

# **What is Rosh Hashanah All About?**

## **An Historical Overview**

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What is Rosh Hashanah all about? For many of us, the answer is complicated: Rosh Hashanah is both a festive day and a day of reckoning. During services, it's about God reviewing our deeds, and when we leave services, it's about apples and honey and a sweet new year. It can feel as if there are two Rosh Hashanahs, each allotted a separate portion of the day.

How has the Jewish tradition viewed Rosh Hashanah? Again, there is no single or simple answer to this question. Each of the other major holidays in the Jewish calendar has a distinct purpose: Pesach commemorates our rescue from bondage, Shavuot commemorates our receiving the Torah, Sukkot is the time of rejoicing, and Yom Kippur is a time for atonement and forgiveness. There is no similar clearly defined purpose for Rosh Hashanah.

How the liturgy of Rosh Hashanah came to be what it is today is a fascinating example of how Jewish practices evolve over time. It is a journey that takes us from the Bible to the Talmud, and beyond.

There are only four references to Rosh Hashanah in the Bible – of which two are in the Torah – including the following:

The first day of the seventh month shall be a sacred holiday ("mikra kodesh") to you when you may not do any work activity ("m'lechet avodah"). It shall be a day of "t'ruah" ("yom t'ruah"). You should bring a burnt offering that will produce a pleasant aroma before God, consisting of one young bull, one ram, and seven yearling sheep all without blemish ... [The passage continues with an account of other offerings.] (Numbers 29:1-6)

From this passage we learn that Rosh Hashanah falls into the same category as the other festivals in two ways: it is a "mikra kodesh" and "work activity" is prohibited. (Note that the prohibition against work on Shabbat specifies all forms of "m'lachah" and not just "m'lechet avodah"; e.g., the prohibition against cooking food is less stringent on festivals than on Shabbat.) We also learn that Rosh Hashanah is a "yom t'ruah," but we are not told what that means. We naturally assume that "t'ruah" is a sound made by a ram's horn but, as we shall see, that is not a natural assumption. In any case, we are not told what kind of sound a "t'ruah" should be, what emotion it is intended to evoke, or whether we are supposed to listen to it (or blow it) once or all day. The passage doesn't tell us the purpose of this "mikra kodesh," this sacred holiday. In particular, there is no indication that it marks the beginning of a year, nor is there any mention of the name "Rosh Hashanah" (which, of course, means "beginning of the year"). In fact,

the day is described as the first day of the *seventh* month; in the Torah, the first month of the year is Nisan, the month of spring, the month of our liberation from Egypt.

The only other reference to Rosh Hashanah in the Torah is no more enlightening:

The first day of the seventh month shall be a day of rest ("yom shabbaton") for you. It is a remembrance [or reminder or commemoration] of "t'ruah" ("zichron t'ruah") and a sacred holiday [or holy convocation] ("mikra kodesh"). Do not do any work activity ("m'lechet avodah"), but bring a burnt offering to God. (Leviticus 23:24-25)

Like the previous passage from Numbers, this passage from Leviticus does not provide an explanation of Rosh Hashanah, and confuses matters by speaking of "zichron t'ruah." What does "zichron – remembering," have to do with it? Does "zichron t'ruah" mean "everyone should remember to hear/sound the t'ruah"? Or, perhaps, the "t'ruah" is blown to commemorate something, or to memorialize something, or to remind us of something, or to announce something? We don't know.

The third reference to Rosh Hashanah in the Bible is in the book of Nehemiah, and there, too, the day has no name. After the destruction of the first Temple in 586 BCE, the Jews were carried off to Babylonia (present-day Iraq) where they remained for several generations until Cyrus permitted them to return to their homeland under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah. The following remarkable story is told:

Now when the seventh month approached, all the people gathered themselves together and said to Ezra the scribe that he should get the scroll of the Torah of Moses, which Adonai had commanded to Israel. And Ezra brought the Torah before the congregation, both men and women, on the first day of the seventh month and read from the book from dawn to midday, and everyone paid close attention. Ezra stood on a high pulpit of wood, which they had made for the occasion, and opened the scroll so that all could see, because he stood above all the people. And when he opened it, all the people stood up. Ezra praised Adonai, the great God, and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with their hands up, and bowed themselves, and worshipped Adonai with their faces to the ground. And he read in the scroll of the Torah of Adonai distinctly and plainly, so that everyone understood what was read. Nehemiah and Ezra said unto all the people: "This day is holy unto Adonai your God. Therefore, do not mourn and do not cry." For all the people were crying when they heard the words of the Torah. "Therefore," he said to them, "go home, eat a festive meal, drink sweet wine, and share your food and drink with those who have not prepared for this day. For this day is holy unto Adonai; therefore, don't be depressed, for your strength comes from your joy in Adonai." And all the people went on their way to eat and to drink, and to share with others, and to rejoice greatly, because they understood the words they were told. (Nehemiah 8:1-12, slightly abbreviated)

