

Remarkable Recollections: Rosh Hashanah

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Mrs. Shira Smiles
Summary by Channie Koplowitz-Stein

The *Rosh Hashanah Mussaf Amidah* has three major components as cited in the *Mishneh*: "Recite before Me on *Rosh Hashanah*...*Malchuyot/Kingship*...*Zichronot/Remembrance* and *Shofrot*. So that your remembrance should arise before Me for good [purpose] ... and with what? With the shofar."

Zichronot will be the core of our discussion here. What does memory signify in relation to Hashem Who is Omniscient? Rabbi Leff and others posit that the *Mishneh* refers to our memories coming before Hashem, for Hashem to remember us for the good. Why do we refer to *Rosh Hashanah* as The Day of Remembrance when the *Torah* refers to the rituals as *Shabbason zichron teruah/a day of rest*... a remembrance with *shofar* blasts..., and as *Yom Teruah/a Day of shofar* sounding.

Rosh Hashanah is also the first day of the Ten Days of Repentance. However, Rav Scheinerman notes that in this section of *Mussaf* there are no verses that mention repentance or punishment. So, while one purpose of blowing the *shofar* is to coronate Hashem as King, the *Ben Melech* notes that it also symbolizes Hashem's judging us. But there is nothing in the verses that delineates this day as the beginning of a new year or of the *shofar* bringing remembrance. Why is it a festival

sanctified as a day of rest? The *Torah* specifies that Hashem performed acts of *chesed* for us on all the other festivals. What specific good did Hashem do for us on this day? If we say we celebrate the Day of Judgment, it is the entire world that is judged. Why would it be a festival for *Bnei Yisroel*?

What makes it a festival is that blowing the *shofar* evokes memories of *chesed* before Hashem, from the covenant with Noach to the covenant with our forefathers. The blessing at the end of this section concludes with "He Who remembers the covenant." It is the memory of this covenant that we pray will ensure us a good year and is the cause of celebration. Just as *Malchuyot* and *Shofrot* require an active component from us, so does *Zichronot*. This active component is tied to the *teshuvah* process. Rabbi Scheinerman notes that while we can do *teshuvah* all year round, *Rosh Hashanah* carries with it an additional element. Through the memories evoked by the *shofar* and the recitation of these specific verses, we are reminded initially of Hashem's love for the entire world and then to His special, heightened love for *Bnei Yisroel*. We hear Him calling us His most precious son and His delightful child. Hashem's love for us stirs reciprocal love within our souls, and we yearn to reconnect with Him. Our *teshuvah* during the rest of the year is generally prompted by fear of punishment; on *Rosh Hashanah* it is

prompted through love. Because of this love, we are inspired to give more *tzedakah* and do more *mitzvot*. The shofar awakens our hearts, inspiring us with memories that arouse the love for Hashem within us. *Teshuvah* on *Rosh Hashanah* is a *teshuvah* that impacts the essence of the person rather than *teshuvah* for sins. It is a *teshuvah* that desires not so much expiation for sins as much as a return of connection to Hashem. The message of *Zichronot* is not about our reminding Hashem about us, but about reminding ourselves about Him.

When we ask Hashem to remember us even in judgment, we are signifying that we want that connection in all circumstances. That's why, although the *Torah* calls it *Yom Teruah*, we call it *Yom Hazikaron*. In spite of its being a day of awe, we still celebrate this day of connection with festive food and clothing. Our service of the day, our *teshuvah*, is to yearn to connect with Hashem, even if the connection is harsh and judgmental. The Ohel Moshe notes that the verses cited point to the significance of Man. If Hashem remembers me, I am worthy of being remembered, and, like our Patriarchs in the verses cited, I too can have a relationship with the Creator. And if what I do matters to Hashem, it should surely matter to me. I must put in the effort to actualize the potential Hashem sees in me.

The Significance of Why There Are Five Books of the Torah Part 2 III

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Rebbetzin Leah Kohn

The 70 people who went down to *Mitzrayim* were the DNA of *Klal Yisrael*. Although they lived in an immoral society, they maintained their purity and this created the inner strength within us to withstand the vicissitudes of exile and remain loyal to Hashem. Hashem ensured that the covenant would endure by implanting within the foundation of *Klal Yisrael* the abilities they would need to accomplish their purpose. This is the meaning of *yissurim shel ahavah*. All through the generations there were great people who went through difficulties not because they sinned but as a means

of actualizing the Divine Plan which would affect *Klal Yisrael*. If we veer away from our mission Hashem reminds us. When something painful occurs we have to ask ourselves what is Hashem telling us and then try to go in the direction it leads us and improve our ways.

In the last *brit* in *Nitzavim* which speaks about the blessings and curses, Hashem tells us what might happen if we choose the wrong path. Unfortunately, we've seen the curses come true throughout our history. Still *Klal Yisrael* agreed to the *brit*. Rashi explains,

Hashem says -I committed myself to the *brit* unconditionally. I created a world and I want it to come to purpose and your mission is to do so. You have to get there. Do it in a way that won't require suffering. And we respond- Even if we will have to go through pain, it's worthwhile. *Chazal* say that Hashem asked Avraham- What will happen if your children will sin, will you choose death or exile? And Avraham chose exile. Avraham instilled within us the idea that any price is worthwhile for what the covenant will eventually create. Hashem has His ways to bring us to where he

Continued on Page 2

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Continued from Page 1

wants us to get to. Sometimes it's pleasant and sometimes not, but we will eventually get there and the best way to see this is by studying history. We cannot help but see the hand of Hashem in bringing us to our purpose. There's a well-known story of four righteous Torah scholars who were traveling on a ship which was captured by pirates. They were put up for sale on the slave market and were redeemed by four Jewish communities in different countries where the level of *Torah* learning needed strengthening. The Jewish communities paid a lot of money to redeem them and they became leaders and established centers of *Torah*.

If we examine this story- At the beginning

stages, there doesn't seem to be any choices. They were captured as slaves and Hashem sent them to foreign countries. But the community members had a choice to redeem them. They recognized the value of these *Torah* scholars and were ready to pay a high price. So too, the captured scholars understood Hashem had sent them to these communities which meant that they had a mission. They chose to live up to that mission and transformed the level of *Torah* scholarship in those countries.

If we look at the great *Torah* leaders that survived the Holocaust and came to America and Israel and accomplished great things we can see how Hashem ensures that after

destruction there will always be renewal. After World War II, Rav Aharon Kotler was invited by Rav Meltzer to come to Israel and then by Rav Moshe to come to America. He wasn't sure what to do so he did the Goral HaGra which came up with the verse, "*Vayomer Hashem el Aharon lech el Moshe bamidbra,*" and the rest is history.

We need to remember to look closely at what is happening and ask ourselves- What does this mean for me in terms of what I can contribute so that the brit will be fulfilled without suffering. We need to hear the voice and act on our mission.

Tehilim 81: Rejoicing on the Somber Day of Judgement

Based on a Naaleh.com shiur by Dr. Esther Shkop

Tehilim 81 is the Song of the Day on Thursday; however in *Masechet Rosh Hashana* we are told that it's also the Song of the Day for both *Rosh Hashana* and *Sukkot*. The chapter has both a celebratory joyous tone to it as it sings the praises of Hashem and a serious mien containing words of reproof both for our current generation and for the past. We also notice that there are several speakers, sometimes it's the poet speaking and other times it seems to be Hashem himself speaking.

"For the conductor on the gitit by Assaf."

Rashi explains that *gitit* is a type of instrument. Rav Hirsh says it refers to a wine press and the celebratory tone reflects a harvest celebration.

"Blow the *shofar* at the moon's renewal at the time appointed for the day of our festivals. It's an ordinance for the people of Israel, a judgement attributed to *Elokai Yaakov*. He placed it as a testimony for Yehosef. When you left Egypt, a language unknown to me, I heard." *Rosh Hashana* is called *keseh* from the language of *l'chasot* -to cover. *Rosh*

Hashana is the only holiday we have at the start of the month when the moon is eclipsed and covered and cannot be seen at the beginning of the month. The *Baal Haturim* points out that typically when people stand in judgment they fast and dress in black and are very somber. But although we plead and pray for a good year on *Rosh Hashana*, we go home joyously and are confident that we will be given a second chance. Other commentators point out that the word *keseh* can be read as *kiseh*-a throne; for it is on this day that we anoint Hashem as king.

"As a testimony for Yehosef, He ordained it, when he went forth over the land of *Mitzrayim*, I understood a language that I had not known." The added *heh* in Yosef's name hints to the idea that it was through him that Hashem prepared the groundwork for the exile which may have appeared as a calamity but was in fact the fulfillment of the promise to Avraham that his children would be enslaved, but would ultimately get *Eretz Yisrael*. Until the Jews had not gone through exile, the reward couldn't happen. Therefore the verse mentions Yosef through whom the process began.

Seforno points out that this stage foretells the fact that we will be exiled among foreign nations whose language we don't comprehend and we will continue to remain loyal to Hashem as we did in Egypt. Rashi looks at this verse and notes that it begins and ends with an *ayin* whose numerical value is 70. This indicates that when Yosef was imprisoned the angel Gavriel taught him 70 languages as well as how to interpret dreams. This was how he was able to interpret the dreams and speak to Pharaoh. The *heh* in Yosef's name indicates that though he lived in an alien culture and understood their language, he remained true to what he was. Rav Hirsh explains that in Egypt the Jews thought Hashem had abandoned them, signified by the eclipse of the moon when the light is hidden. This symbolizes the progression from *Rosh Hashana* to *Sukkot* representing the movement from the darkness of enslavement to the open revelation of redemption when the cloud of glory accompanied the Jews in the desert and His presence was tangible. This chapter evokes a vision of a personal *Yetziat Mitzrayim* where every Jew can discover for himself the light of Hashem that is with him constantly.