

ROSH HASHANAH PATH

This course is lead by Immanuel Shalev, CEO of Aleph Beta. Much of the material is based on the teachings of Rabbi David Fohrman. You can watch the videos at [Alephbeta.org/rosh-hashanah](https://alephbeta.org/rosh-hashanah)

Segment 1

Elul. Rosh Hashanah. The High Holy Days are coming. It feels so ominous. Let me ask you a question: How many of you are excited about the days of awe? I don't know about you, and maybe I shouldn't admit this considering that I teach Torah for a living, but each year, I dread these days.

I'm dreading sitting in shul for hours and hours, doing my best to pay attention, but mostly spacing out. The prayers are in Hebrew, but even in the English, there's so much poetry, it's difficult to understand, and relate to. And I feel guilty about that. Guilty that these days are supposed to be really important, and more often than not, I don't prepare, or don't prepare well enough that I can understand and follow everything.

And while we're on the topic of guilt, these days are so difficult to relate to because of all the .guilt. Rosh Hashanah, Happy New Year by the way, is the **Day of Judgment**. Yom Kippur is the Day of Repentance. It's like guilt-fest. Each year, we sit and we think about how horrible we've been, and we resolve never to be that horrible again...except, how many of us really do teshuvah gemurah, complete and utter repentance, and walk away from the sins we repeat over and over? So I'm supposed to make myself feel guilty for my failures, and I try to do teshuvah, but really I know that I'm just gonna sin again, and so I feel guilty that my teshuvah isn't real teshuvah, and that kinda makes me not wanna do teshuvah, and then I feel guilty for that, I mean, it's just too much.

But what if I were to tell you that Yom Hadin, that Judgment Day, isn't in the Torah. Those words? They never appear.

That's it! Cancel shul! We're going to Disneyland!

No, not quite. The sages in the mishnah are the ones that teach us that Rosh Hashanah is Judgment Day. But what I want to suggest is that the reason why you can't find Judgment Day in the Torah, is because judgment... isn't the true essence of the day. And until we understand what Rosh Hashanah really is about, at its core, we're not really ready to observe it, to do it right.

Hi, I'm Imu Shalev, and if you join us on this adventure, give us just a few minutes a day, and we'll help you show up to shul on the High Holidays feeling ready, this year. We'll explore the essence of what Rosh Hashanah really is about, and see how it might help us stand before God, and before ourselves, not feeling the harshness and the gloom of guilt, but truly celebrating, and even looking forward, to these holidays. We'll talk about prayer, and how to understand davening. We'll discuss the shofar, and why on earth we blow it, and what we're meant to think about and feel, while we're listening.

Watch the videos!

Be sure to head to [Alephbeta.org/rosh-hashanah](https://alephbeta.org/rosh-hashanah) to see all the videos that accompany the guide.

All that and more. Thanks for watching - see you next time!

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**Segment 2**

All told, it's a kind of mysterious three-fold formulation of the day. These three categories of verses end up being the center of gravity around which our prayers on Rosh Hashanah revolve, but why? What exactly would Malchiyot, Zichronot, and Shofrot, have to do with this larger idea of Yom HaDin - a day of judgment?

Thanks Rabbi Fohrman. So the prayers aren't quite what we'd expect them to be when we consider Judgment Day. I think we have some hope here that it's not all about guilt, because even the sages in their formulation of this day of judgment, they seem to see something deeper about this day than simply weighing your deeds and confessing your crimes. Something that has to do with Malchiot, zichronot and shofrot, Kingship, Memories, and the Shofar. On the one hand, this is kinda nice: There's no guilt, no forgiveness... but on the other hand, it's kinda confusing. What kind of Judgment Day is it without guilt? And again, if none of this is in the Torah-are they making all of this up?

Next time, we'll take a look at the text of the Torah itself, and see if it can give us more clarity. See you then.

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**Segment 3**

So we saw that the sages describe Rosh Hashanah as a day of judgment, but strangely, the prayers they have us say that day have to do with kingship, memories and the shofar. Not really a whole lot of guilt and forgiveness. Why? And where are they getting this idea from, if it's not in the Torah?

Well, let's take a look at what the Torah itself says, and see if it can give us more clarity on the essence of the day, and maybe help us see what the sages saw that made them understand Rosh Hashanah as Judgment Day, and a day of kingship, memories, and shofar. Rabbi Fohrman analyzes the Torah's description of Rosh Hashanah, take a look:

Now strangely, that description does not reference the idea of a day of judgment at all, instead the Torah characterizes Rosh Hashanah with just a couple of cryptic words. It calls it a day of Zichron Teruah - a day of remembrance of the cry of the Shofar.

But whatever the case is, what exactly does this mean? It just seems to be hopelessly ambiguous, a day of remembering the cry of the Shofar. But whatever it means it certainly doesn't seem to be saying it's a day of judgment. I mean if you wanted to say it was a day of judgment, just come out and say on the first day of Tishrei, that's a Yom HaDin - a day of judgment, G-d has these scales and weighs the lives of everybody. Nothing like that. Yom Zichron Teruah - a day of remembrance of the cry of the Shofar. Almost as if there was some event that we were supposed to remember involving a Shofar, but like an event that was so obvious that obviously yeah, just remember that day, that you know the cry of the Shofar - what are we even talking about? What is so obvious to the Torah here that you and I aren't getting?

The amazing thing is that the Sages actually tell us what event it was, right exactly where you would expect them to tell us. Listen now to the words that we all say as part of our Rosh Hashanah prayers right before we actually declare the verses of Shofrot. Here's the text the Sages have us say.

Atah nigleita ba'ananim kevodecha - You G-d revealed Yourself in a cloud of glory. Al am kodshecha - to Your holy nation; L'daber imam - to speak with them; Min ha'shamayim hishamatam kolecha - from the heavens You made Your voice heard. V'nigleita aleihem b'arpelei tohar - and You revealed Yourself to them in thick clouds of purity. When it happened; Gam ha'olam kulo chal mi'panecha - the whole world trembled before You; B'higlotecha Malkeinu al Har Sinai - when You, our king, revealed Yourself on Mount Sinai.

Yes, that's the event the Torah was talking about, Zichron Teruah, that's what we're supposed to be remembering here on Rosh Hashanah, it's the memory of the cry of the Shofar - the cry of the Shofar that the entire nation, that we all heard, way back at Sinai. If you read the text of revelation at Sinai you'll find there was a Shofar blast there. That cry seems to be what the remembrance of this day is about.

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**Segment 3**

But now let's stop right here for a second, why, you might ask is the Torah being so cagey about it? I mean, if it's really true that on Rosh Hashanah we're supposed to remember the revelation at Sinai, so the Torah should have just said; Yom Zichron Sinai - it's a day of remembering Sinai, that would have been clear enough. For some reason the Torah is emphasizing the Shofar blast at Sinai as some key part of the experience of revelation. Which is strange because you and I, we would have said the main aspect of Sinai was the Torah. No, Rosh Hashanah comes along and says, Yom Zichron Teruah, if you have to summarize Sinai, the way you should remember it forever, is the time when we heard a blast of a Shofar. Now why would that be? Why would the Shofar at Sinai be so important?

Well, the Sages give you a hint with the very first words of that paragraph we've been reading, Atah Nigleita. Listen to the language one more time. Atah nigleita ba'an'an kevodecha - You revealed Yourself in a cloud, strange, that's an oxymoron. G-d didn't reveal Himself in a cloud, a cloud I can't see anything. Even later on in Deuteronomy when we talk about the Sinai experience, we talk about it in terms of Choshech, Anan, Arafel - it was dark, it was a thick cloud, you couldn't see a thing. How disappointing. Here's the greatest event in the history of the world, revelation, and it's obscured by clouds, you can't really see anything. It's like the biggest disappointment. So what's going on? How come it was so cloudy? How come it was so dark?

But that actually wasn't coincidental, there was a reason for that. Later on in Deuteronomy, again talking about the Sinai experience, Moshe picks up on the fact that you couldn't see anything. Remember, he tells the people, you didn't see anything at Sinai; U'temunah einchem ro'im - there was no vision, there was no picture, nothing to see; Zulati kol - all there was, was voice. Eventually that voice coalesced into words, and you heard the Ten Commandments, but even before that you heard the; Kol shofar chazak me'od - the voice of the Shofar very loud. There weren't any physical Shofars that were blowing at Sinai, what you heard was a supernatural sound. The sound of the Shofar was G-d communicating with you even before He spoke to you.

Why was voice the medium through which we encountered G-d, not sight? If you and I could choose to encounter the Almighty with any one of our senses, we probably would choose sight, it's the most direct way of perceiving something, we'd want to see G-d. But G-d says, sorry folks, that's not the way it works, you can't see Me. You see, sight is a sense by which human beings directly encounter something; when you see x you perceive x directly, fragile human beings can't have that direct an experience with the Almighty in this world, they don't last. As G-d says to Moshe later; Loh yirani odom v'chay - people don't see Me and live through that experience. But you can hear Me, you can hear My voice. When you hear something that comes from x, you don't perceive x directly, you hear an emanation from x, but hearing is still a genuine encounter. You can encounter Me through My voice, G-d says, it's the most direct encounter I can provide for you.

And now every year we have Yom Zichron Teruah - a day of remembering the voice. When we hear the Shofar it takes us back, it stirs something in our collective human souls. We know that voice. It was the moment we made contact. It's the moment that changed everything for us. After that moment we could never be the same.

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**Segment 3**

That memory of the shofar, of that first encounter with God, somehow that is the essence of Rosh Hashanah. I'd argue that if we aren't relating to that, if we don't remember that core encounter, we're missing the essence of the day. Yom Hadin. Malchiyot. Zichronot. Shofrot. They are all expressions of that primal encounter with God, of the day we first met Him and heard His voice. That's a very different Rosh Hashanah than the one many of us are used to, but I believe it's the one the Sages intended.

Next time, we'll take a look at how these ideas can transform your experience of Rosh Hashanah, starting with the structure of our prayer: Malichyos, Zichronos and Shofros. Then, we'll try and examine how the sages understanding of Judgment Day relates to the essence of Rosh Hashanah and the encounter with God. I guarantee your Rosh Hashanah will never be the same again.

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**Segment 4**

Yesterday, we talked about the real essence of Rosh Hashanah - the memory of our first encounter with God, at Sinai. But we still need to answer that gnawing question we've had since Day 1: so what about this Day of Judgment thing that the Sages talk about? That seems totally unrelated to zichron teruah, to hearing God's voice at Sinai. Where do they get that from?

I don't think the sages got it wrong - we haven't been showing up to shul needlessly saying all these irrelevant prayers. Rosh Hashanah is judgment day, just, not in the ways we always thought. I want to suggest that the sages knew that the essence of this day is Zichron Teruah, a day where we remember that close encounter with God. But the sages see expressions of that essence as a day of judgment, and as a day that is worthy of declaring God's kingship, a day of memories, and shofar.

Let me show you what I mean. Put yourself in the shoes of the nation at the moments leading up to Sinai. Imagine hearing God's voice as a shofar, getting louder and louder. You're trembling, hearing, and feeling, even seeing - the Torah describes total sensory overload, so that they were seeing voice and not only hearing it. You encounter God. What would that event have meant to you? How would you have processed it, rationally, and emotionally?

The sages give us a guide: Malchiyos, Zichronos and Shofros.

When we first heard God's voice, in that instance...you know that there IS a God. Not just that He exists, I think the generation that went through miracles in Egypt and the splitting of the sea, they knew He existed. But there's no hiding from that knowledge when you encounter God directly. At that moment, as we stood in front of God, we knew, He is our King. He is our Master, He is our leader, our God.

This is how Malchiyos, at least, is just one expression of The Sinai event. Here, take a look at what Rabbi Fohrman says about this:

The Sinai event, the revelation event, what was that really about? One way of thinking about it is that day was the day that we recognized G-d as king. It was, in a word, coronation day. The Torah itself seems to call it that. G-d proposes to Israel this grand bargain at Sinai. Atem tiheyu li mamlechet Kohanim - you're going to be a kingdom of priests. No such thing as a kingdom without a king.

To accept G-d as king is really to accept Him as leader, it is to express a willingness to follow Him, to let Him lead you, and that, of course, was a facet of the Sinai experience. We accepted the Torah, these laws were the directives of the Master of the Universe, and our acceptance of those directives indicated our willingness to allow Him to lead us. We considered those laws binding, which means we accepted that it was okay, that it was right, for Him to make the rules and for us to follow them.

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**Segment 4**

Every year when we remember that day, when we remember that voice, on Rosh Hashanah we crown G-d anew.

So that's why the sages declare that this day of remembering Sinai, it's a day to declare God's kingship. We're just re-enacting what that first moment meant to us. So now we've explored malchiyot. What about Zichronot, Shofrot and Judgment Day? How are they expressions of the essence of Rosh Hashanah - of that Divine encounter with God? Let's explore that question next time.

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**Segment 5**

We suggested that Malchiyot, declaring God's kingship, is an expression of the idea that we are remembering Sinai. When we hear God's voice, we know He is our king. Could it be that Zichronot, Shofrot and Yom Hadin are also a reaction to hearing God's voice? Let's start with Zichronot - memory - and see how Rabbi Fohrman explains this:

What role does memory play in Rosh Hashanah? Does that too take us back to the Sinai experience somehow? Go back to Sinai - really consider that experience. We talked last video about that experience from the perspective of accepting G-d's kingship or leadership. But, as wonderful as accepting the Torah is, as wonderful as accepting G-d's kingship is, that event can also provoke a crisis.

You see you and me, the average, everyday Joe or Jane, who doesn't experience revelation, we live what we might call normal lives. I'm doing my own thing, I was born in San Francisco in 1965 and then I moved to New York when I was a teenager, and I can tell you the whole story of my life, what I'm trying to achieve, what I'm trying to do, I have my story. But imagine what happens if Joe or Jane experiences revelation at Sinai. The being who originated the universe is right here and you are standing around the mountain. It changes everything. Who am I anymore? I am so small in the face of the Master's immensity, I am so overwhelmed that I am in danger of losing my entire sense of self. My little story, it matters anymore that I moved to New York when I was thirteen and a half?

Okay, so that is the crisis. But if Malchiyot provokes that crisis it also contains the seeds of an answer to it and those seeds are known as Zichronot - the notion of G-d's memories. Let me explain by taking you into an exploration of the idea of memory. What does memory do? What exactly is its function? So you might say, well that's obvious, memory helps you remember, right, if you want to just remember things. But memory does far more than that, it's actually the way we understand ourselves, we understand who we are, identity itself is wrapped up in the idea of memory, and the reason is, that memory is really about storytelling. When you remember things you're actually connecting the dots between your various experiences, weaving them together to form a story. That's actually the only way you do remember anything.

So if you think about it, that means that some points in my life are going to be more important to the story than others. Let's say I'm a big, fancy investment banker and as I'm rushing out the door to work one morning so my seven-year-old daughter spills orange juice on the floor and I clean it up before I go to work. So that might have happened, but in the way that I talk to myself about my life, you know it's a rather disconnected dot, it doesn't really contribute to the grand story of my life - at least the way I see it. But now, here's another way to start thinking about the crisis of Malchiyot that we talked about before. If there really is a king in this universe, maybe there's a grander story than the one I'm telling myself? Maybe the Creator has a story too?

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You think your life is about your story, and from your perspective when your daughter spilled orange juice that wasn't a big deal, it was a disconnected dot. But maybe the Creator in His story, maybe He doesn't think so? Maybe when you stopped and you patiently cleaned up that mess and smiled to your daughter, maybe that was a really meaningful dot? Maybe everything needs to be seen as how it connects to that dot? Maybe your life in the Master's view is not just about what a good hedge fund manager you are but how you balance your career and family?

Because if there's a Creator there is a grand soundtrack out there, there's a story being told in this universe, and it's so much larger than just you. There's a grand weave of history and if you could be part of that weave in a meaningful way, if you and your whole life can be a dot that connects in some visceral, significant, redemptive way in the world, how can there be more meaning in life than that?

You know, we speak about Rosh Hashanah as the beginning of the Yomim Noraim - the Days of Awe. What is awe? We feel awe sometimes when we're in the presence of something like the Grand Canyon, or when you sit on a grassy knoll looking up at the stars at night. But ask yourself, why do you feel awe? Is it just because you feel like you are small and this is big? I don't think so. So you would say okay, fine, so I'm small, that's big. The reason why you feel awe when you have those experiences is because you begin to get a sense that there might just be a larger story here. And if there is, I have to figure out how I fit. I want to be a part of that larger story. Sure if you want you don't have to, you can continue telling your own story, be my guest, but at what price?

For those of you who read Harry Potter, remember that moment when Harry is at Platform 9 ¾ and he's trying to figure out where that train to Hogwarts is. So he's asking around and he asks somebody, a guy by the name of Joe, and Joe doesn't know, he says, I've no idea, I've never seen Platform 9 ¾ before. Imagine you're Joe. So here you are, you're Joe, you have your life, you're doing your own thing, but imagine that one day you figure out you're part of J. K. Rowling's novel? There's a creator here and there's a grand epic story, it's Harry Potter, and you just got bumped into and asked which way the train is?

Now in that moment of revelation - revelation itself - when you see the Creator and you realize there's a story here, the Sinai moment as it were, what do you want most deeply? It's like you feel like petitioning the author and say, could I have a significant role in this story? I don't want to just be the guy who got bumped into to ask where the train is, how can I help, how can you take my life, my personality, my gifts, my track record, what I've done, weave me into that story.

So yes, on the one hand the Sinai moment, the encounter with kingship, implies Din - it implies judgment. You're going to look at my life, You're going to see who I am, You're going to see my track record, what have I done, how can I contribute. But that's a glorious thing that judgment, it's not judgment in order to be punitive and see what terrible things you deserve to be subjected to, to be paid back for all your sins. No. This judgment is a marvelous opportunity, it's my opportunity to be a part of the grand unfolding story. Take me in.

It's incredible to think of judgment as an expression of our original closeness with God. It's a thought that gives us great hope, that we can leave the guilt of Rosh Hashanah behind, but also, that we can approach Yom Hadin with a certain kind of reverence and even joy...It's an idea that promises to transform how we stand before God in shul on Rosh Hashanah. Let's explore these ideas further, next time.

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**Segment 6**

Over and over, we've asked where the sages got the idea of Yom Hadin from and how it relates to Sinai and now, I think the answer is finally clear.

Rosh Hashanah is all about closeness with God. Zichron Teruah, the memory of Sinai, is really about waking up to the fact that God is our Master, our King, and so we spend time on Rosh Hashanah recognizing God's mastery. But the memory of that encounter also fills us with awe and creates a crisis - God is the memory-keeper for all humanity. He is the great storyteller in the sky. How do I fit into the story?

That is Yom Hadin. It's like, after a year of work at your company, filing documents, landing clients, pursuing marketing campaigns, whatever it is you do at your business, you take a day out each year to look at the corporate mission statement. How does what I do align? Let's see, it says here we're pursuing growth, profit, did I make money this year? Great. Check. Let me keep reading, pursue growth while maintaining a healthy work-life balance. Hm, how'd I do there? Well, I missed all of my kid's soccer games, haven't been connected to my wife lately. I need to change something!

The adult version of Yom Hadin isn't the court case of God vs. Rivky Stern, "haul in the scales of sins vs. merits!" - it's WHO AM I? What does God want of me? What is my mission statement? How do I align? What is God's story, and what's my story? Do they align?

Is there guilt involved? Yeah, sure. But we're not meant to worship that guilt. It's not a mitzvah to fill up with self-loathing, and the more you hate yourself, the better Rosh Hashanah you have. If you do that, You're missing the point.

It's about the encounter with God. It's about closeness. It's about a relationship. Life is complicated. We have families, we have work, we pursue leisure. Sometimes we forget that God wants us to live that life with Him, not around Him. How are our businesses a part of God's story? How are our families a part of God's story? The the simple things that we enjoy-how can we enjoy them together with God, as part of our relationship with Him. That's Yom Hadin. That's a day of Zichron Teruah.

Take a look at that mishnah again, the one that is the source for Yom Hadin: On Rosh Hashanah all the inhabitants of the earth pass before God like "a flock of sheep." Do you see the difference now? God's judgment isn't the great lidless eye of Sauron waiting for you to fail, it's the loving shepherd, who, honestly has a lotta sheep, but is taking the time to tend to each one individually and making each one of us feel special.. Making our stories matter. And remember, the Rabbis gave us a verse to support this conception of Din, it was a verse from Psalms: שְׁנֵאֵמַר - as it says in Psalm 31 - הַיּוֹצֵר יַחַד לְבָבָם, הַמְבִּינֵן אֶל כָּל מַעֲשֵׂיהֶם - God, the One who forms all of their hearts, who understands all of their actions.

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**Segment 6**

He's not probing our thoughts and our hearts to find our misdeeds. Consider the difference between a judge in a courtroom, and our judge the Creator. When a person judges you, they don't know your full story. They don't know your desires, your passions, your struggles in life, what led you to the moment of "failure." They judge you on an objective scale, that frankly, isn't fair. But The Creator? He formed our hearts, He understands the true nature of all of our deeds. He judges us subjectively, and that's a good thing. That is the judgment of Avinu Malkeinu. The merciful and loving Father and the all-knowing leader.

I don't know about you, but this conception of Yom Hadin is a very different one than the one I grew up with. So we're going to spend some time together trying to fuse the Rosh Hashanah we experience every year with this deeper Rosh Hashanah that celebrates our encounter with God. So look out for that next time.

If this notion of Rosh Hashanah as commemorating Sinai feels too foreign for you and you're looking for just a little more evidence, I recommend you check out this video of the only recorded Rosh Hashanah celebration in the Torah, and the echos of Sinai you'll see there. I really recommend it.

And remember - we covered Malchiyot and Zichronot, but what about Shofrot? We'll go into the shofar a little bit later in this series, so don't forget! Till next time!

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Segment 7

Today, take the opportunity to reflect on some of the ideas we've been speaking about. I'm going to ask you some questions that are pretty difficult to answer - and only you will be able to answer them.



(At this point, we recommend grabbing a pen and paper, or opening a new document on your computer - writing will give you a ritual to force yourself to articulate these thoughts honestly and clearly, and it will also give you something you can come back to.)

What is your story? Who are you?

A) Write a short paragraph encapsulating the story of this past year.

- Consider. What roles are important to you:
 - Parent? Husband/Wife? Son/Daughter? Boss? Student? Employee? Friend?
- Consider. What events or achievements/failures stood out for you?

B) Consider the encounter with God.

- What do you think God's story is? And think about your life, your story - but from God's perspective. How does your story align with His? What are you proud of? What are you ashamed of? Write a short paragraph on your reflections.

*Consider - How can you use this exercise to prepare for the prayer services? How might it feed into teshuvah for the past, and how might you want to prepare for the future?

*Consider - If you find this exercise useful, could you share it with others? How would your family answer the question about God's story? Would a conversation like that help your marriage, or your family unit re-align around a collective purpose?



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**Segment 8**

Welcome back. Up until now we've talked about a bit of a paradigm shift from Rosh Hashanah as a scary guilt-fest into something more mature, the memories of that Divine encounter, and how those memories produce a sort of Yom Hadin, causing us to take stock of who we are vis-a-vis God, and to do some re-aligning.

But that's only part of the story. Rosh Hashanah is also, essentially, a celebration. It's a holiday, remember? We're feasting, we're partying. It's not just the solemn task of mission statements, there's something to be utterly overjoyed about, and I don't want us to forget it.

Remember, the fundamental idea of Rosh Hashanah is remembering that primal encounter with God. That relationship itself is worth celebrating. It's coronation day, remember? We make God king over us because we're utterly dumbfounded that the Master of all the Universe should care about us. That the master storyteller should weave us, US, into His story!

Consider what that means. If God is the great storyteller in the sky, He is shaping the future, deciding, yeah, the basic things, health, security, the plight of the sick, the destitute, and He is deciding whether the things we pour our lives into should succeed: our careers, our relationships, our dreams. When we pray to God, the memorykeeper, the storyteller, we beseech Him to shape our story for good. That's what so much of our prayer on Rosh Hashanah is doing.

The Sages tell us how to pray on Rosh Hashanah; Through Malchiyos, Zichronos, and Shofros. Let's revisit those prayers one more time:

Malchiyos - say before Me verses of kingship so that you will crown G-d as king over you. Zichronot, say verses of memory; remind me of your national story, remind me of your merits Kedei sheya'aleh zichronchem lefanai l'tovah - so that your memory should come up to Me in a good way. So that God will incorporate us into His story. The Talmud continues - Ba'meh? - how will we get God to remember us? Through the Shofar.

The shofar has a double meaning for us on this day. On the one hand, we use it to remember God's voice. When we're in shul on Rosh Hashanah, and we hear the shofar being blown, we are transported back to the primal voice. Remember it, and remember all of its implications.

But the sages have us pick up the shofar, not just to remember God, but to have Him remember us. God chose to communicate with us wordlessly, at first. So we could just hear His voice and know him. We do the same. We blow our shofar, back to God. It is our wordless prayer, a desire to fuse our kol with his kol. To join our voices with His voice. To join our story with His story.

And so when the shofar blows, forget the words to your prayers. What do you want? Rosh Hashanah is a day of celebration because it celebrates our relationship with God. It celebrates that He cares about us enough to hear our voice and to make it His voice. To hear our desires, our hopes, our prayers, and to weave them into His story. I don't know about you, but I think that's remarkable, it's awe-inspiring.

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**Segment 8**

So now we have a transformed vision of Rosh Hashanah - a day of connection with God. But, how can we make these ideas practical? How can we really transform our experience to bring some of these ideas into Rosh Hashanah? That's what we'll explore next time, in our final segment. However, this is the last video segment of the course, so I want to thank you for joining me, this was a lot of fun, and I hope you all enjoyed.

If you're feeling the itch to continue exploring the many incredible themes of Rosh Hashanah, please make sure to check out Aleph Beta's other Rosh Hashanah videos, on prayer and holiness, the 13 attributes of mercy, and on how to do proper teshuvah. Also, for our premium members, Rabbi Fohrman and I will be hosting a webinar to more deeply explore these ideas together and to close out the final stretch of preparation before Rosh Hashanah. My hope is that we can all learn from each other, and we can deeply affect our Rosh Hashanah experience. You won't want to miss it, so if you're not yet a premium member, please consider joining us, we'd love to see you there.

ROSH HASHANAH PATH**Segment 9**

We've thought about our story, and about God's story. But spend today considering:

What do you want your story to be?

Your story, your family's story, the story of the world? In other words - what will you pray for on Rosh Hashanah?



(Just like with the last exercise, we recommend writing this out, both to give you a ritual to force yourself to articulate these thoughts honestly and clearly, and to give you something to come back to.)

*Consider bringing what you wrote with you to shul on Rosh Hashanah. When we sound the shofar, how might you focus on matching your voice with God's voice? How might you express your emotions before God on this day, through the shofar?



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Thanks for understanding - we love you guys, too.