From this passage we learn that although the people were distressed upon hearing the Torah, apparently because that they had not known or followed the Torah for several generations, Rosh Hashanah is not supposed to be a day for distress or regrets; indeed, it is a day of festivity and great celebration. Far from viewing Rosh Hashanah as a prelude to Yom Kippur, Ezra and Nehemiah insisted that the rejoicing on Rosh Hashanah not be diminished by regrets over past transgressions.

It is puzzling that the passage from Nehemiah makes no mention of a shofar being blown, although Ezra had presumably just read in the Torah that this day was “yom t’ruah.” To them the word “t’ruah” apparently did not mean a sound made by a shofar. Indeed, the word “t’ruah” appears about 80 times in the Bible, in various forms, and in only one of those is there a clear reference to a sound made by a shofar. “T’ruah” usually means a loud shout, sometimes a cheer or a roar, and often a shout of joy (particularly in Psalms) or a battle cry. For example, Joshua instructs the Israelites gathered around Jericho that “when you hear the sound of the shofar, roar a great roar, and the walls will tumble down.” (Joshua 6:5,20) The “t’ruah” in these passages is not the sound of the shofar, but the roar of the crowd. Similarly, when David retrieves the Ark from the Philistines and brings it triumphantly to Jerusalem, the Bible notes that they celebrated “with ‘t’ruah’ *and* with the sound of the shofar.” (II Samuel 6:15) The phrase “hariau lifnei hamelech Adonai – celebrate loudly before Adonai the ruler” in Kabbalat Shabbat (Psalm 95:2) uses “hariau,” the verb form of “t’ruah,” to refer to voice, not instrument. In the phrase “tziltz’lei t’ruah” (Psalm 150:5), we see that “t’ruah” is an adjective indicating that the particular instrument referred to, the “tziltzal,” was “loud.” In still other passages, “t’ruah” is a sound made by an instrument: In Numbers 10:1-10 a “t’ruah” is blown on silver trumpets as a signal to travel, and in Leviticus 25:9, a “t’ruah” is sounded on a shofar every 50<sup>th</sup> year to announce the jubilee year. Neither of these sources, however, refers to Rosh Hashanah. The silver trumpets were used on festivals, but only for a “t’kiah,” and the jubilee year was announced on Yom Kippur, not Rosh Hashanah. Surprisingly, the fourth reference to Rosh Hashanah in the Bible (Ezekiel 40:1) says “on Rosh Hashanah, the tenth of the month,” so although the phrase “Rosh Hashanah” does occur in the Bible, this passage, like the jubilee passage, suggests that the new year was originally proclaimed on Yom Kippur!

Our next references to Rosh Hashanah are from the Mishnah, which was compiled in about 200 CE based on discussions that took place in the several preceding centuries. Well before that time, three important developments had already taken place.

First, it had become accepted that “t’ruah” meant shofar. Several hundred years after the Mishnah was compiled, the rabbis of the Talmud appropriately asked, “How do we know that t’ruah means shofar?” They responded that since “t’ruah” meant “shofar”

for the jubilee commemoration on the tenth day of the seventh month, it must also have the same meaning for Rosh Hashanah on the first day of the seventh month. (Their attempt to provide a Biblical rationale for this well-established practice is not very convincing! It apparently didn't convince the Karaites who celebrate Rosh Hashanah by lifting their voices in prayer.)

Second, the term “Rosh Hashanah” is used in the Mishnah to indicate the beginning of a year. However, the Mishnah uses this term to refer to four different dates, much as we have calendar years, fiscal years, school years, etc. This diversity of years grows out of natural cycles, so it should not be surprising that the section of the Mishnah that discusses Rosh Hashanah begins as follows:

There are four Rosh Hashanahs. The first of Nisan is the Rosh Hashanah for rulers and festivals. The first of Elul is the Rosh Hashanah for tithing of animals. The first of Tishrei is the Rosh Hashanah for years and seventh [sh'mittah] years. And the first of Shevat is the Rosh Hashanah for trees, according to the school of Shammai; the school of Hillel says that it is on the fifteenth of that month. (Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:1)

Thus, for example, we refer to the three pilgrimage festivals – Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot – in that order, since the festival cycle begins with Pesach, which occurs during the month of Nisan. To say that the first of Nisan is the Rosh Hashanah for rulers is to say that the governmental year begins in Nisan, so that a king's second year in office begins on the first of Nisan no matter when he took the throne. Similarly, all fields had to lie fallow for one year out of every seven, and that year began (and still begins) on the first day of Tishrei. And we still observe the new year for trees on the fifteenth day of Shevat, following the opinion of Hillel; the festival is called “Tu Bishvat,” with “tu” standing for 15, since its letters tet and vav represent 9 and 6. (We would normally represent 15 with yod (10) and heh (5), but that combination of letters spells “yah,” which is a name of God and therefore inappropriate as a calendric abbreviation.)

What is striking about this Mishnah is that what we know as *the* Rosh Hashanah is just one of four Rosh Hashanahs. Furthermore, although the Mishnah identifies the first day of Tishrei as the Rosh Hashanah of years, it makes no reference to the idea that this is the anniversary of the creation of the world. Indeed, from the discussion in the Talmud we learn that there had actually been a dispute (circa 100 CE) about when creation took place: Rabbi Eliezer said that it was on the first day of Tishrei, and Rabbi Yehoshua said that it was on the first day of Nisan, in the spring, a suggestion that sounds very plausible. The compromise decision was made (see Rosh Hashanah 12A) to follow Rabbi Eliezer's view regarding creation, but Rabbi Yehoshua's view regarding the festivals; the text above thus incorporates that decision.

The concept of Rosh Hashanah as the birthday of the world is not an idea that is played up by the rabbis, and merits only two mentions in the liturgy: “This day marks the beginning of Your work, a reminder of the first day” (see p. 280) and “Hayom harat olam – This is the birthday of the world” (see p. 279). In both instances the text segues immediately to “this is the day when all of the world’s creatures stand in judgment” – not exactly birthday greetings. Furthermore, although the number of the year changes, as from 5771 to 5772, there is no special ceremony on Rosh Hashanah to mark the occasion, and there is no reference to the change in year in the liturgy.

Although the Mishnah cited above lists multiple new years, in subsequent paragraphs “our” Rosh Hashanah is distinguished from the others in that it is referred to as “yom tov shel Rosh Hashanah – the holiday of Rosh Hashanah.” This implies that this Rosh Hashanah was a festive day, unlike the other Rosh Hashanahs, which served primarily as technical demarcations. The linguistic convention of referring to Rosh Hashanah as “yom tov” – the same term that is used for the festivals of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot – had a great and lasting impact because it guaranteed that Rosh Hashanah would remain a festival even though its character would change substantially in subsequent years. Indeed, to this day, we wish each other a “good yom tov” and “a sweet new year” on Rosh Hashanah, and we eat festive meals, even though that festivity is not reflected in the Rosh Hashanah liturgy.

Third, we learn from the Mishnah that there was a practice, established long before, of observing Rosh Hashanah by reciting biblical verses and blowing the shofar. More specifically, the practice involved (a) reciting verses from the Bible called “zichronot” (using the root “zachor – remember”) that focused on God’s remembering the covenant, (b) blowing the shofar, (c) reciting verses relating to the shofar itself (called “shofarot”), and (d) blowing the shofar again. This practice was integrated into the standard liturgy of Rosh Hashanah by incorporating it into the Musaf Amidah. Regardless of what the compound phrase “zichron t’ruah” had meant in Leviticus, the Mishnah takes for granted that the two words “zichron” and “t’ruah” were to be treated separately and that the observance of Rosh Hashanah had two components: remembering the covenant (“zichron”) and blowing the shofar (“t’ruah”). Thus “Yom T’ruah” had come to mean a day of shofar and “remembering” had come to mean “remembering the covenant – zocheir hab’rit.” Also, a term parallel to “Yom T’ruah” had been introduced into the liturgy to mean a day of remembering the covenant, “Yom haZikkaron.” Although the practice of reciting “zichronot” and “shofarot” is discussed in the Mishnah, it is clear (see below) that this was an old tradition with an established practice.

