

The Day of the Awakening Blast

*“On Rosh HaShanah, man is judged. But what sacrifice does he bring? He brings himself.”
(The Secret by Jonathan Rosenblum)*

Rosh HaShanah is the first of the three Fall Feasts of Israel, which together, paint a powerful picture of the end of the age and the return of our L-rd. It is called the Jewish New Year. This is not because of its position in the Hebrew Calendar—the 1st day of the 7th month—but because of the tradition, which says that this is the day G-d created Adam. Man will be judged, they say, on the same day he was created. As such, Rosh HaShanah begins a ten-day period of deep repentance in preparation for the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) when the gates of Heaven are closed.

The Hebrew sages teach that the end of the world, known simply as “ketz”, would begin on a future Rosh HaShanah. In their teachings it is said that three books will be opened by G-d on Judgment Day: the *Book of Life* for the totally righteous; the *Book of Death* (the Rashim) for the totally wicked; and the *Book of the Average Man* whose fate is in suspension until Yom Kippur and the blowing of the last trumpet.

It is the Feast described in Leviticus 23 as *The Day of Blowing the Shofar*, the only Feast that falls on the New Moon or darkest day of the month—quite apropos for Judgment Day. The name of the month,

shri,

is an Aramaic word that means to loosen or untie. It has a double meaning in that during this month, man has the opportunity to loosen or untie his sins from himself and to start anew with G-d. It is also the month during which judgment, which has been held back, will be loosened or untied and allowed to permeate the earth.

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There are four names for the celebration:

- Rosh HaShanah, meaning ‘Top of the Year’
- Yom HaDin, meaning, ‘Day of Judgment’
- Yom HaZikkharon, meaning ‘Day of Remembrance’

- Yom Teruah meaning, 'Day of Blowing the Shofar'

As 'Judgment Day', it speaks of the day on which each man will be 'weighed in the balance':

"Fathers shall not be put to death for their children, nor children put to death for their fathers; each is to die for his own sin."

As the 'Day of Remembrance', it recalls that G-d will remember the promises made to the patriarchs. As part of the celebration, the story of the birth of Isaac born to barren Sarah is recalled (Genesis 21) as well as the birth of Samuel to barren Hannah (1 Samuel 1); Jeremiah's vision of the deliverance of Israel from exile is recited (Jer. 31:1-19); and the binding of Isaac by Abraham (Genesis 22). Each story is recited to recall to God's remembrance: Birth after barrenness, deliverance after exile, and rescue from sacrifice.

Each of these stories, for believers, should recall that G-d has promised barren Israel fruitfulness (Isaiah 54); that He will return Israel from exile (Isaiah 43:5-6) and rescue her from sacrifice when Israel's enemies surround her (Ezekiel 38:18-23).

Rosh HaShanah is called the Day of Blowing the Shofar to fulfill the biblical command (Leviticus 23:24). The reason for the shofar blasts, the sages teach, is that before a king punishes his subjects for neglecting his decrees, he gives them a final warning. The shofar blasts are G-d's final warning before the final judgment on Yom Kippur when the gates of Heaven are closed.

Judgment Day is G-d's warning to man of His impending wrath—the harvest (Rev. 14:14-20). Rosh HaShanah is man's opportunity to prepare for the harvest of the earth that will follow. Yeshua (Jesus) told a parable about the end of the age and interpreted it for His followers. He said:

"The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of this age, and the harvesters are angels." (Matt. 13:38, 39)

The Shofar

All of the traditions, whether based on Biblical commands or oral law, point to Yeshua (Jesus) and His redemptive work. The Shofar for instance, which is central to the theme of Rosh HaShanah, has traditions connected to it that have great prophetic significance.

The individual chosen to blow the shofar is called the Tokeah b'shofar or just the Tokeah. He covers his head with a prayer shawl, indicating the sacred nature of his job—sacred because the shofar sound is believed to bring down the Glory of G-d just as it did on the first Shavuot at Mt. Sinai. The prayer shawl or tallit represents the Word of G-d, the Torah. The Tokeah, therefore, is wrapped in the Word of G-d and is basked in its supernatural light, G-d's Glory.

As believers, we know Yeshua as the Living Word of G-d, G-d's Glory. Because our bodies are Temples of the Holy Spirit we have the super-natural light (of understanding) that the Holy Spirit brings. The tallit serves to remind us of this great privilege.

The shofar is said to compare with the voice of G-d. At times, the scriptures describe the voice of the prophets as trumpets. For instance, in Isaiah: "Cry aloud, spare not; lift up your voice like a trumpet" (Isaiah 58:1). In a very real sense, those who speak the Word of G-d are 'trumpeters', Tokeas who are wrapped in G-d's Glory, His Living Word Yeshua, by the supernatural light of the Holy Spirit.

The three sounds of the shofar are Tekiah, Teru'ah. Shevarim. Each shofar blast begins and ends with Tekiah, a whole note that surrounds either a shevarim or teru'ah, broken notes. This is said to be the theme of Rosh HaShanah:

We were whole, we became broken, even shattered into the fragments of the teru'ah; but we shall be made whole again!

This is true of both Israel and the Church. The first century church was whole in its beginning. The church, over the centuries became shattered into many fragments (denominations). But Yeshua (Jesus) prayed that we would all be made one just as He and the Father are One. One

day, there will be no more separation between Jew and Gentile—we will be The One New Man!

Jonathan Rosenblum (The Secret) sums up Rosh HaShanah:

“Our task on Rosh HaShanah is to attach our entire existence to that which is eternal within us. It is to recognize that the life and death to which we refer on Rosh HaShanah have nothing to do with whether we are breathing. To experience real life is to experience a connection to the source of life, to G-d, who is called a G-d of life. He defines life. Only that which is connected to Him is alive, for only it has eternity. Everything else is doomed to vanish like smoke.”

Ketivah vachatimah tovah—“May you be inscribed and sealed for a good year.”