



## ALYTH ESSENTIALS

### ROSH HASHANAH

#### **Biblical Precedents: Leviticus 23:23-5**

<sup>23</sup> And the Eternal spoke to Moses saying:

<sup>24</sup> Speak to the children of Israel saying, the seventh month, on the first day of the month, will be for you a Shabbaton, a sacred occasion of remembrance commemorated with loud blasts.

<sup>25</sup> You shall not do any work, and you shall bring burnt offerings to the Eternal.

כג וַיִּדְבֹּר יי אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:  
כד וַיִּדְבֹּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר  
בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה  
לָכֶם שַׁבָּתוֹן זְכֹרֹן תְּרוּעָה מִקְרָא־  
קֹדֶשׁ: כה כָּל־מְלָאכָתָ עֲבֹדָה לֹא  
תַעֲשׂוּ וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אֹשֶׁה לַיי:

#### **Biblical Precedents: Numbers 29:1-6**

<sup>1</sup> And the seventh month, on the first day, will be for you a sacred occasion. You shall not do any work. It will be na day of sounding [the shofar] for you. <sup>2</sup> You shall present a burnt offering of pleasing odour to the Eternal: one bull of the herd, one ram, seven one-year-old lambs without blemish. <sup>3</sup> And the meal offering, choice flour with oil, shall be: three tenths of a measure for a bull, two tenths for a ram, <sup>4</sup> and one tenth for each of the seven lambs. <sup>5</sup> And there shall be one goat for a sin offering, to atone on your behalf, <sup>6</sup> in addition to the burnt offering of the new moon with its meal offering, and the regular burnt offering with it meal offering, each with its prescribed libation, offerings by fire of pleasing odour to the Eternal.

א ובַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ מִקְרָא־  
קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל־מְלָאכָתָ עֲבֹדָה לֹא  
תַעֲשׂוּ יוֹם תְּרוּעָה יִהְיֶה לָכֶם: ב וַעֲשִׂיתֶם  
עֹלָה לַרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ לַיי פָּר בֶּן־בָּקָר אֶחָד  
אֵיל אֶחָד כִּבְשִׂים בְּנֵי־שָׁנָה שִׁבְעָה  
תְּמִימִם: ג וּמִנְחָתָם סֵלֶת בָּלוּלָה בַשֶּׁמֶן  
שְׁלֹשָׁה עֶשְׂרִים לָפָר שְׁנֵי עֶשְׂרִים לָאֵיל:  
ד וְעֶשְׂרֹן אֶחָד לִכְבֹּשׁ הָאֶחָד לְשִׁבְעַת  
הַכִּבְשִׂים: ה וּשְׁעִיר־עִזִּים אֶחָד חֹטְאֵת  
לִכְפֹּר עֲלֵיכֶם: ו מִלֵּבָד עֹלֶת הַחֹדֶשׁ  
וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְעֹלֶת הַתְּמִיד וּמִנְחָתָהּ וְנִסְכֵּיהֶם  
כַּמִּשְׁפָּט לַרִיחַ נִיחֹחַ אֹשֶׁה לַיי:

## Biblical Precedents: Nehemiah 8:1-8

<sup>1</sup> The people gathered as one person in the square before the water-gate, and they asked Ezra the Scribe to bring the book of the Torah of Moses which the Eternal had commanded to Israel. <sup>2</sup> Ezra the Priest brought the Torah before the community, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard. This was the first day of the seventh month. <sup>3</sup> He read from it, from early morning till noon. All the people listened closely to the book of the Torah. <sup>4</sup> Ezra the Scribe stood on a wooden platform made for the purpose ....

<sup>5</sup> He opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above them, and when he opened it they all stood up. <sup>6</sup> Ezra blessed the Eternal, the great God, and all the people raised their hands and answered: 'Amen! Amen!' They bowed their heads and fell down before the Eternal with their faces to the ground. <sup>7</sup> ... The Levites explained the meaning of the Torah to the people as they stood. <sup>8</sup> They read from the book of the Torah of God clearly, translating and explaining the meaning so that the people understood what was read.

א וַיֵּאסְפוּ כָּל־הָעָם כְּאִישׁ אֶחָד אֶל־  
הַרְחֹב אֲשֶׁר לִפְנֵי שַׁעַר־הַמַּיִם וַיֹּאמְרוּ  
לְעֶזְרָא הַסֹּפֵר לְהָבִיא אֶת־סֵפֶר תּוֹרַת  
מֹשֶׁה אֲשֶׁר־צִוָּה יְיָ אֶת־יִשְׂרָאֵל׃ ב וַיָּבִיא  
עֶזְרָא הַכֹּהֵן אֶת־הַתּוֹרָה לִפְנֵי הַקָּהָל  
מֵאִישׁ וְעַד־אִשָּׁה וְכָל מִבֵּין לְשִׁמְעַע בְּיוֹם  
אֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי׃ ג וַיִּקְרָא־בּוֹ לִפְנֵי  
הַרְחֹב אֲשֶׁר | לִפְנֵי שַׁעַר־הַמַּיִם מִן־הָאוֹר  
עַד־מַחֲצִית הַיּוֹם נֹגֵד הָאֲנָשִׁים וְהַנָּשִׁים  
וְהַמְּבִינִים וְאֶזְרָא כָּל־הָעָם אֶל־סֵפֶר  
הַתּוֹרָה׃ ד וַיַּעֲמֵד עֶזְרָא הַסֹּפֵר עַל־מַגְדֵּל־  
עֵץ אֲשֶׁר עָשׂוּ לְדָבָר׃ ... ה וַיִּפְתַּח עֶזְרָא  
הַסֹּפֵר לְעֵינָיו כָּל־הָעָם כִּי־יַמְעַל כָּל־הָעָם  
הַזֶּה וַיִּכְפָּתְחוּ עֲמֻדוֹ כָּל־הָעָם׃ ו וַיִּבְרְךְ  
עֶזְרָא אֶת־יְיָ הָאֱלֹהִים הַגָּדוֹל וַיַּעֲנוּ כָּל־  
הָעָם אָמֵן | אָמֵן בְּמַעַל יְדֵיהֶם וַיִּקְדּוּ  
וַיִּשְׁתַּחֲוּ לַיְיָ אֲפִים אֶרֶץ׃ ז ... וְהַלְלוּם  
מִבְּיָנִים אֶת־הָעָם לַתּוֹרָה וְהָעָם עַל־  
עֲמֻדָם׃ ח וַיִּקְרְאוּ בַסֵּפֶר בְּתוֹרַת הָאֱלֹהִים  
מִפְּרֹשׁ וְשׁוּם שָׁקֵל וַיְבִינּוּ בַּמִּקְרָא׃

ארבעה ראשי שנים הם :  
 באחד בניסן, ראש השנה למלכים ולרגלים.  
 באחד באלול, ראש השנה למעשר בהמה ;  
 רבי אלעזר ורבי שמעון אומרים, באחד בתשרי.  
 באחד בתשרי, ראש השנה לשנים לשמיטים :וליובלות, ולנטיעה ולירקות.  
 באחד בשבט, ראש השנה לאילן, כדברי בית שמאי ;  
 בית הלל אומרים, בחמישה עשר בו.

There are four heads of years:

On the first of Nisan, the new year for kings and for the festivals;

On the first of Elul, the new year for the tithing of animals;

Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Shimon say, on the first of Tishrei

On the first of Tishrei, the new year for years, for the Sabbatical years and for the Jubilee years and for planting and for vegetables

On the first of Sh'vat, the new year for trees - these are the words of the House of Shammai; The House of Hillel says, on the fifteenth thereof

**NEW YEAR.** The Mishnah (RH 1:1) enumerates four separate days of the year, each of which is regarded as a New Year (Heb. \*Rosh Ha-Shanah, lit. "head of the year"). The fixing of those dates was essential, not only for civil and political purposes, but for the regulations concerning the procedure regarding the religious injunctions connected with agricultural produce. Since, for example, the tithe had to be given of animal produce, the fruit from the first three years of a tree's growth (\**orlah*) was forbidden, and the beginning and end of the \*Sabbatical year had to be determined, it was necessary to lay down when the year began for those various calculations. With one exception (and that only according to \*Bet Hillel), all the New Years begin on the first of the month.

(1) The first of Nisan is the New Year for (Jewish) kings and for the religious calendar (for festivals). Thus if a king ascended the throne during Adar, the next month would constitute the second year of his reign, and Passover is the first festival of the year. The Talmud (RH 7a) adds that it is also the New Year for the purchase of congregational sacrifices with the \*shekalim collected in Adar, and for the renting of houses.

(2) The first of Elul is the New Year for the tithing of cattle (but see the first of Tishri), i.e., tithes had to be given for all cattle born between the first of Elul and the 30<sup>th</sup> of Av.

(3) The first of Tishri is the New Year for the civil calendar (including the counting of the reigns of foreign kings; see RH 3a-b and cf. Git. 8:5) for the Sabbatical and Jubilee years (plowing and planting being forbidden from that date), and for the year of planting of fruit and vegetables. The establishment of the first of Tishri as the religious New Year (see \*Rosh Ha-Shanah) depends upon the statement that on that day "all the world is judged" (RH 1:2). According to R. Simeon and R. Eleazar the first of Tishri is also the New Year for the tithing of cattle and therefore there are only three New Years.

(4) The first of Shevat is the New Year for trees, according to Bet Shammai, but Bet Hillel fixed the date as the 15<sup>th</sup> of Shevat, and since the *halakhah* is established accordingly, it is this date which is celebrated today (see \*Tu bi-Shevat). The

reason given in the Talmud (RH 14a) is that on that date the greater part of the year's rain has fallen.

Only Rosh Ha-Shanah is fully celebrated, though in recent times a minor celebration has developed, especially in Israel, for Tu bi-Shevat. The others, as stated, are merely for calendrical computations.

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## FOUR TIMES OF JUDGEMENT

### MISHNAH, ROSH HASHANAH 1:2

בארבעה פרקים העולם נדון,  
בפסח על התבואה,  
בעצרת על פרות האילן,  
בראש השנה כל באי העולם עוברים לפניו כבני מרון, שנאמר (תהלים לג) היוצר יחד לבם,  
המבין אל כל מעשהם.  
ובחג נדונין על המים:

At four times the world is judged:

On Pesach, for the crops.

On Shavuot, for the fruits of the tree.

On Rosh Hashanah, all the world passes before God like sheep, as it says, THE ONE THAT FASHIONS THE HEARTS OF THEM ALL, THAT CONSIDERS ALL THEIR DOINGS (Psalm 33:15)

On Sukkot, they are judged for the water.

### BABYLONIAN TALMUD, ROSH HASHANAH 16b

א"ר כרוספדאי א"ר יוחנן שלשה ספרים נפתחין בר"ה אחד של רשעים גמורין ואחד של  
צדיקים גמורין ואחד של בינוניים  
צדיקים גמורין נכתבין ונחתמין לאלתר לחיים  
רשעים גמורין נכתבין ונחתמין לאלתר למיתה  
בינוניים תלויין ועומדין מר"ה ועד יוה"כ זכו נכתבין לחיים לא זכו נכתבין למיתה

Rabbi Kruspedai said that Rabbi Yochanan said: Three books are opened on Rosh Hashanah:

One for the wholly wicked, one for the wholly righteous and one for those in the middle.

The wholly righteous are immediately written and sealed for life; the wholly wicked are immediately written and sealed for death

Those in the middle are left [with their judgment] suspended from Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur. If they merit, they are written for life; if not, they are written for death.

# Alyth

## THE SHOFAR

There are ten reasons why the Creator commanded us to sound the shofar on Rosh Hashanah.

