Daily Daf Differently – Tractate Rosh Hashanah 29-35 –

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This file consists of seven episodes that I prepared and recorded as podcasts that were released, one per day, on Friday June 6, 2014 through Thursday, June 12, 2014 for the Daily Daf Differently, and that were available on jcastnetwork.org/ddd and are now at another site. The program is described on the website as follows: "Join a wonderful group of liberal rabbis and teachers as we take part in the cycle of the Daf Yomi. Each week a different teacher presents short episodes on the daily daf "differently"."

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Welcome to Daily Daf Differently. This is Joe Rosenstein, and I am a professor of mathematics at Rutgers University and the author of Siddur Eit Ratzon and Machzor Eit Ratzon. Today we will be studying Tractate Rosh Hashanah, daf 29, chof-tet.

Chapter 4, the final chapter of the tractate, begins on this daf, and coincidentally ends next Thursday, my last day on the program.

The focus of Chapter 4 consists of two topics that are particularly relevant to our observance of Rosh Hashanah, namely, the blowing of the shofar and the special prayers of the day. A common theme to our discussion of this chapter will be the ways in which our people's observance and understanding of Rosh Hashanah has changed over time.

Let's start with what the Torah says about Rosh Hashanah. There are exactly two references to Rosh Hashanah in the Torah. Chapter 9 of Bamidbar, Numbers, begins:

> The first day of the seventh month shall be observed by you as a "mikra kodesh" – translated as "a sacred event" or "a holy convocation" – when you may not do any "m'lechet avodah" – any work activity. It shall be "yom t'ruah – a day of "t'ruah."

From this passage we learn that Rosh Hashanah falls into the same category as the other festivals in two ways: first, it is a "mikra kodesh" – a "sacred event" or "holy convocation" and, second, all "work activity" is prohibited.

We know the purpose of the other festivals – Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot – both as commemorating historical national events and as reflecting the agricultural cycle of the year. What does Rosh Hashanah commemorate? How is it important agriculturally?

We don't know, and this passage doesn't tell us the purpose of this special day. All we are told is that it is a "yom t'ruah".

Because Rosh Hashanah means "beginning of the year", you would think that what is being celebrated here is the beginning of the year, but the day is not referred to as Rosh Hashanah in this passage. It is called simply "the first day of the seventh month."

You might conjecture that the day celebrates the creation of the world – but it turns out that there were two views in the Talmud as to when the world was created – on the first day of the month of Tishrei, when we actually celebrate Rosh Hashanah, and on the first day of Nissan, at the beginning of spring – a view that makes a good deal of sense: It is appropriate for the world to come alive, for nature to awake, at the time that nature awakes. It was surprising to me to learn that was no single tradition of when the world began.

In any case, there is no clear statement in the Bible that the first day of the seventh month was when the world was created. And so it is not surprising that the traditional Rosh Hashanah liturgy contains no "new year's" ceremony where we proclaim that we have finished year x and are embarking on year x+1.

The only other reference to Rosh Hashanah in the Torah, from Vayikra, Leviticus, chapter 23, is no more enlightening:

> The first day of the seventh month shall be a "yom shabbaton," a day of rest for you. It is a "yom zichron t'ruah" and a "mikra kodesh" – "a sacred holiday" or "a holy convocation". Do not do any work activity ("m'lechet avodah") ...

Like the previous passage from Numbers, this passage from Leviticus does not provide an explanation of Rosh Hashanah, nor does it mention the name Rosh Hashanah, and confuses matters by speaking of "yom zichron t'ruah." What does the word "zichron," from the root "zayin-chof-resh" which means remember, mean here? 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.

In fact, we also don't know what "yom t'ruah" means in the Torah – but it likely did not refer to 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, or a battle cry or, particularly in Psalms, a shout of joy. For example, Joshua instructs the Israelites gathered around Jericho that [quote] "when you hear the sound of the shofar, roar a great roar, and the walls will tumble down." [end-quote] 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."

So perhaps in ancient times, the Israelites in each region gathered on the first day of the seventh month for a day-long pep rally. A pep rally for what? We'll return to this question in a few days.

In any case, by the time of the Second Temple – and probably much earlier – "yom t'ruah" came to mean the day on which the shofar was sounded.

Here's a practical question: What happens if Rosh Hashanah falls on Shabbat? Do we blow the shofar or not? In modern times, traditional congregations have an easy answer – they blow the shofar on the second day. But in the time of the Mishnah, there was no second day of Rosh Hashanah; that was a later innovation. Moreover, our easy answer is not so easy, because the Torah says explicitly that "yom t'ruah" is the first day of the seventh month, not the second day.

The first Mishnah in Chapter 4 begins with the following statement: When the Yom Tov of Rosh Hashanah was on Shabbat, they blew the shofar in the Temple, but not "bamdinah – in the provinces." From this we learn that there is no inherent prohibition against sounding the shofar on Shabbat, since it was in fact blown in the Temple.

This also raises a problem. Unlike Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot, Rosh Hoshanah was not a "chag – a pilgrimage festival," – presumably the same word as the Arabic "hadj" – so how were the Jews outside of Jerusalem going to observe the day as "yom t'ruah" if it fell on the Shabbat. They couldn't afford to make a pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the first day of the seventh month and then another pilgrimage for Sukkot on the fifteenth day of

the seventh month. Apparently they didn't get to hear the shofar when Rosh Hashanah fell on Shabbat. Sad news. An unfortunate consequence of interpreting "yom t'ruah" as the day when the shofar is sounded.

The Mishnah continues: After the Temple was destroyed, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai ruled that they would blow the shofar [on Shabbat] in every place where there was a "bet din," an established judicial court.

Recall that Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai escaped from Jerusalem while it was under siege in the year 70 of the common era and established an academy in Yavneh. Once the Temple was destroyed, this academy dealt with the challenge of how Judaism could survive the destruction of its central location, the Temple, and its central practice, the Temple rituals.

You might have expected Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai to continue past practice and declare that, if Rosh Hashanah occurred on Shabbat, the shofar would not be blown on Shabbat, since it could only be blown in Jerusalem, or that it should only be blown in Yavneh. Indeed, Rabbi Elazar claims that that is precisely what Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai meant. But his claim is rejected, and the Mishnah accepts that Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai meant exactly what he said – the shofar was blown on Shabbat in each community that had a bet din.

From an historical perspective, we might say that Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai determined that we should not follow past practice and centralize the observance, but rather that we should decentralize the observance, allowing the shofar to be sounded on Shabbat in any established community, one which was sufficiently large and sufficiently organized to have an established bet din.

