

Jewish Inspirations for Rosh Hashanah — Teaching Notes

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The Fall Feasts

- ⌘ Lev 23:24 (NKJV) "In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall have a Sabbath-rest, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, a holy convocation."
- ⌘ Lev 23:27 "Also the tenth day of this seventh month shall be the Day of Atonement. It shall be a holy convocation for you; you shall afflict your souls, and offer an offering made by fire to the LORD."
- ⌘ Lev 23:34 "The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the Feast of Tabernacles for seven days to the LORD."

The Festival of Trumpets

- ❖ Rosh Hashanah is a day of prayer, a time to ask the Almighty to grant us a year of peace, prosperity and blessing. But it is also a joyous day when we proclaim God King of the Universe.
- ❖ Therefore, the primary theme of Rosh Hashanah is making God King. Also referred to as the coronation of the King.
- ❖ Making God King means waking up every morning with the central, overarching goal in one's life of getting close to God.
- ❖ Making God King also means choosing transcendence over transience, Infinite over finite, reality over illusion.
- ❖ The festival correlates with seventh trumpet judgment described in the book of Revelation, where the arc of His covenant is open in heaven.
 - Rev 11:15 "Then the seventh angel sounded: And there were loud voices in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world have become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever!"
 - Rev 11:19 "Then the temple of God was opened in heaven, and the ark of His covenant was seen in His temple. And there were lightnings, noises, thunderings, an earthquake, and great hail."

- ❖ The festival also mysteriously is a picture of Christ returning for His bride, fulfilled in the resurrection and rapture of those who are in Christ, and preceding the judgments of Christ.
 - 1Co 14:52 "In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."
- ❖ Jewish tradition teaches that on this day, all inhabitants of the world pass before God like a flock of sheep," and it is decreed in the heavenly court "who shall live, and who shall die ... who shall be impoverished and who shall be enriched; who shall fall and who shall rise."
- ❖ It is customary to sound a long blast as the concluding sound of the shofar in order to confuse Satan and prevent him from accusing Israel of lacking fear of Divine judgment.
- ❖ Therefore, Rosh Hashanah is a trial, a Day of Judgment.
- ❖ However, we find no mention of sin in the Jewish prayers of that day. Why? Because the entire theme of the day is about the coronation of the King.
- ❖ And because, when Israel sounds the shofar in fulfillment of prophesy at the return of her King, their closed hearts are opened, they regret their sins, and their thoughts turn to repentance.
 - Zec 12:10 "And I will pour on the house of David and on the inhabitants of Jerusalem the Spirit of grace and supplication; then they will look on Me whom they pierced. Yes, they will mourn for Him as one mourns for his only son, and grieve for Him as one grieves for a firstborn."
- ❖ Satan knows the power of the sounds of the shofar. Though they originate from man's lips, they will culminate with the coming of the Messiah, the Son of David.
 - Zec 14:1-9 "Behold, the day of the Lord is coming... Then the Lord will go forth And fight against those nations, As He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, Which faces Jerusalem on the east... Thus the Lord my God will come, And all the saints with You... And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—'The Lord is one,' And His name one."

When the World Began

- ❖ Adam, the first human being, opened his eyes to a world that appeared to have always been. He lifted his eyes to the vast sky above. He beheld mighty mountains and majestic waterfalls, flowing rivers and verdant forests.
- ❖ And he cried out, "This is all the majesty of an Infinite Being, who created a world out of kindness and might, beauty and wonder, glory and majesty, so that His creatures might know Him!"

- ❖ That is why Rosh Hashanah is called the first day of creation, for only then did the world know it had meaning.

Soul, Space, and Time

- ❖ In the soul of the universe there is a consciousness from which all consciousness extends.
- ❖ In space, there is the Land of Israel, a space from where all space is nurtured.
- ❖ In time, there is Rosh Hashanah, a time from which all time is renewed.
- ❖ Rosh Hashanah means Head of the Year. Not just a starting point, but a head, a new beginning of time on which a new consciousness enters our universe.
 - Joh 1:14 "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

Hide and Seek

- ❖ Rosh Hashanah is a game of hide and seek. God hides, we seek.
- ❖ But where can God hide? Wherever you go, there He is. There is no place void of Him.
- ❖ We are the small child who climbs into the king's arms, tears off the mask and exclaim, "Daddy!"
- ❖ Which is just what He was waiting for.
 - Eph 3:9 "And to make all see what is the fellowship of the mystery, which from the beginning of the ages has been hidden in God who created all things through Jesus Christ."

The Drama

- ❖ All the cosmos came to be because God chose to invest His very essence into a great drama: the drama of a lowly world becoming the home of an infinite God. A marriage of opposites, the fusion of finite and infinite, light and darkness, heaven and earth.
- ❖ We are the players in that drama.
 - 2Co 11:2 "For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ."

We Are the Child

- ❖ Your child is not like everyone else; your child is you.
- ❖ And yet, your child is not you; your child is his own person.
- ❖ A paradox.

- ❖ Our souls are that paradox—on a greater scale: the nexus between God and His universe, where His own breath becomes His creation.
- ❖ That is why we are called His children. And we call Him our Father.
 - Rom 8:15 “But you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, “Abba, Father.”

My Dad, the King

- ❖ On Rosh Hashanah, we call God both king and father.
- ❖ King, because He dictates what will be and what will not.
- ❖ Father, because there is something of Him within each of us.
- ❖ Indeed, as we choose, so He will dictate.
- ❖ Choose life.
 - Rom 8:29 “For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.”

The Ultimate Author

- ❖ How is God a king? Does He wear purple robes? Does He sit upon a golden throne?
- ❖ A king speaks and his word is fulfilled. God speaks and the world comes into being. He is the author and we are the characters of His story.
- ❖ Such a great author that His characters can speak back to Him, and discuss with Him the path His story must take.
 - Heb 5:9 “And having been perfected, He became the author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him.”

The Primal Shofar

- ❖ The sound of the shofar is not the cry of a human voice. It is the howl of an animal's horn.
- ❖ It is a cry so primal, so raw, that the mind ceases to ponder, the heart suspends its throb.
- ❖ With the fury of a beast pent up in its cage, the naked essence of the soul bursts out, howling, ripping through heaven's curtains, awakening the primal essence of all being.
- ❖ The raw core of your soul below touches the primal essence above, and now their reunion may begin.

The Essence—Cry

- ❖ There are things so important to us that the words flow out in a burst of emotion, rich words, expressive and vibrant.
- ❖ And then there are things that shake us to the core. Things that do not care for the mind's permission or for the right words—for the mind cannot fathom them, the most poignant words could not contain them. Things that can only break out in a cry, in a scream, and then in silence.
- ❖ This is the sound of the shofar: The very core of our souls crying, "Dad! Don't leave me here alone!"

— Joh 14:18 "I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you."

Words & World

- ❖ In the beginning, God spoke and the world came into being.
- ❖ On Rosh Hashanah, every year, we speak praises and prayers, petitions and pleas. We speak of ourselves and we speak of others—in the synagogue, and at home.
- ❖ On Rosh Hashanah, every word we speak counts. Because according to what we speak, and how we speak, so God speaks.
- ❖ And accordingly, our world comes into being.

— Joh 14:13 "And whatever you ask in My name, that I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son."

References

1. Excerpted from: The Book of Our Heritage. Published and copyright by Feldheim Publications.
2. From the wisdom of the Lubavitcher Rebbe, of righteous memory; words and condensation by Rabbi Tzvi Freeman.