a beautiful teaching from our Jewish mystical tradition about the word king or in hebrew melech. The teaching reads the word Melech as an acronym Mem, Lamed, kaf...for Mem for Moach—head, Lamed for Lev— heart, and Kaf for Klayot—our guts, or kishkeh. When we call God melech we recognize the importance of being ruled by our thinking, rational brains (moach), our feelings (lev), and our intuition (klayot)—not just one of these, but all three working in concert with each other. This teaching that melech is an acronym for head, heart, and intuition provides a road map for what it means for God to be sovereign in our lives and at the same time not diminishing us as human beings. Rather the opposite. We are empowered and called to action. When we think about our responsibilities to our families, our communities, our world, ... when we feel the emotional desire to act... and then driven by our guts to make the changes we want to see, then we have melech, we have God in our lives. So we, the chosen people... choose to be chosen. We choose to be chosen everyday. Choosing to be chosen means to be innovative and revolutionary thinkers. Choosing to be chosen means giving purpose to our existence. Choosing to be chosen means being strong and resilient. And as we hear these Malchuyot shofar blasts, Choosing to be chosen means changing ourselves and together, changing the world... shana tova!