The Talmud explains how that decision was made by Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai. Soon after the Temple was destroyed, Rosh Hashanah fell on Shabbat. Scholars from nearby communities came to Yavneh and said to Rabbi Yochanan that they needed to discuss the question about whether the shofar should be blown on Shabbat. He responded that there was no time for a discussion because if they don't blow the shofar now, then Rosh Hashanah would be over and the question would be moot. Therefore, he said, let's blow the shofar and later discuss the issue. After the shofar was blown, they were prepared for a discussion, but Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai said that now there was nothing to

discuss – they had already set a precedent of blowing the shofar on Shabbat. Who said that there was no humor in the Talmud!

Let's back up for a minute. As we said before, since the shofar was blown in the Temple on Shabbat, it was not inherently prohibited to blow the shofar on Shabbat … so why couldn't anyone blow the shofar anywhere? The answer given is that although you can blow the shofar on Shabbat, you can't carry it in the public domain on Shabbat – that would violate the laws of Shabbat.

They imagine the following scenario: Yosef wants to blow the shofar, but try as he might, he can't get a sound out of it. So he goes to Yankel, the local expert, and asks him to help him blow his shofar. Of course, Yosef carries the shofar with him and thereby violates Shabbat.

But if the community has an established court, then they will take it upon themselves to make sure that everyone in the community knows that, although they may blow the shofar, they cannot carry it into the public domain.

That solves the problem for all the Jews who live in established communities. But what about those who are out in the countryside? The Torah says that this is "yom t'ruah" – the day when, according to long-established tradition, they are supposed to hear the shofar. How can they not hear the shofar on this day?

According to one view in the Talmud, the answer is in the Torah! In Numbers, the day is referred to as "yom t'ruah" – the day of hearing the shofar. In Leviticus, the day is referred to as "yom zichron t'ruah" – which for this purpose they translate as the day of remembering the hearing of the shofar. The first – yom t'ruah – refers to when Rosh Hashanah is not on Shabbat – so on that day, we hear the shofar – the second – yom zichron t'ruah – refers to when Rosh Hashanah is on Shabbat – and on that day, we just remember hearing the shofar. So, in fact, according to this explanation in the Talmud, the commandment to hear the shofar does not apply if Rosh Hashanah is on Shabbat.

This explanation was rather contrived and it was in fact rejected by the Talmud, primarily because that would imply that the shofar should not have been blown in the Temple as well. It also contradicts the established view of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, and is contrary to the traditional view of "zichron t'ruah" (as will be discussed in a later session). Nevertheless, this perspective, that on Shabbat we should only remember the

blowing of the shofar, found many supporters and, as a result, over the generations, the blowing of the shofar ceased when the first day of the seventh month was on Shabbat. It should be noted, however, that as late as the 9th century the shofar was still blown on Shabbat in Morocco and Spain.

It should also be noted that in days past, individuals blew the shofar on their own, so the scenario of accidentally carrying the shofar, as envisioned in the Talmud, was not far-fetched. Nowadays, however, individuals don't blow the shofar on their own, so that scenario need not be cause for concern.

If that is the case, perhaps we should be reconsidering our position and reestablish the practice of blowing the shofar if Rosh Hashanah occurs on Shabbat, relying in part on Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai's perspective and ruling.

That brings us to the end of today's session. Please join us tomorrow as we discuss other innovations instituted by Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai.

Welcome to Daily Daf Differently. This is Joe Rosenstein, and I am a professor of mathematics at Rutgers University and the author of Siddur Eit Ratzon and Machzor Eit Ratzon. Today we will be studying Tractate Rosh Hashanah, daf 30, lamed.

This daf, and the next one, take a detour from Rosh Hashanah to continue the discussion of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai's innovations following the destruction of the Temple.

One of his innovations concerns the taking and shaking of the lulav on Sukkot. The Mishnah on our page says that in the old days ("barishonah") – that is, before the destruction of the Temple – the lulav ceremony took place for seven days in the Temple and only one day "in the m'dinah – in the provinces."

Why one day? Because it says in the Torah that [quote] "on the first day of Sukkot you shall take the four species." [end quote] So the commandment for the lulav ceremony only applies for one day.

Then why was the ceremony conducted in the Temple for seven days? Because it says in the Torah that [quote] "you shall rejoice before Adonai your God for seven days" [end quote] – and where do you rejoice "before Adonai your God" – that means in the Temple.

If there is no Temple, then the logical conclusion of that reasoning is that the lulav ceremony should only take place on the first day of Sukkot. So for those Jews who survived the destruction of the Temple, those Jews who came to the pilgrimage festival of Sukkot and participated in the lulav ceremony for seven days, year after year, their observance of Sukkot would be sharply curtailed.

So Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai rejected that reasoning.

The Mishnah continues. Once the Temple was destroyed, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai ruled that the lulav ceremony should be conducted "in the m'dinah – in the provinces" for seven days.

Lest you think that Rabbi Yochanah ben Zakkai's innovation implied that he thought that the tradition had been observed incorrectly in the past, he added that the lulav ceremony would be carried out "zeicher lamidkash – as a reminder of how it was done in the Temple."

As in yesterday's example of blowing the shofar on Shabbat, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai did not attempt to recentralize the lulav ceremony in Yavneh, but rather he

decentralized the ceremony so that all Jews could carry out locally what was once done only in the Temple.

Another ruling of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai that is relevant to us concerns the beginning of the month, what we refer to as Rosh Chodesh, which occurs at the time of the [quote] "new moon." [end-quote] As you recall, Judaism runs on a modified lunar calendar; all of our feasts and fasts are determined by their dates on the lunar calendar – Pesach begins on the 15th day of Nissan, Tisha B'Av is on the 9th day of Av, Rosh Hashanah is on the first day of Tishrei. As a result, knowing when the month begins is essential.

In the old days, Rosh Chodesh was determined by "r'iyah – visual observation" – two reliable witnesses had to come independently to the court in Jerusalem and testify that they had seen a sliver of the moon, and if the court accepted their testimony, they declared that day to be the first day of the new month.

A lunar month is about 29½ days so that a reasonable way of keeping the calendar in line with the lunar months is to alternate the lengths of the months between 29 days and 30 days. And that's approximately what we do to this day. The new moon may occur on the last day of a 30 day month, in which case both the last day of that month and the first day of the next month are observed as Rosh Chodesh.

There are many problems with basing the determination of the new moon on visual observation, but this is not the place to discuss the details. One problem arose a few years ago for Islam, which still uses "r'iyah" – the sighting of the new moon in Mecca – to determine when the new month begins. Although they knew that the month after Ramadan began around midnight, hey had to wait until the new moon was actually seen before they could declare the end of Ramadan; the result was that Moslems around the world did not know in advance whether that day was the end of Ramadan or not, and therefore whether the feast of Eid would be that night or the next night. The same problem could arise with Rosh Hashanah, and we will soon discuss that issue.

In Judaism, we no longer base the new moon on "r'iyah." Indeed, in Talmudic times, there must have been an epic struggle between the traditionalists, who insisted on "r'iyah", and the modernists who said that the determination of the new moon could be based on calculation. By announcing the time of the new moon on the previous Shabbat, as we do to this day, the modernists in effect won that battle.

But when the Temple stood, they relied on "r'iyah". So on the thirtieth of the month, they did not know whether that day was actually the first day of the next month. So they didn't know whether today was the holiday of Rosh Chodesh or not.

This problem was particularly acute on the 30th day of the month of Elul, because they didn't know whether that day was Rosh Hashanah or not. If it turned out to be Rosh Hashanah, then they would not be allowed to work, so they had to treat the whole day as if it were Rosh Hashanah, lest it really was Rosh Hashanah and they would have violated it by working on that day. They had to treat that day as if it were Rosh Hashanah, even though they didn't know if it would be.

Moreover the Temple rituals for the day would depend on whether it was Rosh Chodesh or not, and whether it was Rosh Hashanah or not. So the next Mishnah tells us that originally, they would accept the witnesses' testimony all day, so that even if the witnesses arrived late in the day, they would declare that day to be Rosh Chodesh. But one year the witnesses came very late and, as a result, the Levites apparently chanted the wrong psalms. So they decided that they would only declare that day to be Rosh Hashanah if the witnesses came before the afternoon service. However, if the witnesses came after the afternoon service, the next day would be considered the first day of Tishrei and therefore Rosh Hashanah. Of course, since that day could have been Rosh Hashanah, they observed the prohibition of work on that day – so that in effect that day was observed as if it were Rosh Hashanah. This double Rosh Hashanah, referred to as "yoma arichta – one long day", is the source for our present-day custom of observing two days of Rosh Hashanah, in Israel as well as elsewhere.

Although we won't discuss this topic here, we note that the rationale for observing the first two days of Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot as holidays seems to be different from the rationale for observing two days of Rosh Hashanah. This is why Rosh Hashanah is observed for two days in Israel, as well as in the rest of the world, whereas Pesach, Shavuot, and Sukkot are observed as holidays only one day in Israel although they are observed two days in the rest of the world.

Once the Temple was destroyed, Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai declared that, since we are no longer concerned about Temple rituals, even if the witnesses came just before sunset and declared that they had seen the new moon, that day would be Rosh Hashanah. However, the Talmud does not explain how the prayer and shofar rituals for Rosh Hashanah would be observed if they had to be condensed into five minutes.

Perhaps by the time of the Talmud, they made the determination of the first day of Tishrei by calculation, so that everyone knew well in advance which day was really Rosh Hashanah.

Moreover, they had made a distinction between the new moon at the end of Elul and the first of Tishrei. What, you say, isn't the new moon at the end of Elul automatically the first day of the new month of Tishrei? You would think so … but that assumption caused some difficulties.

If, for example, the first day of Tishrei – Rosh Hashanah – was on a Wednesday, then the tenth day of Tishrei – Yom Kippur – would be on a Friday, in which case proper preparations for Shabbat could not be made. If Rosh Hashanah were on a Friday or on a Sunday there would be similar problems. The solution they adopted was to "docheh – push forward" the beginning of Tishrei by a day – and that we do to this day.

If the new moon occurs on Sunday, Wednesday, or Friday, that day is considered the 30th day of Elul and the first day of Tishrei is the following day. So Rosh Hashanah is still observed on the first day of the seventh month, as commanded in the Torah, even though the first day of the seventh month is not really the first day of the seventh month. An ingenious solution!

Indeed, if you look at the calendar, you will find that the first day of Rosh Hashanah is always on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, or Shabbat. You would expect that it would be evenly distributed among the days of the week. But if you look up when the new moons actually were for a number of years, you will find – as I did many years ago – that about 3/7 of the time, Rosh Hashanah was actually one day after the new moon.

A few minutes ago, I mentioned the prayer announcing the new moon that is said on the previous Shabbat. We say that prayer on the Shabbat before every new moon, except on the Shabbat before Tishrei – it would obviously be confusing to announce that the new moon is on Sunday when everyone knows that Rosh Hashanah and Tishrei begin on Monday.

That concludes today's session. Please join us tomorrow as we discuss other innovations of Rabbi Yochanah ben Zakkai.

Welcome to Daily Daf Differently. This is Joe Rosenstein, and I am a professor of mathematics at Rutgers University and the author of Siddur Eit Ratzon and Machzor Eit Ratzon. Today we will be studying Tractate Rosh Hashanah, daf 31, lamed-aleph.

In yesterday's daf, it was noted that in years long past, if witnesses came and testified that they had seen the new moon, that testimony would be accepted even if the witnesses came late in the day. But one year, when the new moon was that of the seventh month of Tishrei, the witnesses came so late that the Levites had already chanted the weekday psalm, when they should have recited a festival psalm. As a result, the practice was changed so that, if the testimony of the witnesses was offered late in the day, their testimony would not be implemented, and the next day, not this day, would be declared Rosh Hashanah.

This led to a digression in which the Talmud discusses the seven psalms that the Levites recited on the seven days of the week in the Temple and that, to this day, are recited during the morning service. The Talmud asks why those particular psalms were chosen and the consensus seems to be that the six weekday psalms are linked to the six days of creation.

The linkages are not very convincing – for example, it is suggested that Psalm 94 is recited on the fourth day (that is, Wednesday), when the sun and moon were created, because the harsh words that begin the psalm – "Eil n'kamot Adonai – Adonai is a vengeful god" – are directed at those who worship the sun and moon, instead of their creator.

Since the attempt to link the psalms to the seven days of creation is weak, it is unlikely that this theory – that the psalms were chosen to correspond to the six days of creation – was accurate. As a result, this b'raita – this ancient teaching – suggests to us that, even in Temple times, when there was an orderly transmission of authority, there was not a reliable transmission of the tradition. How else could the Levites not have known why particular psalms were recited at particular times?

Returning to the rationale for the psalms, there is surprisingly a dispute about why on Shabbat we recite Psalm 92, which begins "Mizmor shir l'yom haShabbat – a song for Shabbat." As we might expect, the view is expressed that this psalm corresponds to the seventh day, the day after creation was completed. But another view is expressed – that this psalm corresponds to the Shabbat that will eventually happen, "l'yom shekulo Shabbat

– to the day that is entirely Shabbat." This refers to the time when God's creation would come to an end, and all would return to a state of rest.

Our ancestors apparently believed that God created a world that would last for 6,000 years and that these six millennia would be followed by a millennium or two of Shabbat. Interestingly, this end of days was not related in this Midrash to "olam haba – the world to come" or messianic times. Life on this planet was just limited to six thousand years.

They weren't bothered by that timeline, because in the Talmudic period the world had 3,000 years to go. But now, as we are only 200 years short of the 6,000 years of creation … should we worry?

We certainly have reason to worry about the destruction of life on this planet, independently of this Midrash, as we see the changes in our weather and environment that have been brought on by global warming. Perhaps, our ancient rabbis might have said, it is inevitable that humankind would bring about its own destruction.

But such pessimism is premature. Midrash is not reality. Moreover, we have reason to hope that with a new environmental consciousness, the human race can turn us away from the threat of ecological disaster to which it seems to have brought us.

Sometimes civilizations come to believe in their own Midrashim. It may be, for example, that the Mayan civilization collapsed in the 9th century simply because its calendar ended … since they believed in the reality of their calendric mythology.

We have to hope that Judaism does not suffer the same fate – that the announcement that "the world will soon end" will not become a dominant theme in some Jewish circles in the next two hundred years.

Daf 31 continues with other innovations instituted by Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, the most interesting of which concerns a strip of red wool. Here is the text of the b'raita – an ancient teaching – cited on this page concerning Yom Kippur: "In olden times, they would tie a strip of red wool on the outside of the door that divided the public area of the Temple from the sanctuary. If it turned white, they rejoiced; if it didn't they were sad. So the sages decided that they should tie it on the inside of the door that divided the public area of the Temple from the sanctuary. But the public would still peek into the sanctuary to see what happened to it. If it turned white, they rejoiced; if it didn't they were sad. So the sages decided – and this decision was attributed to Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai – that they should send the strip off with the goat."

What is this all about?

On Yom Kippur we read the following verse from Isaiah: "Come let us reason together, says Adonai, though your sins be like crimson, they will become as white as snow, though they be as red as dyed wool, they will become as white as fleece."

Based on this verse, there was once a custom to place a strip of red wool on the outside of the sanctuary on Yom Kippur so that when the Kohen Gadol (the high priest) emerged from the Kodesh ha Kodoshim (the holy of holies) and declared to the people "lifnei Adonai titharu – before Adonai you are cleansed" the strip would turn from red to white, in confirmation of the declaration of the Kohen Gadol.

This physical manifestation of forgiveness may have taken place in early times – the sages said that it happened every year when Shimon haTzaddik was Kohen Gadol – but it evidently did not happen as frequently in later times.

The problem was, presumably, that if the strip of wool did not turn white, the people might not believe that their sins were forgiven … that the rituals of the Kohen Gadol did not work … and that would undermine their faith in the system.

So the rabbis and the priests tried to solve this dilemma by giving the strip less visibility, by placing it inside the door instead of outside the door. That solution didn't work because those closest to the door would peek inside and quickly text everyone in the crowd about the color of the strip of wool.

What to do? They couldn't get rid of the strip of wool because it had been part of the ritual for centuries. Then someone came up with the ingenious idea of sending the strip of wool with the goat, which carried the people's sins off to Azazel. That way they would get rid of the strip without getting rid of the strip – by giving it a new role.

Was that someone Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, as claimed by Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak on today's daf? Probably not, because Rabbi Yochanan lived at the very end of the Temple period and ascribing this change to him would mean that for hundreds of years, the Yom Kippur service was marred by red strips that stubbornly refused to turn white.

The discussion of the red strip of wool ends the two-day digression to the changes instituted by Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai, and tomorrow we will return to our discussion of Rosh Hashanah. Please join me then.

Welcome to Daily Daf Differently. This is Joe Rosenstein, and I am a professor of mathematics at Rutgers University and the author of Siddur Eit Ratzon and Machzor Eit Ratzon. Today we will be studying Tractate Rosh Hashanah, daf 32, lamed-bet.

Today's daf contains a fascinating and informative mishnah about the Musaf Amidah of Rosh Hashanah.

Let's start with some background information. Every Amidah is structured as an audience that we have with God. It begins with three b'rachot – blessings – in which we first introduce ourselves as the children of our ancestors, second, acknowledge God's power and presence, and third acknowledge God's holiness. And every Amidah ends with three b'rachot in which we ask God to accept our prayers, we offer God our gratitude, and we ask for the gift of shalom.

Between the three initial b'rachot and the three closing b'rachot – which are much the same in every service – we insert one additional b'rachah on Shabbat and festivals, a b'rachah that focuses on the character of the particular day. This b'rachah is called "k'dushat hayom – the sanctity of the day" to distinguish it from the previous b'rachah – the third introductory b'rachah – which speaks of God's holiness and is called "k'dushat haSheim."

The central b'rachah on Shabbat ends with the phrase that speaks of God as the one who is "m'kaddeish hashabbat – who sanctifies the Shabbat," and on Rosh Hashanah as the one who is "m'kaddeish Yisraeil v'yom hazikkaron – who sanctifies Israel and the day of zikkaron."

That's unexpected. Rosh Hashanah already has a name – yom t'ruah. Where did this new name – yom hazikkaron – come from?

Remember that in Leviticus, Rosh Hashanah is referred to as "yom zichron t'ruah" – that's the source of the phrase Yom haZikkaron. And what does it mean? We'll come back to that question in a few minutes.

The one exception to the general rule that on special days the Amidah has a single central b'rachah is the Musaf Amidah on Rosh Hashanah, where we add several additional b'rachot. How did this come about? Long before the time of the Mishnah – perhaps during the time of the second Temple – someone asked the question "What is the proper way of observing Rosh Hashanah?" and the answer that was eventually accepted was that we should read verses from the Bible and then blow the shofar.

What verses?

There were two categories of verses – one based on the phrase "yom zichron t'ruah" and another one based on the phrase "yom t'ruah". The second group of verses all deal, not surprisingly, with the sound of the shofar, and the first group of verses are all reminders to God about God's covenant with Israel. Thus the developers of the Rosh Hashanah Amidah interpreted "zichron t'ruah" as blowing the shofar to remind God of the covenant. Thus "yom ha-zikkaron" is the day when we remind God of the covenant.

The choreography of the central part of the Musaf Amidah thus becomes – we recite verses about the covenant – called zichronot – enclosing them in a b'rachah that ends "zocheir hab'rit – You remember the covenant," then we blow the shofar. Then we repeat the cycle – we recite verses about the shofar – called shofarot – enclosing them in a b'rachah that ends "shomeia kol t'ruat am'cha yisraeil b'rachamim – You listen compassionately to the t'ruah sounds of Your people Israel," and then we blow the shofar again.

Thus, two additional b'rachot are added to the Musaf Amidah after K'dushat Hayom (the sanctity of the day) – one focusing on God's remembering the covenant and the other focusing on God's hearing the sound of the shofar.

Those of you who are familiar with the Musaf Amidah will question this conclusion, noting that the Amidah has three sets of verses – malchuyot, zichronot, and shofarot – and therefore three additional b'rachot. It might seem therefore that I left out the malchuyot verses and the malchuyot b'rachah.

And that objection brings us, finally, to the discussion of the fascinating mishnah that I mentioned at the start of today's session. We will see that it wasn't that I left malchuyot out of Musaf, but rather that they added malchuyot into Musaf!

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.

