

**Pardes: My favourite...High Holy Day Liturgy  
Rosh Hashanah Musaf**

Rabbi Hannah Kingston, Thursday 3 September

**bTalmud Rosh Hashanah 34b**

**אמר רבה אמר הקב"ה אמרו לפני בר"ה מלכיות זכרונות ושופרות מלכיות כדי שתמליכוני  
עליכם זכרונות כדי שיבא לפני זכרונכם לטובה ובמה בשופר**

Rabba said that the Holy One, Blessed be God, said: Recite before Me on Rosh Hashanah *Malchuyot*, *Zichronot*, and *Shofarot*, so that you may acknowledge Me as Ruler over you; Remembrance, so that your remembrance may rise up favourably before Me. And with what shall this be done? With the means of *shofar*.

Much has been written about the sounds of the shofar. We may hear a call to battle when the shofar is sounded, or we may hear the plaintive wail of a Jew who stands in fear before her Creator. We may hear the joy of a Jew who has once again reached Rosh Hashanah, or the laughter of Jewish children as they prepare to enjoy their apples and honey.

But I would like us to focus on three distinct time frames, the past, the present and the future. I would like us to link the three sections of the *Musaf* service to these three time frames, and then I would like us to listen very carefully to hear what the shofar is telling us.

*Malchuyot*: In this section of liturgy, we praise God who rules the world. As Jews, we acknowledge God's sovereignty. Listen to the voice of God speaking through the sounds of the shofar. What do you hear?

*Zichronot*: In this section, we remind God of God's promise to preserve our people. We remember God's commitment and our own declaration at Sinai – *na'ase v'nishma* – we will do and we will obey. What memories are evoked for you by the sound of the shofar? Do you remember Sinai? Do you remember the trumpets that sounded as God spoke? Listen.

*Shofarot*: This section focuses on the future, and God's promise of future redemption. But in truth, who will bring redemption. Rabbi Jude Harlow tells us: both God and people. We make the world worthy of redemption; God redeems the world and history. If we believe that we alone can bring redemption, we fall into the error of false messianism. If we believe that God alone will bring it, we fall into the error of despair and inaction. What actions are being required of you when you hear the blast of the shofar? How is God describing a perfect world?

*Rabbi Diane Cohen*

**Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 4:5, 6**

**סדר ברכות, ואמר אבות וגבורות וקדש השם, וכולל מלכיות עמהן, ואינו תוקע. קדש  
היום, ותוקע. זכרונות, ותוקע. שופרות, ותוקע. ואומר עבודה והודאה וברכת פהנים, דברי  
רבי יוחנן בן נורי. אמר לו רבי עקיבא, אם אינו תוקע למלכיות, למה הוא מזכיר. אלא  
אומר אבות וגבורות וקדש השם, וכולל מלכיות עם קדש היום, ותוקע. זכרונות, ותוקע.  
שופרות, ותוקע. ואומר עבודה והודאה וברכת פהנים**

The order of blessings:

He says "patriarchs", "powers" and the "sanctification of the name" and includes the kingship verses with them and does not blow [the shofar].

The sanctification of the day and blows, the remembrance-verses and blows, and the shofar-verses and blows.

Then he says the blessing of the Temple service and “thanksgiving” and the blessing of the priests, these are the words of Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri.

Rabbi Akiva said to him: if he does not blow the shofar for the kingship-verses, why should he say them? Rather he says: “patriarchs”, “powers” and the “sanctification of the name” and includes the kingship verse with the sanctification of the day and blows the shofar, then he says the remembrance-verses and blows, and the shofar-verses and blows. Then he says the Temple service and “thanksgiving” and the blessing of the priest.

אֵין פּוֹחֲתִין מַעֲשֵׂה מַלְכוּיּוֹת, מַעֲשֵׂה זְכוּנוֹת, מַעֲשֵׂה שׁוֹפָרוֹת. רַבִּי יוֹחָנָן בֶּן נוּרִי אוֹמֵר,  
אִם אָמַר שְׁלֹשׁ מַכְלָן, יֵצֵא. אֵין מְזַכְרִין זְכוּנוֹת מַלְכוּת וְשׁוֹפָר שֶׁל פְּרָעָנוֹת. מִתְחִיל  
בַּתּוֹרָה וּמִשְׁלֵים בְּנִבְיָא. רַבִּי יוֹסֵי אוֹמֵר, אִם הִשְׁלִים בַּתּוֹרָה, יֵצֵא

They do not recite less than ten kingship [verses], ten remembrance [verses], and ten shofar [verses]. Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri says: if he said three from each set he has fulfilled his obligation. They do not mention kingship, remembrance and shofar verses of punishment. He begins with [verses] from the Torah and concludes with [verses] from the prophets. Rabbi Yose says: if he concludes with [a verse] from the Torah he has fulfilled his obligation.

### Talmud Rosh Hashanah 32a

גמ' הני עשרה מלכיות כנגד מי אמר (רבי) כנגד עשרה הלולים שאמר דוד בספר תהלים  
הלולים טובא הוו הנך דכתיב בהו (תהלים קג) הללוהו בתקע שופר

GEMARA: These ten verses of Kingship, to what do they correspond?

Rabbi said: They correspond to the ten praises that David said in the book of Psalms.

There are many more praises?

Those in which it is written by them: **“Praise God with the blast of the shofar”** (Psalms 150:3)

רב יוסף אמר כנגד עשרת הדברות שנאמרו לו למשה בסיני ר' יוחנן אמר כנגד עשרה  
מאמרות שבהן נברא העולם הי ניהו ויאמר

Rav Yosef said: The ten verses correspond to the Ten Commandments, which were said to Moses at Sinai.

Rabbi Yohanan said: They correspond to the ten utterances through which the world was created. Which are these?

