

Jewish Community Center of Paramus
Congregation Beth Tikvah

Rosh Hashanah Learner's Service

prepared by
Sam Weiner

Welcome to the Jewish Community Center of Paramus Congregation Beth Tikvah's special Rosh Hashanah service. We are glad that you could join us, and we hope that we will help you experience a truly meaningful and enjoyable Rosh Hashanah. Rosh Hashanah, the celebration of the Jewish New Year, marks our transition as a community from one Jewish year to the next. We welcome the new year with communal and personal tefilot, prayers, with a focus on reflecting on our actions and thoughts over the past year in order to enter into this new year with a clean slate and positive outlook.

Reflection for Erev Rosh HaShanah **Rabbi Ellen Lippmann** (adapted)

On Rosh HaShanah, we engage in the process of teshuva – of repentance and forgiveness - that is at the center of these days of awe because *we have an opportunity to consider, reflect on, and ask forgiveness* for the misdeeds which we have committed over the past year. We are reminded that we must attend to the matters that are bein adam la-havero (between one person and another) before we can attend to those that are bein adam la-makom (between a person and God). How can we turn to God when our minds and hearts are distracted by the fight we had with a friend, the tension we are having with a co-worker, the uncomfortable distance between us and a neighbor?

I have been familiar with these categories – bein adam l'havero and bein adam la-makom. But... there are two more related categories we need to take into account on Rosh HaShanah:

One is bein adam la-s'vivah, between a person and the environment. This refers to the natural environment, which surely gets short shrift from so many of us around the world. I think it also refers to the social environment, how we see ourselves interacting with the people of our neighborhood, or our city. Bein adam la-s'vivah therefore connects to bein adam l-havero and bein adam la-makom, for ultimately how we treat each other and how we relate to God will show in our entire environment, and probably vice versa.

The other way of relating is bein adam l'atzmo, between each of us and our selves. Surely this is the hardest one to come to terms with: it is hard to look at ourselves honestly and see our shortcomings without flinching or justifying or sliding over. Here is where we begin the practice known as heshbon ha-nefesh: the accounting of the soul. Over the centuries of Jewish life, many have taken this as a literal accounting, some even noting in a ledger of the self what he or she did wrong, and when, and what occurred as a result. Can you imagine making your own ledger before turning to those who have wronged you or you they? Can you imagine your ledger helping lead you to your listing in God's book of life? What would your first listing say? Take a minute to picture it.

This practice takes time, so now we have ten days of awe, and even beyond to Sukkot. To do a real, truthful and cleansing heshbon ha-nefesh, we each need to take into account the ways in which we related this year to ourselves and the world in which we live: bein adam l'atzmo is first, then bein adam la-s'vivah, bein adam l'havero, and finally, if we are lucky, bein adam la-makom. Start with yourself, consider your environment in all its facets, turn to another to make amends, and finally come in repentance to God. Easy to say. Hard to do. Rosh HaShanah, it is said, is the birthday of the world, or of human beings. So we can wipe the slate clean. Let's start now.

Rosh Hashanah Abridged Service

The Holiday

This day, the first of Tishrei on the Hebrew calendar, is known as Rosh Hashanah. It is also called the Birthday of the World, the Day of Remembrance, the Day of Judgement and the Day of Sounding [the Shofar]. For your own information, here are some sources regarding these special designations of this day.

Rosh Hashanah (The New Year)

Mishna, Rosh Hashanah 1:1

There are four “heads” of the year. On the first of Nissan is the new year of kings and the months (the calendar cycle). On the first of Elul is the new year for tithing animals. Rabbi Elazar and Rabbi Shimon say, on the first of Tishrei. On the first of Tishrei is the new year for [the calculation of] years, of the *shmittah* cycle, the jubilee cycle, the planting and the produce. On the first of Shevat is the new year for trees, so says the house of Shammai. The house of Hillel says it is the fifteenth (of the month).

Yom Harat Olam (Birthday of the World)

Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 10b

Rabbi Eliezar says: In Tishrei the world was created... From where do we know that the world was created in Tishrei? Because it says “G-d said, ‘Let the earth sprout vegetation; seed-bearing plants, fruit-bearing trees yielding fruit, each after its kind’” (Genesis 1:11). In what month does the earth produce grass and the trees are full of fruit? You must say that this is Tishrei, and Tishrei is the rainy season, so the rain came down and the plants began to sprout. For it says “a mist ascended from the earth and watered the whole surface of the soil” (ibid 2:6).

Yom Hazikaron (Day of Remembrance)

Talmud, Rosh Hashanah 10b

Rabbi Eliezar says...On Rosh Hashanah, Sarah, Rachel and Hannah were remembered on high and conceived. On Rosh Hashanah, Joseph left prison. On Rosh Hashanah, the bondage of our ancestors ceased in Egypt....

Yom Hadin (Day of Judgement)

Tosefta, Rosh Hashanah 1.13

All things are judged on Rosh Hashanah, and their fate is sealed on Yom Kippur, are the words of Rabbi Meir. Rabbi Judah, in the name of Rabbi Akiba, says: All things are judged on Rosh Hashanah, but the fate of each and every one of them is sealed in its proper season...

Yom Teruah (Day of Sounding the Shofar)

Numbers 29:1

And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you will have a holy convocation: you will do no manner of servile work; it is for you a day of *Teruah*.



Doing Teshuva: Four Habits of Highly Reflective People

Many of us are sincerely interested in being better people, in doing teshuva, but knowing where or how to start the process is difficult. With this in mind, the great Jewish thinker Maimonides developed a four-step practice of self-reflection and improvement:

1. חרטה - Hareta - Remorse One should identify and reflect upon those actions which negatively impacted themselves and others in the past year.

2. זיבה - Azeivah - Resolve One who wants to act differently should do just that—begin acting and speaking towards themselves and others in accordance with their highest values.

3. וידוי - Viduy - Recognize One should attempt to express remorse for their prior behavior to those it has affected and ask for forgiveness.

4. קבלה לעתיד - Kabbalah l'Atid - Reaffirm One should confidently accept that their desire for self-improvement will have a far-reaching, meaningful impact on themselves and the world around them.



חשבון הנפש Cheshbon Ha'Nefesh Taking Personal Inventory

During the month before the High Holidays, many Jews engage in the practice of *cheshbon ha'nefesh*, taking a personal inventory of their year, both of their successes and the places where they would like to improve for the New Year. Here are four *cheshbon ha'nefesh* questions to help you get started:

- 1** What were the greatest missteps I made in the past year?
- 2** What important decision did I avoid making last year?
- 3** Which relationships in my life need more attention than I gave in the past year?
- 4** When do I most feel that my life is meaningful?

Why should I wish to see God better than this day?
 I see something of God each hour of the twenty four,
 and each moment then;
 In the faces of men and women I see God, and in
 my own face in the glass;
 I find letters from God dropped in the street,
 and everyone is signed by God's name;
 And I leave them where they are,
 for I know that wheresoe'er I go
 Others will punctually come forever and ever.



Walt Whitman



I see You in the starry field,
 I see You in the harvest's yield,
 In every breath, in every sound,
 An echo of Your name is found.
 The blade of grass, the simple flower,
 Bear witness to Your matchless power.

In wonder-workings, or some bush aflame,
 Men looking for God and fancy Him concealed;
 But in earth's common things He stands revealed
 While grass and flowers and stars spell out His name.

Ibn Ezra

God, where shall I find Thee,
 whose glory fills the universe?
 Behold I find Thee wherever the mind
 is free to follow its own bent,
 Wherever words come out
 from the depths of truth,
 Wherever tireless striving
 stretches its arms towards perfection,
 Wherever men and women
 struggle for freedom and right,
 Wherever the scientist toils to unbare
 the secrets of nature,
 Wherever the poet strings pearls of beauty
 in lyric lines,
 Wherever glorious deeds are done.



Mordecai M. Kaplan

Bircot Hashakhar

For all these we offer praise to You.
For the ability to tell light from dark, right from
wrong.
For creating us in your image.
For the gift of freedom.
For the privilege of being Jewish.
For the ability to see.
For the garments that clothe us.
For the yearning of slaves to be free.
For the power to stand up under our burdens.
For the orderly universe in which we live.
For providing our daily needs.
For the guidance to do right.
For endowing our people with strength.
For crowning Israel with glory.
For the privilege of awakening to a new day.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר נָתַן לְשִׁכּוּי בִּינָה, לְהִבְחִין בֵּין יוֹם וּבֵין לַיְלָה
ch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam asher natan la-sech-vi vina l'hav-chin beyn yom
u-veyn laila

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂנִי בְּצַלְמוֹ
Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam she-asani b'tzalmo

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂנִי יִשְׂרָאֵל
Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam she-asani yis-ra-eyl

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂנִי בֶן [בַּת] חוֹרִין
Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam she-asani ben [bat] chorin

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, פּוֹקֵחַ עֲוֹנוֹתֵינוּ
Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam po-key-ach ivrim

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, מַלְבִּישׁ עֲרֻמִּים
Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam mal-bish arumim

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, מַתִּיר אֲסוּרִים
Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam matir asurim

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, זוֹקֵף כְּפוּפִים

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam zo-keyf k'fu-fim

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, רוֹקֵעַ הָאָרֶץ עַל הַמַּיִם

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam roka ha-arets al ha-mayim

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁעָשָׂה לִי כָּל צָרָכִי

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam she-asa li kol tzor-ki

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם הַמְכִיֵּן מִצְעָדֵי גִבּוֹר

aruch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam ha-mey-chin mitz-a-day gaver

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אוֹזֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּגִבּוֹרָה

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam ozer yis-ra-eyl bi-g'vura

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, עוֹטֵר יִשְׂרָאֵל בְּתַפְאָרָה

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam oter yis-ra-eyl b'tif-ara

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, הַנוֹתֵן לַיַּעַף כֹּחַ

Baruch ata Adonai Eloheynu melech ha-olam ha-noteyn la-ya-eyf koach

Genesis 22:1-19

וַיְהִי אַחֲרַיִם הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה וַהֲאֱלֹהִים נִסּוּ אֶת־אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר אֵלָיו אַבְרָהָם
וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי:

Some time afterward, God put Abraham to the test. He said to him, “Abraham,” and he answered, “Here I am.”

2

וַיֹּאמֶר קח־נָא אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יְחִידְךָ אֲשֶׁר־אַהַבְתָּ אֶת־יִצְחָק וְלֶךְ־לְךָ אֶל־אֶרֶץ
הַמֹּרְיָה וְהַעֲלֵהוּ שָׁם לְעֹלָה עַל אֶחָד הַהָרִים אֲשֶׁר אֹמַר אֵלֶיךָ:

And He said, “Take your son, your favored one, Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the heights that I will point out to you.”

3

וַיִּשְׁפֹּם אַבְרָהָם בַּבֹּקֶר וַיַּחְבֹּשׁ אֶת־הַמֶּלֶךְ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־שְׁנֵי נְעָרָיו אִתּוֹ וְאֶת יִצְחָק
בְּנֹו וַיִּבְקַע עֵצִי עֹלָה וַיִּקֶּם וַיֵּלֶךְ אֶל־הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר־אָמַר־לּוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים:

So early next morning, Abraham saddled his ass and took with him two of his servants and his son Isaac. He split the wood for the burnt offering, and he set out for the place of which God had told him.

4

בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי וַיִּשָּׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא אֶת־הַמָּקוֹם מֵרֶחֶק:

On the third day Abraham looked up and saw the place from afar.

5

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֶל־נְעָרָיו שְׁבוּ־לְכֶם פֹּה עִם־הַחֲמֹר וְאֲנִי וְהַנֶּזֶר נִלְכָה עַד־כֹּה
וְנִשְׁתַּחֲוֶה וְנָשׁוּבָה אֵלֵיכֶם:

Then Abraham said to his servants, “You stay here with the ass. The boy and I will go up there; we will worship and we will return to you.”

6

וַיִּקַּח אַבְרָהָם אֶת־עֵצִי הָעֹלָה וַיִּשֶׂם עַל־יִצְחָק בְּנֹו וַיִּקַּח בְּיָדוֹ אֶת־הָאֵשׁ
וְאֶת־הַמַּאֲכָלֶת וַיֵּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו:

Abraham took the wood for the burnt offering and put it on his son Isaac. He himself took the firestone and the knife; and the two walked off together.

7

וַיֹּאמֶר יִצְחָק אֶל־אַבְרָהָם אָבִיו וַיֹּאמֶר אָבִי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי בְנִי וַיֹּאמֶר הִנֵּה הָאֵשׁ
וְהַנֶּזֶר אֵיךְ הִשָּׂה לְעֹלָה:

Then Isaac said to his father Abraham, “Father!” And he answered, “Yes, my son.” And he said, “Here are the firestone and the wood; but where is the sheep for the burnt offering?”

9

8

וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהִים יִרְאֶה-לוֹ הַשְּׂעָה לְעֹלָה בְּנִי וַיִּלְכוּ שְׁנֵיהֶם יַחְדָּו:

And Abraham said, "God will see to the sheep for His burnt offering, my son." And the two of them walked on together.

9

וַיָּבֹאוּ אֶל-הַמָּקוֹם אֲשֶׁר אָמַר-לוֹ הָאֱלֹהִים וַיִּבֶן שָׁם אַבְרָהָם אֶת-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ וַיַּעֲרֹךְ אֶת-הָעֵצִים וַיַּעְקֹד אֶת-יִצְחָק בְּנוֹ וַיִּשָּׂם אֹתוֹ עַל-הַמִּזְבֵּחַ מִמַּעַל לְעֵצִים:

They arrived at the place of which God had told him. Abraham built an altar there; he laid out the wood; he bound his son Isaac; he laid him on the altar, on top of the wood.

10

וַיִּשְׁלַח אַבְרָהָם אֶת-יָדוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת-הַמַּאֲכָלֶת לְשַׁחֵט אֶת-בְּנוֹ:

And Abraham picked up the knife to slay his son.

11

וַיִּקְרָא אֵלָיו מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם וַיֹּאמֶר אַבְרָהָם | אַבְרָהָם וַיֹּאמֶר הִנְנִי:

Then an angel of the LORD called to him from heaven: "Abraham! Abraham!" And he answered, "Here I am."

12

וַיֹּאמֶר אֶל-תְּשַׁלַּח יָדְךָ אֶל-הַנְּעָר וְאֶל-תַּעֲשֵׂ לּוֹ מְאוּמָה כִּי | עַתָּה יָדַעְתִּי כִּי-יִרָא אֱלֹהִים אֹתָהּ וְלֹא חָשַׁכְתָּ אֶת-בְּנִיךָ אֶת-יְחִידְךָ מִמֶּנִּי:

And he said, "Do not raise your hand against the boy, or do anything to him. For now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your favored one, from Me."

13

וַיִּשָּׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת-עֵינָיו וַיִּרְא וְהִנֵּה-אֵיל אֲחֹר נֶאֱתָז בַּסֹּבֵב בְּקַרְנָיו וַיִּלֶּךְ אַבְרָהָם וַיִּקַּח אֶת-הָאֵיל לְעֹלָה תַחַת בְּנוֹ:

When Abraham looked up, his eye fell upon a ram, caught in the thicket by its horns. So Abraham went and took the ram and offered it up as a burnt offering in place of his son.

14

וַיִּקְרָא אַבְרָהָם שְׁם-הַמָּקוֹם הַהוּא יְהוָה | יִרְאָה אֲשֶׁר יֹאמַר הַיּוֹם בְּהַר יְהוָה יִרְאָה:

And Abraham named that site Adonai-yireh, whence the present saying, "On the mount of the LORD there is vision."

15

וַיִּקְרָא מִלְאָךְ יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָהָם שְׁנִית מִן-הַשָּׁמַיִם:

The angel of the LORD called to Abraham a second time from heaven,

וַיֹּאמֶר כִּי נִשְׁבַּעְתִּי נְאֻם־יְהוָה כִּי יֵעַן אֲשֶׁר עָשִׂיתָ אֶת־הַדָּבָר הַזֶּה וְלֹא חָשַׁכְתָּ
אֶת־בְּנֶךָ אֶת־יְחִידְךָ:

and said, "By Myself I swear, the LORD declares: Because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your favored one,

כִּי־בִרְךָ אֲבָרְכְךָ וְהִרְבֵּה אֲרַבֶּה אֶת־זַרְעֲךָ כְּכּוֹכְבֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם וְכַחֹל אֲשֶׁר
עַל־שֹׁפֵת הַיָּם וַיִּרְשׁ זַרְעֲךָ אֶת שַׁעַר אֹיְבָיו:

I will bestow My blessing upon you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars of heaven and the sands on the seashore; and your descendants shall seize the gates of their foes.

וְהִתְבָּרְכוּ בְזַרְעֲךָ כָּל גּוֹיֵי הָאָרֶץ לְעֹבֵי אֲשֶׁר שָׁמַעְתָּ בְּקוֹלִי:

All the nations of the earth shall bless themselves by your descendants, because you have obeyed My command."

וַיָּשָׁב אַבְרָהָם אֶל־נְעָרָיו וַיִּקְמוּ וַיֵּלְכוּ יַחְדָּו אֶל־בְּאֵר שָׁבַע וַיָּשָׁב אַבְרָהָם
בְּבֵאֵר שָׁבַע: (פ)

Abraham then returned to his servants, and they departed together for Beer-sheba; and Abraham stayed in Beer-sheba.

Musaf on Rosh Hashanah: Monarchs, Memories and Melodies (of the Shofar)

Source Sheet by Sam Weiner

1. Leviticus 23:23-25

ויקרא כ"ג:כ"ג-כ"ה א.

(23) And the LORD spoke unto Moses, saying: (24) Speak unto the children of Israel, saying: In the seventh month, in the first day of the month, shall be a solemn rest unto you, a memorial proclaimed with the blast of horns, a holy convocation. (25) Ye shall do no manner of servile work; and ye shall bring an offering made by fire unto the LORD.

(כג) וַיְדַבֵּר יְהוָה אֶל מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר. (כד)
דַּבֵּר אֶל בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בְּחֹדֶשׁ
הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאֶחָד לַחֹדֶשׁ יְהִי־לָכֶם שַׁבָּתוֹן
זִכְרוֹן תְּרוּעָה מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ. (כה) כָּל
מְלֹאכֶת עֲבָדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ וְהִקְרַבְתֶּם אֹשֶׁה
לַיהוָה.

2. Rashi on Leviticus 23:24:1

רש"י על ויקרא כ"ג:כ"ד:א' ב.

(24) זכרון תרועה [THERE SHALL BE UNTO YOU] A זכרון OF SOUNDING THE CORNET — a mention (זכרון) of Biblical verses which speak of the Divine remembrance and Biblical verses which have reference to the blowing of the Shofar (a ram's horn) on the occasion of important historical events (Sifra; Rosh Hashanah 32a) that I may recall to memory (זכרון) for you the offering (lit., the "Binding") of Isaac in whose stead a ram was offered (cf. Rosh Hashanah 16a) having been caught by its horn (שופר).

(כד) זכרון תרועה. זכרון פְּסוּקֵי
זְכוּרֹנוֹת וּפְסוּקֵי שׁוֹפְרוֹת (ספרא: ראש
השנה ל"ב) לְזִכְרוֹן לָכֶם עֲקִידַת יִצְחָק
שֶׁקָּרַב תַּחְתּוּ אֵיל:

3. Rosh Hashanah 16a

ראש השנה ט"ז א ג.

And Say before me on Rosh Hashana kingship, remembrance, and shofar kingship in order that you make me king over yourselves, remembrance so that your remembrance comes before me for good, and how? With the Shofar" Says R' Abahu why do we blow with the horn of a ram? Said the Holy One: blow before me with a ram's horn in order that I remember for you the binding of Isaac son of Abraham, and I will consider it as if you bound yourselves before me

ואמרו לפני בראש השנה מלכיות
זכרונות ושופרות מלכיות כדי
שתמליכוני עליכם זכרונות כדי שיעלה
זכרוניכם לפני לטובה ובמה בשופר
אמר רבי אבהו למה תוקעין בשופר של
איל אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא תקעו לפני
בשופר של איל כדי שאזכור לכם
עקידת יצחק בן אברהם ומעלה אני
עליכם כאילו עקדתם עצמכם לפני

4. Berakhot 29a

ד. ברכות כ"ט א

To what do the nine benedictions in the New Year Tefillah correspond ? R. Isaac of Kartignin said : To the nine references to the Divine Name which Hannah made in her prayer (I Sam. ii. 1-10) ; for the teacher said : On the New Year's day Sarah, Rachel and Hannah were "visited."

הני תשע דר"ה כנגד מי א"ר יצחק דמן
קרטיגנין כנגד תשעה אזכרות שאמרה
חנה בתפלתה דאמר מר בראש השנה
נפקדה שרה רחל וחנה

5. Yeshivat Har Etzion - Based on a speech by Rav Aharon Lichtenstein:

ה.

"In the Rosh Ha-shana prayers, the Anshei Knesset Ha-gedola (Men of the Great Assembly) defined it as Yom Ha-Zikkaron (the Day of Remembrance), and we are obligated to understand what it is that we are to remember, and how. I believe that the holiness of the day is bound up with remembrance in two senses. Undoubtedly, the first aspect is the reservoir of the past. There is amassing of facts, reviewing of information, as it were. It finds expression principally in the opening of the section of Zikhronot (the middle section of the three special additions to the Mussaf service on Rosh Ha-shana), where the character of Rosh Ha-shana as a day of judgment is spelled out. 'You remember the deeds of yore, and account for the primal creations. Before you all the wonders are revealed and many hidden things from since creation, for there is no forgetfulness before the seat of Your glory, and nothing is hidden from before You. You remember all that is done, and nothing in creation is concealed from You....'"

"At the same time, there is clearly a second aspect. This, too, is reflected in the section of Zikhronot... Initially, we say in our prayer, "For the remembrance of all of creation comes before You: man's every action, thought, plan, and

desire..." In the wake of this fact a terrible threat seems to face man, who is exposed in his nakedness and his guile... But it also stands at the center of the request at the end of the berakha. The fact that "For You remember all the forgotten things forever, and there is no forgetfulness before the seat of Your glory" is repeated, *but for a completely different purpose*. That which is remembered is principally the covenant between God and Knesset Yisrael, and the selflessness of our forefathers - and their descendants - as its source and for its sake. **If so, then the character of the remembering here is not one of bare factual knowledge, but rather of spiritual connection.** On this level, the very fact of a connection with God is a positive phenomenon. Nothing can be worse for us than to be distanced from Him, exposed to a cold, an uncaring cosmos, cut off from the source of life and "forgotten" by Him. In light of the Ramban's statement that "Rosh Ha-shana is a day of judgment-in-mercy" (Commentary on the Torah, Vayikra 23:24), we may say that **we open with praise of the King of Judgment, and in the midst thereof we describe the memory which gathers and knows, and also accuses. But we close with a request to our God and the God of our fathers - and thereby appeal to the supportive and redemptive memory, to the source of "the remembrance of salvation and mercy from the highest Heavens."** Hence both aspects of Yom Ha-zikkaron find expression.

Unetanah Tokef

By Rabbi Dr. Reuven Hammer

On both days [of Rosh Hashanah and on Yom Kippur], the magnificent Unetanah Tokef (we shall ascribe holiness to this day) is chanted prior to the Kedushah prayer. Although there are popular legends concerning the origin of this piyyut (liturgical poem), we do not know who wrote it. What is certain is that the poet was extremely gifted. The structure of the poem and its language suggest that it was composed during the Byzantine period.

The concepts on which it is based come from Jewish apocalyptic literature and parallel Christian writings based on similar sources, the most famous of which is the *Dies irae* (day of wrath)--found in the requiem mass--which offers a vivid description of the day of judgment for all humankind. In Unetanah tokef, however, the subject is not the final judgment but the much more immediate, yearly day of judgment — Rosh Hashanah. The text of this piyyut follows.

We shall ascribe holiness to this day.

For it is awesome and terrible.

Your kingship is exalted upon it.

Your throne is established in mercy.

You are enthroned upon it in truth.

*In truth You are the judge,
The exhorter, the all-knowing, the witness,
He who inscribes and seals,
Remembering all that is forgotten.
You open the book of remembrance
Which proclaims itself,
And the seal of each person is there.
The great shofar is sounded,
A still small voice is heard.
The angels are dismayed,
They are seized 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 as a troop.
As a shepherd herds his flock,
Causing his sheep to pass beneath his staff,
So do You cause to pass, count, and record,
Visiting the souls of all living,
Decreeing the length of their days,
Inscribing their judgment.
On Rosh Hashanah it is inscribed,
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 end of his days 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 become rich and who shall be impoverished.

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 he turn from his path and live. Until the day of his death You wait for him. Should he turn, You will receive him at once. In truth You are their Creator and You understand their inclination, for they are but flesh and blood. The origin of man is dust, his end is dust. He earns his bread by exertion and is like a broken shard, like dry grass, a withered flower, like a passing shadow and a vanishing cloud, like a breeze that blows away and 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 understanding the meaning of Your Name. Your Name is fitting unto You and You are fitting unto it, and our name has been called by Your Name. Act for the sake of Your Name and sanctify Your Name through those who sanctify Your Name.

These words lead directly into the *Kedushah*, the prayer of the sanctification of God's name.

Many consider this poem to be the pinnacle of the Rosh Hashanah liturgy. The poet has painted a picture of the most solemn day of the year, which to him is Rosh Hashanah, not Yom Kippur. All other concepts associated with the day have been stripped away. "Awesome and terrible" are the only fitting words to describe it. The poet's primary concern is with the Mishnah's description of the first of Tishre as the day when humanity is judged. And he fills in the details that the Mishnah only hints at to spread before us a terrifying spectacle of heaven and earth called to judgment.

But this is not a day of suffering without hope. No matter what one has done, says the poet, the severe decree--the penalty of death--can be averted. Indeed, one need only follow the advice of the Sages, "Three things cancel the decree, and they are prayer, charity, and repentance" (Genesis Rabba 44:12). This rabbinic teaching is not confined to Rosh Hashanah but speaks in general terms of what one

must do to avert the consequences of sin. The poet has set it correctly in the context of the day of judgment, focusing on the ten-day period from the beginning of Rosh Hashanah until the end of Yom Kippur as a time when these three actions must be undertaken to change the outcome of the trial.

There is a further note of hope expressed in this poem. God is depicted as a merciful judge who understands the frail nature of human beings. The pathetic description of the transitory nature of life and the heartrending comparison between eternal God and human beings who are no more than “a dream that flies away” or a speck of dust that is gone with the wind are not intended to depress us but to impress God, as it were, and make Him incline toward forgiving us.

It is little wonder that this poem gave birth to legend. It is said that it was recited by Rabbi Amnon (Mainz, c. 11th century), who had failed to reject a proposal of apostasy immediately and instead asked for three days to consider it. When he did not agree to give up his faith, he was taken away and tortured brutally. It was Rosh Hashanah, and he asked his disciples to take him to the synagogue, where he interrupted the service and recited this prayer in order to sanctify the name of God. Upon completing the recitation, he died. Later, the legend continues, he appeared to Rabbi Kalonymus in a dream and asked that this prayer be recited each year. Moving as this legend is, it should not distract us from the piyyut itself, the subject of which is not martyrdom, but human responsibility and the possibility for change, as we face the judgment of our creator.

וּנְתַנָּה תִקְרָה קִדְשֵׁת הַיּוֹם כִּי הוּא נוֹרָא וְאֵים וּבוֹ תִנְשָׂא מַלְכוּתְךָ וַיִּכּוֹן בְּחֶסֶד כְּסָאֲךָ וְתִשָּׁב עָלָיו
בְּאַמֶּת

We lend power to the holiness of this day. For it is tremendous and awe filled, and on it your kingship will be exalted, your throne will be established in loving-kindness, and you will sit on that throne in truth.

אַמֶּת כִּי אַתָּה הוּא דִין וּמוֹכִיחַ וַיִּוֹדַע וַעֲד וְכוֹתֵב וְחוֹתֵם וְסוֹפֵר וּמוֹנֶה וְתִזְכֹּר כָּל הַנְּשָׁכָחוֹת וְתִפְתַּח
אֶת סֵפֶר הַזְּכוֹרוֹנוֹת וּמֵאֱלֹו יִקְרָא וְחוֹתֵם יָד כָּל אָדָם בּוֹ

It is true that you are the one who judges, and reproves, who knows all, and bears witness, who inscribes, and seals, who reckons and enumerates. You remember all that is forgotten. You open the book of records, and from it, all shall be read. In it lies each person's insignia.

וּבְשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל יִתְקַע וְקוֹל דְּמָמָה דַּקָּה יִשְׁמַע וּמִלְאָכִים יִחַפְזוּן וְחִיל וּרְעָדָה יֵאָחֲזוּן וַיֵּאמְרוּ הִנֵּה
יוֹם הַדִּין לְפָקֵד עַל צָבָא מְרוֹם בְּדִין כִּי לֹא יִזְכוּ בְּעֵינֶיךָ בְּדִין וְכָל בָּאֵי עוֹלָם יַעֲבְרוּן לְפָנֶיךָ כְּבָנֵי
מְרוֹן כְּבִקְרַת רוּעָה עֹדְרוּ מֵעֵבִיר צֹאנוּ תַחַת שְׂבָטוֹ כֵּן תַּעֲבִיר וְתִסְפֹּר וְתִמְנָה וְתִפְקֵד נֶפֶשׁ כָּל חַי
וְתִתְחַדֵּךְ קִצְבָּה לְכָל בְּרִיָּה וְתִכְתֹּב אֶת גִּזְרֵי דִינָם

And with a great shofar it is sounded, and a thin silent voice shall be heard. And the angels shall be alarmed, and dread and fear shall seize them as they proclaim: behold! the Day of Judgment on which the hosts of heaven shall be judged, for they too shall not be judged blameless by you, and all creatures shall parade before you as a herd of sheep. As a shepherd herds his flock, directing his sheep to pass under his staff, so do you shall pass, count, and record the souls of all living, and decree a limit to each persons days, and inscribe their final judgment.

בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה יִכְתְּבוּן, וּבִיּוֹם צוֹם כְּפוּר יִחַתְמוּן. כְּמָה יַעֲבְרוּן, וְכְמָה יִבְרָאוּן, מִי יִחְיֶה, וּמִי יָמוּת,
מִי בְּקִצּוֹ, וּמִי לֹא בְּקִצּוֹ, מִי בַמַּיִם, וּמִי בְּאֵשׁ, מִי בְחָרֵב, וּמִי בְחִיָּה, מִי בְרָעַב, וּמִי בְצָמָא, מִי
בְרַעַשׁ, וּמִי בַמַּגָּפָה, מִי בְחַנְיָקָה, וּמִי בְסָקִילָה, מִי יָנוּחַ, וּמִי יָנוּעַ, מִי יִשְׁקֵט, וּמִי יִטָּרַף, מִי יִשְׁלוּ,
וּמִי יִתְיַסֵּר, מִי יַעֲנִי, וּמִי יַעֲשִׂיר, מִי יִשְׁפֹּל, וּמִי יָרוּם. וְתִשׁוּבָה וְתִפְלָה וְצַדִּיקָה מַעֲבִירִין אֶת רֵעַ
הַגִּזְרָה.

On Rosh Hashanah it is inscribed, 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 in good time, and who by an untimely death, who 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 lapidation, who shall have rest and who wander, who shall be at peace and who pursued, who shall

be serene and who tormented, who shall become impoverished and who wealthy, who shall be debased, and who exalted. But repentance, prayer and righteousness avert the severity of the decree.

כִּי כְּשִׁמְךָ כֵּן תְּהִלָּתְךָ, קַנְיָה לְכַעֲוִים וְנוֹחַ לְרָצוֹת, כִּי לֹא תַחְפֹּץ בְּמוֹת הַמֵּת, כִּי אִם בְּשׁוּבוֹ מִדֶּרֶךְ
וְתִקֶּה, וְעַד יוֹם מוֹתוֹ תִּסְכְּפֶה לוֹ, אִם יָשׁוּב מִיַּד תִּקְבְּלוּ. (אֲמַת) כִּי אַתָּה הוּא יוֹצֵרם וְיוֹדֵעַ יִצְרָם, כִּי
הֵם בְּשָׂר וְדָם.

For your praise is just as your name. You are slow to anger and quick to be appeased. For you do not desire the death of the condemned, rather, that they turn from their path and live and you wait for them until the day of their death, and if they repent, you receive them immediately. (It is true -) [For] you are their Creator and You understand their inclination, for they are but flesh and blood.

אָדָם יְסוּדוֹ מֵעֶפֶר וְסוּפוֹ לְעֶפֶר. בְּנִפְשׁוֹ יָבִיא לַחֲמוֹ. מְשׁוּל כְּחֶרֶס הַנֶּשֶׁבֶר, כְּחֶצִיר יָבֵשׁ, וְכֶצִיץ
נוֹבֵל, כְּצֵל עוֹבֵר, וְכַעֲנַן כֹּלֵה, וְכָרוֹחַ נוֹשֵׁבֵת, וְכֶאֱבֶק פּוֹרֵחַ, וְכַחֲלוֹם יְעוּף. וְאַתָּה הוּא מְלַךְ אֵל חַי
וְקַיִם.

We come from dust, and return to dust. We labour by our lives for bread, we are like broken shards, like dry grass, and like a withered flower; like a passing shadow and a vanishing cloud, like a breeze that passes, like dust that scatters, like a fleeting dream. But You are the king who lives eternal.