Two new conceptions of Rosh Hashanah, which were not part of the earlier tradition, emerged during the time of the Mishnah. One viewed Rosh Hashanah as an

appropriate time to celebrate God as ruler of the world, and the other viewed Rosh Hashanah as a day of judgment. We will discuss them separately.

Over time, our people's understanding of God had moved from the notion of "our God is greater than their gods" to "our God is the only God." The commandment (in the "ten commandments") that "you shall have no other gods before Me" means that we should not worship other gods, but it does not assert that other gods do not exist. As we moved from monolatry (worship of one god) to monotheism (belief that there is only one God), it made sense to view God as ruler of the world. Although that view is not expressed in the Torah, it does appear in the prophetic writings and in the psalms.

By the second century CE, a practice had developed of reciting verses relating to God as ruler of the world, called "malchuyot" (from "melech – king"), in parallel to the "zichronot" and "shofarot" verses. The discussion, recorded in the Mishnah, of when the "malchuyot" verses should be recited is very revealing. Before reading it, you need to be aware that every Shabbat or festival Amidah (except Musaf on Rosh Hashanah) has seven b'rachot ("blessings"), including three introductory b'rachot and three concluding b'rachot. The central b'rachah focuses on the festival and is referred to as "k'dushat hayom – the holiness of the day." The last of the three introductory b'rachot focuses on God's holiness and is therefore referred to as "k'dushat haSheim – the holiness of God" (referred to euphemistically as "haSheim – the Name").

The order of the b'rachot [for the Musaf Amidah on Rosh Hashanah]: The leader says [the first three b'rachot], incorporating malchuyot into the [third] b'rachah on God's holiness, but does not blow the shofar; the holiness of the day b'rachah, and then blows; zichronot, and then blows; shofarot, and then blows; and then says [the final three b'rachot]. This was the view of Rabbi Yochanan ben Nuri. Rabbi Akiva said to him: "If you're not going to blow shofar after reciting the malchuyot verses, then what's the point of saying them?" Rather, the leader should say [the first three b'rachot], then incorporate the malchuyot verses into the holiness of the day b'rachah and blow; zichronot and then blow; shofarot and then blow; and then say [the last three b'rachot]. (Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 4:5)

From this exchange we learn that the organization of the Musaf Amidah for Rosh Hashanah had already been established well before the time of the Mishnah, and that the zichronot and shofarot verses and the associated blasts of the shofar, had already been incorporated into the Musaf Amidah. That is, in addition to the three initial and three final b'rachot in every Amidah, and the central "k'dushat hayom – holiness of the day" b'rachah in every Shabbat and festival Amidah, two additional b'rachot had been introduced, one that incorporates the zichronot verses and another, the shofarot verses. This structure was already so well-established that no one proposed the natural solution of adding another b'rachah for the malchuyot verses. A second

important reason for the absence of such a proposal is that there is a basis in the Torah text for the recital of zichronot and shofarot verses – namely, the phrase “zichron t’ruah” – tenuous though it is, whereas there is no Torah text that supports the recital of malchuyot verses.

Thus, the debate over the proposal for creating a malchuyot component for the Amidah parallel to the zichronot and shofarot components comes down to where the malchuyot component should be located. Should it be included with the last of the three introductory b’rachot, which speaks of “k’dushat haSheim – the holiness of God?” That would certainly make sense because proclamations of God’s majesty could then be incorporated into the prayers discussing God’s holiness, a related topic. This makes more sense than incorporating the theme of God’s majesty into the b’rachah of “k’dushat hayom – the holiness of the day,” an entirely different topic. The solution that is sensible theoretically, however, is problematic choreographically. Indeed, if we follow the sensible solution, then the “k’dushat hayom” b’rachah would break up the pattern of “verses, shofar, verses, shofar, verses, shofar.” Indeed, the Mishnah endorsed the custom – which we follow today – of southern Palestine, as presented by Rabbi Akiva, and not the custom of northern Palestine, as presented by Rabbi Yochanan ben Nuri.

The proponents of malchuyot got a windfall from that decision. Because malchuyot fits naturally with the b’rachah on God’s holiness, a number of passages dealing with God as ruler were incorporated into that b’rachah and, because the Mishnah declared that malchuyot belong in the “holiness of the day” b’rachah, passages dealing with God as ruler are incorporated into that b’rachah as well. Therefore, the Musaf Amidah has a double dose of malchuyot, although the malchuyot verses are only recited once. Moreover, since malchuyot is not allocated its own b’rachah, and is incorporated instead into the two b’rachot that are in every Amidah (the “holiness of God” b’rachah and the “holiness of the day” b’rachah), the theme of God as ruler gets repeated in every Amidah. Thus, the theme of malchuyot gets much more attention on Rosh Hashanah than the Biblically mandated themes of zichronot and shofarot.

The Mishnah does not ask, however, why the idea of God as ruler of the world should be such a focus of the Rosh Hashanah liturgy (much more so than the traditional focus on shofar and remembrances). One can reasonably surmise that focusing on God as ruler of the world at this one time of the year suggests that Rosh Hashanah was seen as a time when God’s rulership was reaffirmed and was, in effect, the time for an annual coronation event.

One might expect that the idea of God as ruler of the world should become a focus of every Amidah year-round; but it plays only a small role in the regular Amidah. On the other hand, the opening of the malchuyot section is the Aleinu prayer which became a key component of each prayer service year-round.

The second important conception of Rosh Hashanah that emerges in the time of the Mishnah is Rosh Hashanah as a day of judgment. After describing the four Rosh Hashanahs, the Mishnah notes that:

The world is judged four times a year: On Pesach for crops, on Atzeret [i.e., Shavuot] for fruits of the tree, on Rosh Hashanah, all human beings pass before You as [David inspected his] troops in formation ... , and on the festival [i.e., Sukkot] for water. (Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 1:2)

What is interesting about this Mishnah is that God's determinations on Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot appear to be global, that is, either this will be a good year for rain or it won't ... for everybody. This may have been an adequate explanation for the agricultural world of the Bible, but it was not sufficient for the commercial world of the Talmud, so they adopted a model that allowed for greater personalization of God's decisions. God decides upon the annual allocation of crops, fruits and rain for everyone, as described in the Mishnah, but then on Rosh Hashanah, God divides the annual allocation among individual people. This Mishnah thus becomes the source for the focus on Rosh Hashanah as a time that decisions are made, and the text of this Mishnah ("all human beings pass before You ...") finds its way into the "Un'taneh Tokef" prayer during the Musaf Amidah (see p. 261).

However, the theme of God's judging the world and its inhabitants on Rosh Hashanah is rarely mentioned in the Mishnah and Talmud. It is not until later generations that this theme dominates the day. The "Un'taneh Tokef" prayer wasn't written until perhaps 800 years after the completion of the Mishnah.

The Mishnah is much more concerned with getting the verses and the shofar blowing right. How many verses should be recited? Again there is a dispute between Rabbi Akiva, who held that at least ten verses should be recited about each theme, and Rabbi Yochanan ben Nuri, who opined that three verses would be sufficient. Which verses should be recited? From the discussion in the Mishnah, it is clear that each person (or each community) could choose which verses to recite. Several qualifications are given: The malchuyot verses should have a universal flavor – they should speak of God as ruler of the world and not just as ruler of the Jews; the zichronot verses should speak of God as remembering all of Israel and not just particular individuals; the shofarot verses should speak of the shofar and not just of "t'ruah"; and all the verses should have a positive spin, that is, they should not use prophetic verses that herald destruction. Over time, the verses that were recited became standardized, although today some groups, basing themselves on Rabbi Yochanan's opinion, recite some of the verses on the first day and the remaining verses on the second day. (It is also possible to add or substitute verses, and there are a few additional verses in this Machzor.)



How should the shofar be blown? According to the Mishnah, the requirement is that three sounds be repeated three times, once to accompany malchuyot, once to accompany zichronot, and once to accompany shofarot. But what should you blow each of those three times? You need to blow one t'ruah that should be preceded and followed by a "t'kiah," a long blast. And what is a t'ruah? The Talmud records a debate in which one view is that a t'ruah should sound like a person sighing – oy, oy, oy (what we now call "sh'varim – broken notes"). A second view is that it should sound like women ululating – oy-oy-oy-oy-oy-oy-oy (what we now call "t'ruah") – and a third is that it should be both, sighing followed by ululating (what we now call "sh'varim t'ruah"). Since they could not determine which tradition was the authentic one, Rabbi Abahu of Caesarea decided that we should do all three. That is our current practice – we blow a sh'varim t'ruah surrounded by long blasts, then a sh'varim surrounded by long blasts, and then a t'ruah surrounded by long blasts.