[This is referring to the ten times in the story of creation that we see the phrase] **“And He said”**

(ויאמר) דבראשית ט' הוו בראשית נמי מאמר הוא דכתיב (תהלים לג, ו) בדבר ה' שמים  
נעשו

**“And He said”** in Genesis? There are only nine

**“In the beginning”** is also considered an utterance, as it is written: **“By the word of the Eternal were the heavens made”** (Psalms 33:6)

ר' יוחנן בן נורי אומר אם אמר שלש שלש מכולן יצא: איבעיא להו היכי קתני שלש מן  
התורה שלש מן הנביאים ושלש מן הכתובים דהוו תשע ואיכא בינייהו חדא או דלמא אחד  
מן התורה ואחד מן הנביאים ואחד מן הכתובים דהויין להו שלש ואיכא בינייהו טובא

Rabbi Yohanan ben Nuri says: If one recited three from each of them, he has fulfilled his obligation. A dilemma was raised: What is he teaching?

Three from the Torah, three from the Prophets, and three from the Writings, which are nine? And the difference is only one?

Or perhaps he means that one must recite one verse from the Torah and one from the Prophets and one from the Writings, which are three altogether, and the difference between them is a large.

**ת"ש דתניא אין פוחתין מעשרה מלכיות מעשרה זכרונות מעשרה שופרות ואם אמר שבע מכולן יצא כנגד שבעה רקיעים**

Come and hear, as it is taught: Do not recite fewer than ten verses of Kingship, than ten verses of Remembrances, than ten verses of Shofarot.

And if one recited seven from each of them, he has fulfilled his obligation, as they correspond to the seven firmaments in heaven.

**רבי יוחנן בן נורי אמר הפוחת לא יפחות משבע ואם אמר שלש מכולן יצא כנגד תורה נביאים וכתובים ואמרי לה כנגד כהנים לויים וישראלים אמר רב הונא אמר שמואל הלכה כר' יוחנן בן נורי**

Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Nuri said: One who recites fewer, should not recite fewer than seven, but if he recited three from each of them he has fulfilled his obligation, as they correspond to the Torah, the Prophets, and the Writings.

And some say: They correspond to the priests, the Levites, and the Israelites.

Rav Huna said Shmuel said: The *halakha* is in accordance with Rabbi Yoḥanan ben Nuri.

## Malchuyot

### bTalmud Rosh Hashanah 32a

**מנין שאומרים מלכיות תניא רבי אומר (ויקרא כג, כב) אני ה' אלהיכם ובחדש השביעי זו מלכות**

From where do we know that one recites Kingship? It is taught that Rabbi says: **"I am the Eternal your God"** (Leviticus 23:22), and [two verses later it states]: **"In the seventh month"** (Leviticus 23:24). This teaches Kingship must be mentioned on Rosh Hashanah.

Judaism asserts that there is one true God. There is also a Divine standard, but it is always mediated by human beings. That the people will inevitably get it wrong sometimes is told in the biblical narrative itself. All religions are interpretations of God's word. While they may be able to capture some of God's will and essence, they are flawed and incomplete. Indeed, it would be idolatrous to assert any human creation is the 'one true religion.' Judaism simply insists on faithfulness.

A parable: A man who has to believe that his wife is the most beautiful woman in the world has no wife, for he is constantly looking at other women to be sure that none may be more beautiful. He thereby surrenders responsibility for faith in his own marriage, for sacred relationship with his life partner. You can never know whose wife (or religion) is fairest of them all, anyway, since such knowledge requires the intimacy of a life lived together (or the journey of a religious life).

The purpose of religion is not to learn what is good, but to learn to *do* what is good, not to disclose secrets but to achieve persons. This is the discipline of living in faithfulness.

*Rabbi Zalman Schachter-Shalomi*

## Zichronot

### Leviticus 23:24

דַּבֵּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל, לֵאמֹר: בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ, יְהִי־לָכֶם שַׁבָּתוֹן--זִכְרוֹן  
תְּרוּעָה, מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ

Speak to the Israelite people thus: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts.

Why is *Zichranot* such a key part of the Rosh Hashanah Musaf, the key part of the liturgy of the most important of holy days during the year, the *Yamim Noraim*?

The Baal Shem Tov, founder of Hasidism, who lived from 1700 to 1766 in Ukraine, makes a remarkable and profound statement about remembering that captures the essence of Judaism's emphasis on memory, so much so that his words are inscribed on the entrance to Israel's House of Memorial to the victims of the Holocaust, Yad Vashem:

Redemption lies in remembering.

We remember the good and the bad of what happened before us, so that we can make tomorrow better than today and yesterday.

As we remember, so we begin the slow process of redemption.

*Rabbi Dov Peretz Elkins*

## Shofarot

### Numbers 29:1

וּבַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ, מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ יְהִי־לָכֶם--כָּל-מְלָאכָתָ עֲבֹדָה, לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ: יוֹם  
תְּרוּעָה, יְהִי־לָכֶם

In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a sacred occasion: you shall not work at your occupations. You shall observe it as a day when the horn is sounded.

The shofar calls – something is asked of me.

Over and above personal problems, there is an objective challenge to overcome inequity, injustice, helplessness, suffering, carelessness, oppression. Over and above the din of desires there is a calling, a demanding, a waiting, an expectation. There is a question that follows me wherever I turn. What is expected of me? What is demanded of me?

What we encounter is not only flowers and stars, mountains and walls. Over and above all things is a sublime expectation, a waiting for. With every child born a new expectation enters the world.

This is the most important experience in the life of every human being: something is asked of me. Every human being has had a moment in which he senses a mysterious waiting for him. Meaning is found in responding to the demand, meaning is found in sensing the demand.

*Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel*