

Through the eyes of the Talmud Yerushalmi

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“Who is a Nation as Great as You” (Deut. 4:8)

As we approach Rosh Hashanah, the day that our fate is determined it is natural for feelings of fear and uncertainty to overcome us.

But this is not the true spirit of Rosh Hashanah!

The Talmud Yerushalmi (Rosh Hashanah 1:3, 7b) notes that ordinarily when faced with judgement people are depressed. They dress in colors of mourning and let their beards go. This is because they do not know the outcome of their judgement.

Not so the Jewish People when they stand in judgement before God on Rosh Hashanah. They wear white, they trim their beards, they eat, they drink and are merry because they know the outcome of their judgement. They are confident that it will be favorable.

Not only does God wipe our slates clean and instate us in good standing, but He charges us with merit so much so that He will even perform miracles for us.

The Talmud Yerushalmi teaches us that on Rosh Hashanah a Jew must be confident both inwardly and outwardly, in one’s emotions and in one’s dress that forgiveness will ensue.

The gentiles exclaim, “Who is a nation as great as you?!” Having certainty in God’s mercy makes us a great nation!

On Rosh Hashanah we attest to the world and to ourselves that we are a great nation and that our God is a great God.

May we not only have forgiveness this Rosh Hashanah, but the confidence and faith in the greatness of our people. May the nations exclaim: “Who is a nation as great as you?!”. (Michael Linetsky)

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