You may ask, "Wasn't the t'ruah supposed to be a joyful sound?" What's all this about sighing and ululating? Apparently, the tradition of joyful sounds on Rosh Hashanah had disappeared. It had been superseded by a new perspective, the one mentioned above, that recast Rosh Hashanah as a time for judgment and transformed the shofar sounds from joyful to serious. This new perspective affected the liturgy in a number of ways, including the blowing of the shofar.

The new perspective also affected how the zichronot verses were perceived. Although almost all of the zichronot verses that we recite refer to God's remembering the covenant and the closing line of the b'rachah is "zocheir hab'rit – [God's] remembering the covenant," reflecting the original understanding of zichronot, the opening and closing paragraphs of the zichronot section focus instead on God's remembering our deeds. Quite a different type of zichronot! From this new perspective, it also was appropriate to add new phrases to the liturgy, such as "zochreinu l'chayyim – remember us for life" (as on p. 31).

Mishnah Rosh Hashanah 4:7 says, matter-of-factly, that on Rosh Hashanah the shofar blowing occurs during Musaf, and Hallel is said during Shacharit. In discussing why the shofar is blown so late in the service, the Talmud notes that not everyone comes in time for Shacharit [Does this sound familiar?]; the response to the follow-up question about why not also recite Hallel later is essentially, "Why penalize those who come early by making them wait for Hallel?" The point is that in the early days of the Talmud it was taken for granted that Hallel was recited on Rosh Hashanah. However, later in the Talmudic period, Rabbi Abbahu, influenced by the new conception of Rosh Hashanah, says that the Mishnah can't possibly refer to Rosh Hashanah because, "Is it conceivable that as God sits in the judge's chair, looking at the open books of life and death, at that very moment we would be singing this song of praise?" (Rosh Hashanah

32B). And it may be that Hallel was never again said on Rosh Hashanah. Thus, although one might surmise that Hallel was originally recited on the “yom tov of Rosh Hashanah,” that clearly did not fit in with the new conception of Rosh Hashanah that was emerging. (Note that Hallel is included in this Machzor so that congregations can consider restoring the ancient practice.)

By the middle ages, when *Un’taneh Tokef* (see p. 261) was written, the fate of Rosh Hashanah had been sealed: Its primary purpose was to foreshadow Yom Kippur. It was no longer a festival, but the first day of “the ten days of repentance,” a term that does not appear in the Rosh Hashanah liturgy and only became widely used after it appeared in the 13<sup>th</sup> century code “*Arbah Turim*” of Rabbi Jacob ben Asher. (Although Maimonides, in his treatise on *t’shuvah* in the *Mishneh Torah*, speaks of the ten days between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur as an appropriate time for *t’shuvah*, he never refers to these days as “the ten days of repentance.”)

Curiously, it is possible that the primary purpose of Rosh Hashanah in Biblical times was quite different from what we think. After all, in those days, we were an agricultural people and the most important day of the year was “*ha-chag – the festival*,” that is, Sukkot, since that is when we prayed for rain. (For example, in the Mishnah cited on p. xii, Sukkot is referred to simply as “*ha-chag – the festival*.”) The high point of the festival was the water ceremony on *Sh’mini Atzeret* called “*simchat beit hasho-eivah – rejoicing in the place where water was poured*,” about which it was said in the Talmud, “if you never experienced the joy of that celebration, you never really experienced joy.” Perhaps the first and tenth days of the month were both preparation for the prayers for rain on Sukkot and for the water celebration on *Sh’mini Atzeret*. Perhaps the spiritual cleansing of Yom Kippur was prerequisite to the prayers for rain. Perhaps the roaring of the crowds (“*t’ruah*”) on Rosh Hashanah came after the holy proclamation (“*mikrah kodesh*”) intended to serve as a reminder (“*zikkaron*”) to our ancestors that Sukkot was coming. This possibility is supported by Psalm 81:4 (see p. 17) which says, “Sound the shofar at the new moon, [proclaim] our festival when the moon is concealed,” a practice that was only observed at the beginning of the seventh month, that is, on Rosh Hashanah since “our festival” clearly referred to Sukkot. That was, indeed, a different world and time.