Why were malchuyot added? One reason is that our understanding expanded from God as the ruler of the Jewish people to God as the ruler of the world. Another reason may be that rulers in ancient times regularly had coronation ceremonies, and that our God, as supreme ruler, should likewise be proclaimed regularly as the ruler of the world. When better to make that proclamation than on Rosh Hashanah, a full-fledged holiday which otherwise seemed to have no essential significance.

The discussion, recorded in the Mishnah, of when the "malchuyot" verses should be recited, is very revealing. Here is what the Mishnah says:

> This is 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." Instead the pattern would be "malchuyot verses in k'dushat hashem and shofar, then k'dushat hayom, then zichronot verses and shofar, and then shofarot verses and 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 pattern we follow is "k'dushat hashem, then malchuyot verses in k'dushat hayom and shofar, then zichronot verses and shofar, and then shofarot verses and shofar."

Rabbi Yochanan ben Nuri and Rabbi Akiva also had a dispute about how many verses should be recited – Rabbi Akiva said "no fewer than ten verses" in each section, but Rabbi Yochanan thought that three was sufficient. Rabbi Akiva's ten verses consisted of three from the Torah, three from the Psalms, three from the prophets, and then a final verse from the Torah. It was not decided which verses should be recited – that was left up to the individual – but the shofar verses had to be positive in tone and the malchuyot verses had to be universal.

Our practice follows Rabbi Akiva's point of view, although it turns out that the discussion on this daf concludes that the halachah follows Rabbi Yochanan ben Nuri, so some congregations restrict themselves to three verses in each section.

It is noteworthy that even two thousand years ago, our ancestors debated whether the services should be longer or shorter!

They also had a problem with people arriving late to services. Here's a paraphrase of another Mishnah on this page: On the Yom Tov of Rosh Hashanah, blowing the shofar is done by the second service leader, whereas the first service leader recites Hallel.

The gemara asks why the second service leader blows the shofar rather than the first leader, and it answers that the blowing of the shofar is delayed because not everyone comes to the service on time and we do want everyone to hear the shofar. The gemara then asks why we don't delay Hallel until later as well, and it answers that you shouldn't penalize the people who do show up on time.

Hold on, you say, we don't recite Hallel on Rosh Hashanah! That's exactly the point that the Talmud makes next. But that discussion will have to wait until tomorrow.

Who says that there's no suspense in Talmud study?

Welcome to Daily Daf Differently. This is Joe Rosenstein, and I am a professor of mathematics at Rutgers University and the author of Siddur Eit Ratzon and Machzor Eit Ratzon. Today we will be studying Tractate Rosh Hashanah, daf 33, lamed-gimel.

Actually, we'll begin by concluding the discussion we began yesterday of Hallel on Rosh Hashanah. You pointed out that Hallel isn't recited on Rosh Hashanah. But we learned a Mishnah which explicitly said that "On the Yom Tov of Rosh Hashanah, blowing the shofar is done by the second service leader, whereas the first service leader recites Hallel." And the Gemara immediately gave a rationale for this practice, thereby acknowledging that this was indeed the practice.

But the next piece of the Gemara – in rejection of the Mishnah and of the initial discussion in the Gemara – insists that this is impossible. The point is that in the early days of the Talmud it was taken for granted that Hallel was recited on Rosh Hashanah – since Rosh Hashanah was a Yom Tov – a festival. However, later in the Talmudic period, Rabbi Abbahu says that the Mishnah can't possibly refer to Rosh Hashanah because, [quote] "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?" [end quote] (Rosh Hashanah 32B).

And it may be that once Rabbi Abbahu made that statement in the beginning of the 4th century, Hallel was never again recited on Rosh Hashanah.

What happened was that between the beginning and the end of the Talmudic era a new understanding of Rosh Hashanah gained momentum – that Rosh Hashanah was the prelude to Yom Kippur. This was not how Rosh Hashanah was seen in the Biblical period, when Rosh Hashanah was likely a day of celebration. This was not how Rosh Hashanah was seen in the period of the second Temple, when they introduced blowing the shofar and reciting Biblical verses of zichronot and shofarot to remind ourselves and God of the covenant. This was not how Rosh Hashanah was seen in the time of the Mishnah, when the main innovation was malchuyot, proclaiming God as ruler of the entire world. In all of these time periods Rosh Hashanah was not linked to Yom Kippur.

This new understanding of Rosh Hashanah as prelude to Yom Kippur is based on the second Mishnah of the first chapter of Tractate Rosh Hashanah where, after describing the four Rosh Hashanahs – the four new years that we observe each year, the Mishnah notes that "The world is judged four times a year: On Pesach for crops, on Shavuot for fruits of the tree, on the festival [i.e., Sukkot] for water, and on Rosh Hashanah, all human

beings pass before You like troops in formation … " – language that was later incorporated into the Un'taneh Tokef prayer.

This Mishnah provides a linkage between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, but in the time of the Mishnah this linkage does not appear to have been significant. For example, we saw how the coronation theme was incorporated into the traditional musaf Amidah, but there is no parallel discussion of inserting the theme of turning, of repentance, of seeking forgiveness, or of judgment into the Musaf Amidah of Rosh Hashanah.

There is no proposal to add verses of forgiveness – kapparot – into the Musaf Amidah, although they are present in the Yom Kippur Amidah.

It should be noted that a new vision of Yom Kippur was also developing during this period. When the Temple stood, the rituals perfomed by the Kohen Gadol – the high priest – provided forgiveness for all sins against God. This forgiveness was a gift to us from God; no action on our part was necessary to obtain this gift – other than fasting and abstaining from work on Yom Kippur.

After the Temple was destroyed, we had to seek that forgiveness through atonement, through penitence, through t'shuvah. Instead of being a day of forgiveness – the literal meaning of yom kippur – it was becoming a day of atonement.

Although the new understanding of Rosh Hashanah did not appear in the liturgy in the time of the Mishnah, the themes that God is examining our deeds on Rosh Hashanah and that the books of life and death are open on Rosh Hashanah were cleverly incorporated into the Rosh Hashanah Amidah. Although almost all of the zichronot verses 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," in places where they don't really belong.

We will return to the new relationship between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur in a later session. But let us examine the statement or Rabbi Abbahu. He evidently thinks of Hallel simply as a song of praise, but is apparently not aware of why God is being praised in Hallel. The focus of Hallel is that with God's help our lives can be changed – and in Hallel, we praise to God for making that change possible. Hallel provides us with two case studies of how that change can take place. It tells us that whatever difficulties you are

having in your life, whatever the source of your distress, if you call on God for assistance, if you ask God for help, that will make a difference. Even if we are skeptical about whether God intervenes directly in our lives, we can comprehend that, by connecting ourselves with a power greater than ourselves, we can make it possible for major changes to occur in our lives. If we understand Hallel as encouragement to all of us to bring God into our lives, as a message that with God's assistance and support we can change our lives for the better, then it is clearly quite appropriate to recite Hallel on Rosh Hashanah … and even on Yom Kippur.

So I encourage you to read Hallel carefully, more carefully than Rabbi Abbahu did, and consider whether it is appropriate for you to recite Hallel on Rosh Hashanah.

Returning now to today's daf, much of the daf is discussion of a Mishnah that appears on the bottom of the previous page. This Mishnah lists a number of situations in which you will not be able to hear the shofar. For example, if your shofar is up in a tree, then you're really up a tree; you can't climb the tree to get the shofar on the festival. If your shofar is on the other side of a river, you can't swim across the river to get it on the festival. If your shofar is in a building which collapses, you can't go searching through the rubble on Rosh Hashanah. If your shofar is beyond the permitted traveling distance on the festival, you can't go get it.. If you are too weak to walk to the shofar, then you can't hitch a ride. In all these cases, you won't get to hear the sound of the shofar. Sad news.

You might object to this conclusion and say that hearing the shofar is a commandment in the Torah – and therefore is something that you must do. Recall that the commandments are divided into two groups – the positive commandments, each of which involves carrying out an action, and the negative commandments, each of which involves refraining from a certain action. Why should the negative commandment of "kol m'lechet avodah lo taasu – you shall not do any work activity" trump the positive commandment of hear the shofar?

That's the question that the Talmud asks … and implicitly asks here the broader question of what happens when a positive commandment and a negative commandment are in conflict. But then it ducks the question by saying that, in addition to violating the negative commandment against work activity, these efforts to hear the shofar also violate the positive commandment of observing Rosh Hashanah as a day of rest – a shabbaton. So the positive commandment of hearing the shofar is actually trumped by a combination of a

negative commandment and a positive commandment. Hearing the shofar loses by a score of two to one. Sad news.

The Mishnah does permit rinsing the shofar with water or wine to cleanse it on Rosh Hashanah and thereby enhance its sound. This would seem to be in the category of fixing a utensil, which is forbidden. But "enhancement" is not in the same category as "fixing," since the shofar doesn't really need fixing; it is perfectly usable without the enhancement.

Now the Gemara asks a question that I'm sure that no one listening to this podcast would ever have considered. May we rinse the shofar with urine? (The euphemism is "mei raglayim – leg water".) Apparently, urine must be an effective cleanser for shofars – and perhaps for other things – since they asked the question. The answer is no, that's just not respectful to this holy instrument – mipnei kavod – and that applies on weekdays as well as on Rosh Hashanah.

The Mishnah then notes that if children are trying to blow the shofar, we don't stop them; indeed, we should tutor them until they learn how to blow it themselves. The Gemara subsequently cites a b'raita that says that this applies even on Shabbat. That's rather surprising because other musical instruments are considered muktzeh on Shabbat, that is, that we may not even touch them. Apparently we must conclude that a shofar is not considered an instrument, but a ritual and holy object.

The Gemara notes that the language of the Mishnah – that we don't stop <u>children</u> from blowing the shofar – seems to imply that we do stop women from blowing the shofar. But it quickly notes that there is a beraita which explicitly presents a contradictory view, namely, "we do not stop either women or children from blowing the shofar on the yom tov of Rosh Hashanah".

Let's put this conflict in context. Hearing the shofar is a time-bound positive commandment, that is, it is an action that is supposed to be performed at a particular time. Women are generally exempt from performing time-bound positive commandments, due to family obligations. May a woman, however, perform that commandment even though she is exempt from it? There are two answers to this question: yes and no. And the Gemara points out that it was Rabbi Yehudah who originally said no and that it was Rabbi Yose and Rabbi Shimon who originally said yes.

The Gemara does not resolve the general question, but it seems that the tradition has generally leaned in the "yes" direction. Today the question that is discussed within the Orthodox community is whether women may wear tefillin and, according to some reports,

the objections are less halachic than cultural – that is, many Orthodox women who might consider wearing tefillin would feel uncomfortable doing so, or would feel uncomfortable letting their friends know that they wear tefillin. In twenty years, that is likely to change, and Orthodox women, like spiritually committed non-Orthodox women, will be wearing tallit and tefillin without discomfort.

Tomorrow our subject will be the actual blowing of the shofar. Please join us.

Welcome to Daily Daf Differently. This is Joe Rosenstein, and I am a professor of mathematics at Rutgers University and the author of Siddur Eit Ratzon and Machzor Eit Ratzon. Today we will be studying Tractate Rosh Hashanah, daf 34, lamed-daled.

Finally, in the last Mishnah of the last chapter of the tractate of Rosh Hashanah we get to the question of how and when the shofar should be blown on Rosh Hashanah.

Let us step back for a minute and recall that the Torah refers to the first day of the seventh month not as Rosh Hashanah, but as Yom T'ruah – a day of t'ruah – and Yom Zichron T'ruah – a phrase that we were not able to translate with confidence. In the Bible the word t'ruah usually involves noise and shouting – in only one of its 80 occurrences is the word "t'ruah" specifically linked to the sound of a shofar. In a previous session, I gave several examples of how the word t'ruah is usually used. Another example, parallel to "zichron t'ruah" is the phrase "tziltz'lei t'ruah" in Psalm 150. Since "tziltz'lei t'ruah" means loud cymbals (that's c-y-m-b-a-l-s), "zichron t'ruah" might mean "loud reminder." So perhaps the observance on the first day of the seventh month might have been, in Biblical times, like what we call a pep rally. That doesn't sound at all like the Rosh Hashanah we know.

But it is possible that the primary purpose of Rosh Hashanah in Biblical times was quite different from what we are accustomed to. 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, which was critical in order for our ancestors to survive and thrive.

The high point of the festival was the water ceremony on Sh'mini Atzeret called "simchat beit hasho-eivah – rejoicing in the pouring of the water," 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 seventh 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 took place when it did in order to ensure that our prayers for rain would be answered. Perhaps the roaring of the crowds ("t'ruah") on Rosh Hashanah came after the holy proclamation ("mikrah kodesh") intended to serve as a loud reminder ("zichron t'ruah") to our ancestors that Sukkot was coming.

This possibility is supported by Psalm 81:4, which is recited during the evening service of Rosh Hashanah. This verse says, "Tiku bachodesh shofar, bakeseh l'yom

chageinu – 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. This verse clearly implies that the new moon was when the arrival of Sukkot was proclaimed.

So we can imagine that on the first day of the seventh month, our ancestors would gather together in their communities to hear and cheer the announcement that Sukkot was coming, Sukkot was coming. Get ready for "ha-chag – the pilgrimage festival." Pack your bags and come to the Temple in Jerusalem where you will pray for rain and for a year of abundance.

Perhaps the first day of the seventh month served as a pep rally … for Sukkot.

That theory sounds plausible … at least to me.