**The first reason:** Because this day is the beginning of creation, on which the Holy One created the world and reigned over it. Just as with kings at the start of their reign, trumpets and horns are blown in their presence to make it known and to let it be heard in every place, thus it is when we designate the Creator as Ruler on this day, for David said:

*With trumpets and sound of the horn, shout before the Ruler, the Eternal (Psalm 98.6)*

**The second reason:** Because the day of New Year is the first of the ten days of repentance, the shofar is sounded on it to announce to us as one warns and says: "Everyone who wants to repent—let them repent: and if they do not, let them reproach themselves." Thus do human rulers: first they warn the people of their decrees; then if one violates a decree after the warning, no excuse is accepted.

**The third reason:** To remind us of Mount Sinai, as it is said:

*The blare of the horn grew louder and louder (Exodus 19.19), and that we should accept for ourselves the covenant that our ancestors accepted for themselves, as they said: We will do and we will obey (Exodus 24.7)*

**The fourth reason:** To remind us of the words of the prophets that were compared to the sound of the shofar, as it is said:

*Then anyone who hears the sound of the trumpet, and takes not warning; if the sword comes, and takes them away, their blood shall be upon their own head... But the one that takes warning shall deliver their soul (Ezekiel 33:4-5)*

**The fifth reason:** To remind us of the destruction of the Temple and the sound of the battle-cries of the enemies. For it is said: *Because You have heard, oh my soul, the sound of the horn, the alarm of war (Jeremiah 4.19)* When we hear the sound of the shofar, we will ask God to rebuild the Temple.

**The sixth reason:** To remind us of the binding of Isaac who offered his life to Heaven. We also should offer our lives for the sanctification of God's Name, and thus we will be remembered for good.

**The seventh reason:** When we will hear the blowing of the shofar, we will be fearful, and we will tremble, and we will humble ourselves before the Creator. For that is the nature of the shofar - it causes fear and trembling, as it is written: *Shall the horn be blown in a city and the people not tremble? (Amos 3.6)*

**The eighth reason:** To recall the day of the great judgment and to be fearful of it, as it is said:

*The great day of the Eternal is near, it is near and hastens greatly... a day of the horn and alarm (Zephaniah 1.14-16)*

**The ninth reason:** To remind us of the ingathering of the scattered ones of Israel, that we ardently desire, as it is said: *And it shall come to pass on that day, that a great horn shall be blown; and they shall come that were lost in the land of Assyria... and they shall worship the Eternal in the holy mountain at Jerusalem (Isaiah 27.13)*

**The tenth reason:** To remind us of the resurrection of the dead and the belief in it, as it is said

*All you inhabitants of the world, and dwellers on the earth, when an ensign is lifted upon the mountains, see; and when the horn is blown, hear (Isaiah 18.3)*

Sefer Avudarham, Rosh HaShanah  
Saadiah Gaon, 882-942

# Alyth

## UN'TANEH TOKEF

Let us acknowledge the powerful holiness of this day  
For it is awesome and terrible  
And on it your sovereignty shall be exalted  
Your throne established in loving mercy.  
You reign upon it in truth.

In truth: You are the judge,  
The prosecutor, the all-knowing the witness,  
The author and the sealer,  
The scribe and the recounter.  
You remember everything that has been forgotten  
You open the book of remembrance  
And from it proclaim  
And the seal of every person is there.

The great shofar is sounded,  
A still small voice is heard.  
The angels are dismayed,  
They are dazed by fear and trembling  
As they proclaim: Behold the Day of Judgment!  
For all the hosts of heaven are brought for judgment.  
They shall not be guiltless in Your eyes

And all creatures shall parade before You like sheep.  
As a shepherd herds his flock,  
Causing the sheep to pass beneath the staff,  
So too do You cause to pass, count and record,  
Reviewing the souls of all living  
Decreeing the length of their days,  
Inscribing their judgment,

On Rosh Hashanah it is written down,  
And on Yom Kippur it is sealed.

