

“Nothing Compares to You”

Rabbi Yisroel Chait

Written by a Student

Why is the concluding statement “Nothing Compares to You” found only in connection with the Shofaros prayers?

Exodus 15:3 records Moses’ description of God as “a man of war,” but not that God is a man, as Rashi says, (Ibid.) it is similar to “the man of Naomi,” the man related to Naomi. [God too is related to war.] Shir Hakavod (the poem recited on Shabbos after musaf) says:

*"I shall allegorize You, I will describe You, though I don't know You.
They allegorized You, but not according to Your reality, and they portrayed You according to Your deeds.
You are one, containing all the allegories.
They saw You as old and as young.
And the hair of Your head was [both] hoary and jet black."*

On the phrase, “and they portrayed You according to Your deeds,” Eitz Yosef comments: "They gave You a nickname of a warrior. Also, a roaring lion, a bereaved bear, a leopard...the mightiest of animals."

Isaiah 40:18 says, “To what will you equate Me, and to what form will you arrange to Me?”

All these sources teach that God permitted man to have an idea of His presence. It is only in God’s revelation of His presence—*Shofaros*—that such visions take place. This explains why the phrase “Nothing Compares to You” is said only in connection with *Shofaros*, the prayer discussing God’s revelation. Such visions are concessions to man. [Isaiah’s words “To what will you equate Me?” intend to clarify that such physical descriptions of God are only metaphors.]

When we say, “God is Merciful; Keil Rachum,” we don’t mean God experiences the emotion of mercy. But Torah uses this terminology to offer man a concept that God exists. *Malchuyos* and *Zichronos*—the 2 prayers discussing God’s Omnipotence and Omniscience—are not where God relates to man, as is true regarding *Shofaros*, which is God’s particular Providence (*Hashgacha Pratis*) of relating to man. *Shofar/providence* is the substratum, without which there is no *Malchiyos* or *Zichronos*, God’s kingship over and His remembrance of man.

[Thus, “Nothing Compares to You” counters any literal misunderstandings of the visions man has of God during revelation, as on Mt. Sinai and at the Reed Sea. But as *Malchiyos* or *Zichronos* are not revelations, there is no need to counter anything.]