In Chapter 8 of the book of Nechemiah, an amazing story is told. The setting for the story is that 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. In Chapter 8 we learn that, soon after their return, on the first day of the seventh month, Ezra stood on a high wooden pulpit and read the entire Torah from dawn to midday to his entire community. He read very distinctly so that everyone understood what was read. His audience consisted of people who had never in their lives heard the Torah. Ezra praised Adonai, the great God, and all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with their hands up, and they bowed themselves, and worshipped Adonai with their faces to the ground.

The account of this day is provided in detail, but one detail is missing. Although Ezra had read that this day was "yom t'ruah", there is no mention of a shofar. Their t'ruah was "Amein, Amein."

What about Sukkot? That's later in the chapter, where it notes "vat'hi simchah g'dolah m'od – and that was a very great simchah." Interestingly enough, there is no mention of Yom Kippur in Chapter 8 of Nehemiah.

In any case, by the time of the Second Temple, as noted in an earlier session, "yom t'ruah" had come to mean the day of blowing the shofar, and "yom hazikkaron" had come to mean the day of God remembering the covenant. They recited Biblical verses about God's remembering the covenant – the verses were referred to as zichoronot – and then blew the shofar. After that, they recited Biblical verses about the shofar itself – referred to

as shofarot – and they then blew the shofar. In the time of the Mishnah, another set of verses was added, verses that refer to God as ruler of the world – referred to as malchuyot – after which the shofar was blown again.

Thus the shofar was blown altogether three times during the repetition of the Musaf Amidah. Actually, it was blown four times, and that is still the practice today. The fourth time is during the Shofar Service, that occurs before the Torah is returned to the Ark.

The Shofar Service was presumably conducted before the Amidah in order to make a b'rachah over the shofar without interrupting the flow of the Amidah; we similarly make a b'rachah over the lulav before saying Hallel on Sukkot although the waving of the lulav occurs during Hallel.

Another reason for placing the Shofar Service before the silent Amidah is that at one time individuals blew the shofar individually upon completion of the verses in the silent Amidah – some communities still follow this practice – so the shofar service enables them to blow the shofar during the Amidah without having pause to say the shofar b'rachah.

The Talmud suggests that these extra blasts of the shofar are intended "l'arbeiv hasatan – to confuse the devil," by which they evidently meant the Romans. That is, the Romans were watching the service and when they heard the Jews blow the shofar at this time and remain seated, they would conclude that the shofar was not a call to revolt.

Then later, once the Romans left, the shofar blasts would be blown while everyone was standing – the Talmud uses the phrases "t'kiyot m'umad – standing t'kiyot" for the shofar blasts during the Amidah and "t'kiyot m'yushav – seated t'kiyot" for the shofar blasts before the Amidah.

The initial letters of the Hebrew verses before the b'rachah of "lishmoa kol shofar – to hear the sound of the shofar" spell the phrase "k'ra satan" which literally means "tear up Satan." The person who selected these verses from Psalm 119 evidently took very literally the Talmudic explanation above, without recognizing its historical origins.

We have settled the question of when the shofar is blown, and we turn now to the question of what sounds are made. The Mishnah says cryptically "Seder t'kiyot, shalosh shel shalosh shalosh – the arrangement of the sounds is three of three three." What that means is that there are three sets of sounds and each set has three sounds; the "shalosh shalosh – three three" at the end of the statement in the Mishnah means "three of each."

The three sets are the ones at the end of the malchuyot verses, at the end of the zichronot verses, and at the end of the shofarot verses.

What are the three sounds at the end of each set of verses – they are t'kiyah, t'ruah, t'kiyah. The essential sound is the t'ruah, not surprising since the day is yom t'ruah. The initial t'kiyah is like an attention getter – listen up, here comes the t'ruah – and the final t'kiyah is like an all clear signal.

It is understandable that the attention getter and the all clear signals should be loud sustained blasts, but what should the t'ruah sound like?

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 – which literally means broken notes"). A second view is that the t'ruah should sound like women ululating – oy-oy-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").

It is very interesting that they didn't know which of these three sounds was the correct one. You would think that this most important ceremony, the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, would be remembered by everyone. Not so.

Since they could not determine which tradition was the authentic one, Rabbi Abbahu of Caesarea decided that we should cover all bases … that is, 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. And that we do three times – first after the malchuyot verses, second after the zichronot verses, and third after the shofarot verses.

That doesn't count the shofar sounds that are made in the Shofar Service prior to the Amidah – there we do exactly the same thing, except that we do it three times – after the b'rachah we blow three sh'varim t'ruahs each surrounded by long blasts, then three sh'varims each surrounded by long blasts, and then three t'ruahs each surrounded by long blasts.

You might ask, "What's all this talk about sighing and ululating?" Isn't Rosh Hashanah supposed to be a "yom tov – a festival"? Shouldn't our shouts be shouts of joy? Shouldn't the blasts of the shofar be celebratory?

When Ezra read the entire Torah on the first day of the seventh month, the people began to weep, presumably because they realized that they had not been following the word of God for generations. Ezra said to them: "This day is holy unto Adonai your God.

Therefore, do not mourn and do not cry. Go home, eat a festive meal, drink wine, and share your food with others. Don't be depressed, for your strength comes from your joy in Adonai."

Somewhere along the way, the tradition of joyful sounds on Rosh Hashanah had evidently disappeared, and our shofar sounds had become sounds of moaning and weeping.

That's something to contemplate between this session and the next one.

Welcome to Daily Daf Differently. This is Joe Rosenstein, and I am a professor of mathematics at Rutgers University and the author of Siddur Eit Ratzon and Machzor Eit Ratzon. Today we will be studying Tractate Rosh Hashanah, daf 35, lamed-heh.

This daf is the final daf of Chapter 4 and the final daf of Tractate Rosh Hashanah. In general, a daf of the Talmud consists of two sides of the page, but today's daf is about a quarter of the usual daf, since it only takes up about half of one side. So I'll restrict my remarks to two or three minutes instead of the usual 10+ minutes … just kidding! There's still plenty to say about Rosh Hashanah.

Before looking at today's daf, let's complete our discussion of the previous daf's analysis of the shofar sounds. In that analysis, dating from the 4th century, they understand the t'ruah sounds as wailing – what we call sh'varim – and sobbing – what we call t'ruah.

You may ask, "Wasn't the t'ruah supposed to be a joyful sound?" What's all this about sighing and ululating? The sounds may not have been different from those used in ancient times, but by the 4th century, the interpretation of those sounds had changed. Apparently, the tradition of joyful sounds on Rosh Hashanah had disappeared.

Indeed, the previous conceptions of Rosh Hashanah had been superseded by a new perspective, alluded to in previous sessions, 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.

Let us take a moment to review the other changes that had been made. While the Temple stood, they understood the zichronot verses as reminders to God to remember the covenant – and described God as zocheir habrit. The day was called "Yom haZikkaron" – the day that God remembers, as exemplified by the Torah reading for Rosh Hashanah that begins "VAdonai pakad et Sarah kaasher amar – and God <u>remembered</u> Sarah as God had promised" – and by the Haftarah in which God <u>remembers</u> Chanah – vayizk'rehah Adonai – and grants both Sarah and Chanah the sons that they prayed for. The message of Yom haZikkaron is, "God, answer the prayers of Your people, as You have promised."