How many shall pass away and how many shall be born,  
Who shall live and who shall die,  
Who shall reach the natural end and who shall not,  
Who shall perish by water and who by fire,  
Who by sword and who by wild beast,  
Who by famine and who by thirst,  
Who by earthquake and who by plague,  
Who by strangulation and who by stoning  
Who shall have rest and who shall wander,  
Who shall be at peace and who shall be pursued,  
Who shall be at rest and who shall be tormented,  
Who shall be exalted and who shall be brought low,  
Who shall be rich and who shall be impoverished

וְנִתְּנָה תְּקֵף קִדְּשֵׁת הַיּוֹם, כִּי הוּא נוֹרָא וְאִיּוֹם:  
וְבוֹ תִּנְשָׂא מַלְכוּתְךָ, וְיִכּוֹן בְּחֶסֶד כְּסֶאֱךָ,  
וְתִשָּׁב עָלָיו בְּאֱמֶת.

אֱמֶת כִּי אַתָּה הוּא דִין וּמוֹכִיחַ, וַיִּדַּע וַעֲד,  
וְכוֹתֵב וְחוֹתֵם,  
וְסוֹפֵר וּמוֹנֶה,  
וְתִזְכּוֹר כָּל הַנִּשְׁכָּחוֹת:  
וְתִפְתַּח אֶת סֵפֶר הַזִּכְרוֹנוֹת, וּמֵאֲלִיו יִקְרָא,  
וְחוֹתֵם יָד כָּל אָדָם בּוֹ.

וּבְשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל יִתְקַע, וְקוֹל דְּמָמָה דְּקָה יִשְׁמַע: וּמֵלֶאכִים יִחְפְּזוּן, וְחִיל וּרְעָדָה יֵאָחֲזוּן,  
וַיֵּאמְרוּ הִנֵּה יוֹם הַדִּין,  
לְפָקוֹד עַל צָבָא מְרוֹם בְּדִין,  
כִּי לֹא יִזְכּוּ בְּעֵינֶיךָ בְּדִין.  
וְכָל בָּאֵי עוֹלָם יַעֲבְרוּן לְפָנֶיךָ כְּבָנֵי מְרוֹן.  
כְּבִקְרַת רוּעָה עֹדְרוֹ, מַעֲבִיר צֹאנוֹ תַּחַת שִׁבְטוֹ,  
כֵּן תַּעֲבִיר וְתִסְפּוֹר וְתִמְנֶה,  
וְתִפְקוֹד נֶפֶשׁ כָּל חַי,  
וְתַחְתּוֹף קֶצֶבָה לְכָל בְּרִיָּה,  
וְתִכְתּוֹב אֶת גְּזֵר דִּינָם.

**בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה יִכְתָּבוּן,  
וּבְיוֹם צוֹם כְּפוֹר יִחְתַּמוּן**

כֹּמֶה יַעֲבְרוּן, וְכֹמֶה יִבְרָאוּן:  
מִי יַחְיֶה, וּמִי יָמוּת:  
מִי בְּקֶצֶז, וּמִי לֹא בְּקֶצֶז:  
מִי בְּאֵשׁ, וּמִי בַּמַּיִם:  
מִי בַּחֲרֵב, וּמִי בַּחֲיָה:  
מִי בַּרְעֵב, וּמִי בַּצָּמָא:  
מִי בַּרְעֵשׁ, וּמִי בַּמַּגֵּפָה:  
מִי בַּחֲנִיקָה, וּמִי בַּסְּקִילָה:  
מִי יָנוּחַ, וּמִי יָנוּעַ:  
מִי יִשְׁקֵט, וּמִי יִטְרֹף:  
מִי יִשְׁלֹו, וּמִי יִתִּיֶסֶר:



But repentance, prayer and righteousness avert the severe decree.

For Your praise is in accordance with Your name.  
You are difficult to anger and easy to appease.  
For You do not desire the death of the condemned,  
But that they shall turn from their path and live.  
Until the day of their death You wait for them,  
Should they turn You will receive them at once.  
In truth You are their Creator  
And You understand their nature  
For they are but flesh and blood.

