

## Rosh Hashanah 5782 - Emunah

The Source- Rosh Hashanah is one of the enigmas of the Chumash. Whilst all the other Yomim Tovim are described in various levels of detail, the only references to Rosh Hashanah (once in Vayikra 23:23-25 and once in Bamidbar 29:1-6) are that it is a “Yom Teruah” (a day of blowing). There is nothing on why we are blowing the shofar, what is “a teruah”, and specifically that it is “a day of judgement”.

Chazal were aware of this anomaly and related its apparent concealment to a possuk in Tehillim 81 that we say on Thursday mornings. תְּקַעוּ בַחֲדָשׁ שׁוֹפָר בְּכֶסֶה לְיוֹם חַגְנוּ (“blow the shofar at the moon’s renewal, at the time appointed for our festive day”). כֶּסֶה is derived from the word to be obscured. When on Rosh Chodesh is one obliged to blow the shofar? Chazal deduced that it can only be on one day of the year – Rosh Hashanah.

This possuk in Tehillim is telling us it is a Chag (a Yom Tov, a day of celebration), but continues that כִּי חֵק לְיִשְׂרָאֵל הוּא מִשְׁפָּט לְאֵלֶיךָ יַעֲקֹב (i.e. it is also a day of judgement).

This typifies the structure of our learning of Talmud Torah, where there is a remez (hint) in the Chumash (or Tenach) to point us in a particular direction, but which is otherwise almost incomprehensible. We are being taught the fundamental and vital role of Torah SheB’al Peh. It is only through the Mishnah and Gemara that we are made aware of what to do regarding the blowing of the shofar, and that we can fully understand the nature of Rosh Hashanah as a Yom HaDin (and that the world, as well as Klal Yisrael, are being judged).

Shemoneh Esrei-The Mishnah (32 et seq) informs us that when it comes to Rosh Hashanah, we have a unique much longer and more complex Shemoneh Eshrei to say than at any other time in the entire year. After the usual first 3 Berachos, and before the usual last 3 Berachos, are 3 additional Berachos of Malchiyos (Kingship), Zichronos (Remembrance) and Shofaros (Shofar).

Incidentally, regarding these 3 additional middle Berachos, the Mishna is not clear whether it is referring to the Shacharis or Mussaf Shemoneh Eshrei. It seems that according to some of the Rishonim, the Mishnah is alluding to Shacharis and it was only in later generations – due to historical conditions - that it was moved to Mussaf.

The Mishnah states that within these 3 Berachos we are to “recite no fewer than 10 verses of Kingship, 10 of Remembrance and 10 of Shofar”. Interestingly, in earlier times before the Machzor standardised our tefillos, it seems one could choose ones’ 10 favourite pesukim from Tenach for each category.

The next Mishnah states “One begins with [3] verses from the Torah and concludes with [3] verses from the Prophets” - so the middle 3 come from the Kesuvim (and we actually finish with 1 possuk from the Torah).

Why is the order Torah/Kesuvim/Nevi'im? In short, because the pesukim represent the “Past”, “Present” and the “Future”.

Emunah- The Rambam defines the true essence of Emunah (the dogma and axiomatic principles of Jewish thought) in his Yud Gimel Ikrei HaEmunah (“13 Articles of Faith”). For the Rambam any individual who did not know and accept every one of these 13 core beliefs in Judaism was an apikoros – that person would be, by definition, outside Klal Yisrael and could not be a true Maamin. To understand, clarify and deepen our beliefs in these Yesodei Hadas, according to the Rambam, was one of the Taryag Mitzvos.

The principles can be summarised as follows:

- 1 Belief in the oneness of (an all-knowing and all-powerful) G-d as the Creator (see principles 1-5).
- 2 Hakadosh Baruch Hu knows every thought and every action of every human being and takes a direct interest in human life (e.g. whether someone boils a kettle on Shabbos) and they are accountable to Him – the idea of s'char ve'onesh – reward and punishment (see principles 10-13).
- 3 Torah min HaShamayim – Matan Torah at Har Sinai - a clear statement given to Klal Yisrael how they should live through Torah Shebichtav and Torah SheB’al Peh (see principles 6-9).

In the 14th Century Rav Yosef Albo wrote Sefer ha-Ikkarim ("Book of Principles"). The objective of the sefer was to look at in depth the 13 principles of the Rambam (analysing each one). He ended with the following conclusion: that there are not 13, there are in reality the 3 (as set out above). He does not argue with the 13, but says that 13 is unnecessarily complex. He then asks when in the whole year do we reassert our Emunah in the most powerful way?

Rav Albo answers on Rosh Hashanah, during the Mussaf Shemoneh Esrei, when we say these additional 3 Berachos, each corresponding to one of the above 3 principles - Malchiyos (1), Zichronos (2) and Shofaros (3).

Shofaros, as an example, does not start with the blowing of the shofar, but “You were revealed in Your cloud of glory to your holy people to speak with them”. For Chazal, Shofaros meant Har Sinai – note the 3 pesukim from the Chumash all relate to (the past) Matan Torah (Torah min HaShamayim).

May we all reassert our Emunah in Hakadosh Baruch Hu this Rosh Hashanah and especially during the Mussaf Shemoneh Esrei.