Afterwards, by adding introductory and concluding paragraphs to the zichronot verses, that portion of the prayer service was instead refocused on God remembering our deeds. Perhaps it was too difficult for the rabbis of the Talmudic period to focus on God as the one who remembers the covenant, since God did not intervene when the Temple was being destroyed. So they focused instead on our sins, and introduced the idea of "mipnei chataeinu galinu mei-artzeinu – because of our sins we were exiled from our land.

While in Temple times, the shofar may have been blown to remind God of the covenant, afterwards, it seems to be understood as a recognition of our sinfulness. Phrases that asked God to remember us for life were inserted in four places of every Amidah. And, of course, Hallel was abolished by Rabbi Abbahu, the same rabbi who reinterpreted the sounds of the shofar as mournful tones.

This new understanding continued to develop over the subsequent centuries. By the middle ages, when Un'taneh Tokef was written and introduced into the Ashkenazic liturgy, 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 occur in the Talmud or the Rosh Hashanah liturgy and only became widely used after it appeared in the 13th 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 "aseret y'mei t'shuvah – the ten days of repentance.")

Thankfully, since the Mishnah refers to Rosh Hashanah a number of times as "Yom Tov shel Rosh Hashanah," it has not been completely transformed. We still celebrate Rosh Hashanah with food, although we no longer celebrate it with liturgy. Perhaps it is time for us to reconsider the purpose of Rosh Hashanah, to try to decouple it from Yom Kippur, to remind God of the covenant, and to restore some celebration and joy to the Rosh Hashanah liturgy. I have tried to do that in my machzor, Machzor Eit Ratzon.

Among the concrete steps that should be considered are decreasing the centrality of Un'tanef Tokef, which many see as a "blame the victim" piece of liturgy, adding a celebration of the new year, including in the shofar service a call to God to fulfill the covenant, and reinstating the practice of reciting Hallel (which can be found in Machzor Eit Ratzon).

That certainly sounds like the conclusion to this session … but we have unfinished business, namely, to complete today's daf.

The last part of the last Mishnah reads: Just as the sh'liach tzibbur – the service leader – is obligated to recite the Amidah, so also each person is obligated to recite the Amidah. Rabban Gamliel says that the sh'liach tzibbur relieves the public of their obligation – motzi et harabim y'dei chovatam.

It is puzzling that these statements appear in a Mishnah that discusses the shofar and that they seemingly have nothing to do with Rosh Hashanah. But it does raise the question of why the Amidah is repeated, particularly if each person is obligated to say it privately. Let us see how the gemara deals with these questions.

Recall that a beraita is a statement from the time of the Mishnah which was not included in the Mishnah, but is nevertheless authoritative. After repeating this portion of the Mishnah, the gemara records the following beraita. As I read it, keep in mind that at this time, the prayers were recited from memory, not from printed texts, and that, although the outline of the Amidah was fixed, each person may have used different words to fill in that outline.

Beraita Part 1: The rabbis said to Rabban Gamliel, "If your opinion is correct – that the sh'liach tzibbur relieves the public of their obligation – then why does the congregation pray silently since the sh'liach tzibbur says the prayers out loud?" He replied, "That gives the sh'liach tzibbur the time to prepare his prayers." That is, while we are all reciting the Amidah, the sh'liach tzibbur is conducting a private dress rehearsal for the public prayers. Since no objection is raised to Rabban Gamliel, it appears that his argument is successful.

Beraita Part 2: Rabban Gamliel said to the anonymous rabbis, "If your opinion is correct – that each person is obligated to recite the Amidah – then why does the sh'liach tzibbur repeat the Amidah?" They replied: "K'dei l'hotzi et she-eino baki – to discharge the obligation of those who can't recite the prayers." Rabban Gamliel replied: "Since the sh'liach tzibbur can relieve the obligation of those unfamiliar with the prayers, so too he can relieve the obligation of those familiar with the prayers." Again it appears that Rabban Gamliel's argument is successful.

So, who wins this dispute? There's a dispute about that! Some say that since Rabban Gamliel has the last word in this beraita, that the rabbis conceded to him, whereas others say that they didn't concede to him.

The issue of whether the rabbis conceded to Rabban Gamliel takes up essentially all of daf 35, and includes a multigenerational discussion involving, in order of appearance, Rabbah bar bar Chanah, Rabbi Yochanan, Rabbi Chiya the son of Rabbah bar Nachmani, Rav Dimi bar Chanina, Reish Laskish, Rabbi Chanah of Tzippori, Rabbi Abba, Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak, Rabbi Meir, Rav Chananel in the name of Rav, Rabbi Yehoshua ben Levi, Rav Acha bar Avira, Rabbi Shimon Chasida, Abba the son of Rav Binyamin bar Chiya, Ravin, and Rabbi Yaakov bar Idi. An amazing cast of characters! And the issue

that they are debating was simply whether the other rabbis conceded to Rabban Gamliel, who was the leading rabbi of his time. What did they decide? They didn't!

But these are practical questions, so answers are necessary. The halachah reflects the following compromise: It follows Rabban Gamliel on Rosh Hashanah; since the prayers in the Amidah are complicated and unfamiliar, when the sh'liach tzibbur recites the Amidah, that fulfills everyone's obligation. But the halachah follows the rabbis the rest of the year; since the prayers during the rest of the year are familiar and uncomplicated, everyone who can do so, should recite the prayers on their own and not expect that their obligation will be fulfilled by listening to the sh'liach tzibbur's repetition of the Amidah.

We have now completed today's page, Chapter 4, and the tractate of Rosh Hashanah. Speaking to the tractate, and to Chapter 4 which begins with the words "Yom Tov shel Rosh Hashanah," we say:

Hadran alach, perek Yom Tov. May we return again to you, chapter "Yom Tov." Hadran alach – may we return to you and study you more deeply, tractate Rosh Hashanah.

And we conclude with a traditional prayer:

Y'hi ratzon l'fanecha, Adonai Elohai, veilohei avotai v'imotai – May it be Your will, our God and God of our fathers and our mothers, that just as you have enabled us to complete Tractate Rosh Hashanah, so may You help us to begin and complete other tractates and holy books, to learn and to teach, to lovingly observe and fulfill all the enduring words that are in the teachings of Your Torah. Amein.

Completing a tractate is traditionally a cause for celebration … which for Jews of course means food and drink. I have uploaded various refreshments to jcastnetwork and I invite you to partake of them with me … or to provide your own if you are unable to download mine. L'chayim.

It has been a pleasure for me to prepare and present these sessions, and I hope that you have enjoyed them as well. Until we meet again … Shalom.