Their origin is dust  
Their end is dust.  
They gather food with their lives,  
They are like shattered pottery,  
Like withered grass, like a faded flower,  
Like a passing shadow, like a vanishing cloud,  
Like a breeze that blows away, like dust that scatters,  
Like a dream that flies away.

But You are King,  
God who lives for all eternity!  
There is no limit to Your years,  
No end to the length of Your days,  
No measure to the hosts of Your glory,  
No limit to the eternity of Your Name.  
Your Name is fitting to You  
And You are fitting to it,  
And our name has been called by Your Name.

Act for the sake of Your Name  
And sanctify Your Name  
Through those who declare the sanctity of Your Name.

For the glory of Your name, honoured and sanctified,  
Like the utterances of holy seraphim, who sanctify  
Your name with 'holy'  
Inhabitants above with inhabitants below:

As is written by the hand of the prophet:  
And they called one to the other and said...

מִי יַעֲנֵי, וּמִי יִשְׁפָּר:

מִי יִשְׁפָּל, וּמִי יָרוּם.

וּתְשׁוּבָה וּתְפִלָּה וּצְדָקָה

מַעֲבִירִין אֶת רֹעַ הַגְּזֵרָה.

כִּי כְשֶׁמָד בֵּן תִּהְיֶה לְתָד,

קָשָׁה לְכַעֵס וְנוֹחַ לְרַצּוֹת:

כִּי לֹא תַחֲפוּץ בְּמוֹת הַמֵּת, כִּי אִם בְּשׁוּבוֹ

מִדְּרָכּוֹ וְחֵיָהּ.

וְעַד יוֹם מוֹתוֹ תִּתְחַכֶּה לוֹ,

אִם יָשׁוּב מִיַּד תִּקְבְּלוּ.

אֲמַת כִּי אַתָּה הוּא יוֹצֵרָם, וְאַתָּה יוֹדֵעַ

יִצְרָם,

כִּי הֵם בָּשָׂר וָדָם.

אָדָם יְסוּדוֹ מֵעָפָר וְסוּפוֹ לְעָפָר:

בְּנִפְשׁוֹ יָבִיא לְחֵמוֹ:

מְשׁוּל כְּחֶרֶס הַנִּשְׁבָּר,

כְּחֻצִיר יָבֵשׁ, וְכָצִיץ נוֹבֵל,

כְּצֵל עוֹבֵר, וְכַעֲנַן כֹּלֵה,

וְכַרוּחַ נוֹשֶׁבֶת, וְכַאֲבָק פּוֹרֵחַ,

וְכַחֲלוֹם יַעֲוִיף.

וְאַתָּה הוּא מֶלֶךְ אֵל חַי וְקַיִם.

אֵין קֶצֶבָה לְשָׁנוֹתֶךָ, וְאֵין קֵץ לְאַרְךָ יָמֶיךָ:

וְאֵין לְשֹׁעַר מְרַכְּבוֹת כְּבוֹדֶךָ,

וְאֵין לְפָרֵשׁ עֲלוֹם שְׁמֶךָ:

שְׁמֶךָ נֶאֱדָה לְךָ וְאַתָּה נֶאֱדָה לְשְׁמֶךָ,

וּשְׁמִנּוּ קִרְאָתְךָ בְּשְׁמֶךָ.

עֲשֵׂה לְמַעַן שְׁמֶךָ, וְקַדֵּשׁ אֶת שְׁמֶךָ עַל

מַקְדִּישֵׁי שְׁמֶךָ,

בַּעֲבוּר כְּבוֹד שְׁמֶךָ הַנִּנְעָרִץ וְהַנִּקְדָּשׁ,

כְּסוּד שִׁיחַ שְׂרָפֵי קָדֶשׁ, הַמַּקְדִּישִׁים שְׁמֶךָ

בְּקָדֶשׁ,

דְּרֵי מַעְלָה עִם דְּרֵי מַטָּה

כַּפְתּוֹב עַל יָד נְבִיאֶךָ: וְקָרָא זֶה אֶל זֶה

וְאָמַר: