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HADAR
Children & Families



ראש השנה
Rosh Hashanah



ראש השנה תשפ"ז
September 12-13, 2026



• The Calendar • בְּנֵי דִּיּוּקָא



What sticks out to you about Rosh Hashanah?

You might think first about apples and honey, hearing the shofar, or beginning a new year. But Hazal teach that Rosh Hashanah is also a day for תְּפִלָּה (tefillah, prayer), when God especially listens to prayer.

According to the Gemara, God tells us what to add to our prayers on Rosh Hashanah.

Talmud Bavli Rosh Hashanah 16a

The Holy Blessed One said: Say before Me on Rosh Hashanah: malkhuyot (verses about God as King), zikhronot (verses about God remembering), and shofarot (verses about the shofar). Malkhuyot—so that you will make Me King over you. Zikhronot—so that your remembrance will rise before Me for good. And with what? With the shofar.



תלמוד בבלי ראש השנה טז.

אָמַר הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא:
אָמְרוּ לִפְנֵי בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה
מַלְכוּיֹת זִכְרוֹנוֹת וְשׁוֹפָרוֹת.
מַלְכוּיֹת כְּדִי שֶׁתִּמְלִיכוּנִי עֲלֵיכֶם.
זִכְרוֹנוֹת כְּדִי שֶׁיַּעֲלֶה זִכְרוֹנֵיכֶם לִפְנֵי
לְטוֹבָה. וּבִמָּה? בְּשׁוֹפָר.



Notice the words אָמְרוּ לִפְנֵי (say before Me). These emphasize that Rosh Hashanah is a day for speaking to God.

The Gemara also explains what our prayers on this day are meant to accomplish. When we pray, we make God our King, and we ask God to remember us for good. And the shofar helps those tefillot rise before God.

This explains why we spend so much time in shul on Rosh Hashanah. This holiday gives us an opportunity to connect to God through prayer.

- What does it mean to make God our King through prayer?
- What kinds of things do you hope God remembers about you this year?
- Why do you think the shofar is connected to prayer?





One of the most important stories about תְּפִלָּה (tefillah, prayer) is the story of Hannah.

Hannah desperately wanted a child, but she could not become pregnant. Every year, Hannah and her extended family traveled to the Mishkan in Shiloh. One year, when Hannah went to the Mishkan, she prayed there with extra intensity.

Shmuel Alef 1:10–11

She was bitter in spirit and she prayed to God and she cried deeply.

She made a vow and said: "God, if You will truly see the suffering of Your servant and remember me...."

שמואל א א:י-יא

וְהָיָא מֵרַת נַפֶּשׁ וַתִּתְפַּלֵּל עַל ה' וּבְכָה תְּבֻכָּה:

וַתְּדַר נֶדֶר וַתֹּאמֶר ה' צְבָאוֹת אִם רָאָה תְּרָאָה בְּעֵינַי אֶמְתֵּךְ וְזָכַרְתִּנִּי....

Hannah prayed quietly. Her lips moved, but no one could hear what she said. Eli, who was the כֹּהֵן גָּדוֹל (kohen gadol, high priest), saw what she was doing and thought she was drunk! Hannah explained to him that she was sad, so she was pouring her soul out before God.

Eli blessed Hannah that her prayers should come true, and sure enough, Hannah soon gave birth to a son. He was Shmuel, and he would eventually become a great prophet.

After Shmuel grew up a little bit, Hannah brought him back to the Mishkan. Then she prayed again, this time to express her thanks to God.

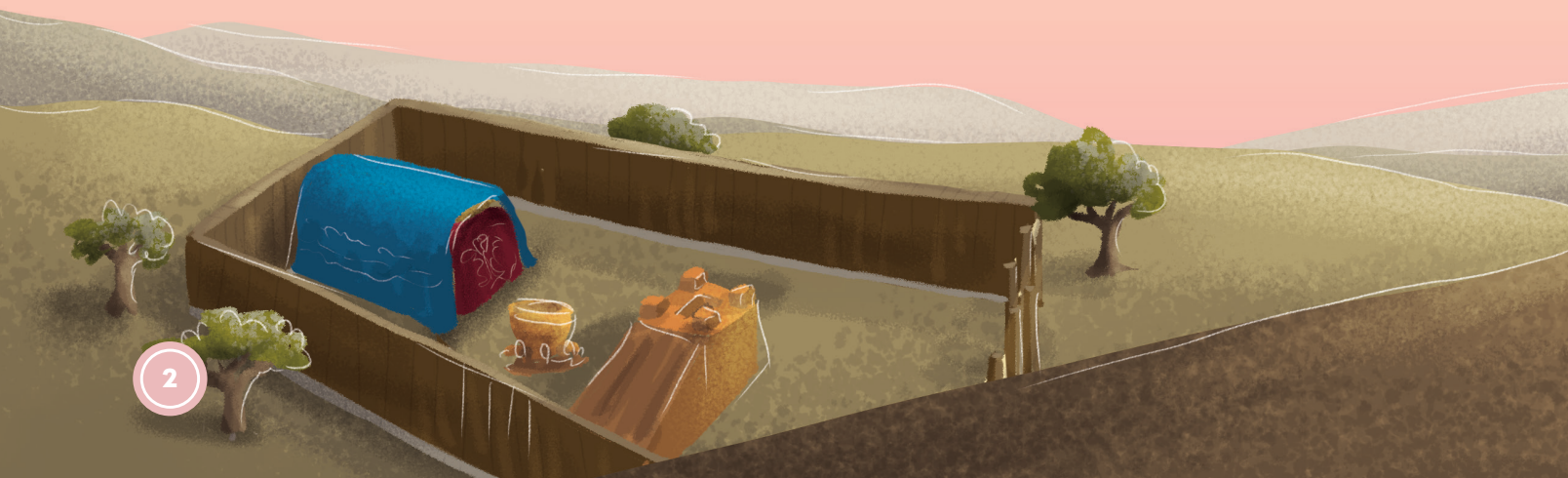
And when did all this happen? Here's what the Gemara says:

Talmud Bavli Rosh Hashanah 11a

On Rosh Hashanah, Sarah, Rahel, and Hannah were remembered.

תלמוד בבלי ראש השנה יא.

בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה נִפְקְדוּ שָׂרָה רָחֵל וְחַנָּה.



These three women all longed for children, and each of them had to wait a long time before becoming pregnant. According to Rashi, the Gemara is teaching us that each of them had their prayers heard on Rosh Hashanah—that was the day when God decided they would each have a baby.

This is why we read the story of Hannah as the haftarah on Rosh Hashanah! It shows how meaningful and powerful prayer can be on this day.

Notice how many tefillah words appear in Hannah's story:

וַתִּתְפַּלֵּל (she prayed)

וַיִּבְכֶּה תִּבְכָּהּ (she cried deeply)

וַיִּזְכְּרֵנִי ("remember me")

Rosh Hashanah is a time to do these things like Hannah: pray, cry, and ask God to remember us. Hannah teaches that tefillah is not only saying the words in a Siddur or Mahzor. It is bringing your real feelings and needs before God.

- ♦ Why might Hannah's story be important to think about as we begin the new year?
- ♦ Hannah prayed for the thing that was most important to her. What are the important things that you are praying for this Rosh Hashanah?
- ♦ Hannah didn't hide her sadness from God. Her prayer was open, emotional, and honest. What helps you to pray honestly, and really express yourself to God, like Hannah did?





תפילה • Prayer in the Parashah

Hannah's תפילה (tefillah, prayer) is a model for Jewish prayer every day of the year, not just on Rosh Hashanah.

In the Gemara, R. Hamnuna explains the rules that come from the way Hannah prayed for a child (in Shmuel Alef 1:13):

Talmud Bavli Berakhot 31a

"Now Hannah was speaking from the heart": from here we learn that a person praying must have kavvanah (intention) in their heart.

"Only her lips moved": from here we learn that a person praying should say the words with their lips.

"Her voice could not be heard": from here we learn that you should not raise your voice during prayer.

תלמוד בבלי ברכות לא.

"וְחִנָּה הָיָא מְדַבֵּרַת עַל לִבָּהּ":
מִכָּאן לְמַתְפִּיל צָרִיד שֶׁיִּכְוֶין לִבּוֹ.

"רַק שִׁפְתֶּיהָ נָעוּת": מִכָּאן
לְמַתְפִּיל שֶׁיִּחְתּוֹךְ בְּשִׁפְתָיו.

"וְקוֹלָהּ לֹא יִשְׁמַע": מִכָּאן שֶׁאֶסוּר
לְהִגְבִּיהָ קוֹלּוֹ בְּתַפִּילתּוֹ.

- ♦ How can you tell if a prayer is "from the heart"?
- ♦ Why is it a good thing to pray quietly?

The Gemara learns how to pray from Hannah's actions. The midrash Yalkut Shimoni goes even further. It explains that the words of Hannah's prayer after Shmuel was born connect to every single one of the blessings in the Amidah! For example:

Blessing #1: מִגֵּן אַבְרָהָם (shield of Avraham)

Hannah hinted at this when she prayed 'רָמָה קִרְנִי בָּה' (I have triumphed through God, in Shmuel Alef 2:1). [The midrash may connect these because the letters of רָמָה (ramah) can be rearranged from the last three letters of אַבְרָהָם (Avraham).]

Blessing #2: מְחַיֶּה הַמֵּתִים (Who gives life to the dead)

Hannah hinted at this when she prayed ה' מְמִית וּמְחַיֶּה (God brings death and life, in Shmuel Alef 2:6).

Blessing #3: הָאֵל-לְהִקְדּוֹשׁ (the holy God)

Hannah hinted at this when she prayed אֵין קְדוֹשׁ כֵּה' (there is none holy as God, Shmuel Alef 2:2).

- ♦ **Try it out!** According to the midrash, the words and ideas of the Amidah are taken from Hannah's prayer about her real life situation. When you say the Amidah on Rosh Hashanah (or any other day), what words or themes can connect to the things that are happening in your life?

