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עִנְיְנֵי דְיוֹמָא • The Calendar

Ever wonder when the world was created? Hazal were curious about this question, and they disagreed about the answer!

Talmud Bavli Rosh Hashanah 10b

R. Eliezer says: The world was created in Tishrei (when we observe Rosh Hashanah)...
R. Yehoshua says: The world was created in Nisan (when we observe Pesah).

תלמוד בבלי ראש השנה דף י עמוד ב

רַבִּי אֱלִיעֶזֶר אוֹמֵר: בְּתִשְׁרֵי נִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם...
רַבִּי יְהוֹשֻׁעַ אוֹמֵר: בְּנִיסָן נִבְרָא הָעוֹלָם.

If you look it up, you'll see that the answer isn't in the Torah because the Torah doesn't make the connection between Rosh Hashanah and creation. (See Vayikra 23:24-25 and Bemidbar 29:1-6.)

However, many of our Rosh Hashanah tefillot seem to follow R. Eliezer. For example, in musaf we say הַיּוֹם הָרַת עוֹלָם (hayom harat olam, today is the world's birthday) and זֶה הַיּוֹם תְּחִלַּת מַעֲשֶׂיךָ (this day was the beginning of Your work, Bavli Rosh Hashanah 27a).

So is R. Yehoshua wrong? Rabbeinu Tam (France, 1,000 years ago) doesn't think so. He suggests that our tefilot might mean the world was first an idea in Tishrei, but it still could be that it was actually made into reality in Nisan (Tosafot Rosh Hashanah 27a).

- What makes sense about the world being created in Tishrei? What makes sense about it being created in Nisan?





בּוֹאוּ נְדַבֵּר עַל זֶה • Tell Me More About This!



The Torah tells us that Rosh Hashanah is supposed to be a יוֹם תְּרוּעָה (yom teru'ah, day of blowing shofar) (Bemidbar 29:1). What's the meaning behind this?

1. Har Sinai

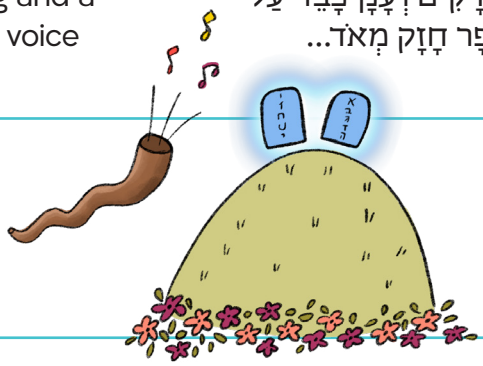
The shofar reminds us of receiving the Torah on Har Sinai!

Shemot 19:16

On the third day (the day of receiving the Torah), when it was morning, thunder and lightning and a heavy cloud was on the mountain, and the voice of the shofar was very strong...

שמות יט:טז

וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם הַשְּׁלִישִׁי בִּהְיֹת הַבֹּקֶר
וַיְהִי קֹלֹת וּבְרָקִים וְעָנָן כָּבֵד עַל
הָהָר וְקֹל שֹׁפָר חָזָק מְאֹד...



2. Redemption

The shofar will be used to announce when מָשִׁיחַ (mashiah, the redeemer) comes.

Yeshayahu 27:13

On that day, a great shofar will be blasted; the ones lost in Assyria and the ones cast aside in Egypt will come and bow down to God at the holy mountain in Yerushalayim.

ישעיה כז:יג

וְהָיָה בַּיּוֹם הַהוּא יִתָּקַע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל
וּבָאוּ הָאֹבְדִים בְּאֶרֶץ אַשּׁוּר וְהַנִּדָּחִים
בְּאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם וְהִשְׁתַּחֲווּ לַה' בְּהַר
הַקֹּדֶשׁ בִּירוּשָׁלָם:

Assyria and Egypt were the great empires of Yeshayahu's day, and many Jews were exiled in their lands. He promises that there will be a time of redemption, and the shofar will bring all the Jews scattered throughout the world back to Yerushalayim. We too can hope that the shofar this year will bring all Jews together with God.



3. Freedom

Shofar announces the יוֹבֵל (yovel) year, when slaves go free and everyone who was forced to sell their land gets it back.

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Vayikra 25:9-10 | **ויקרא כה:ט-י**

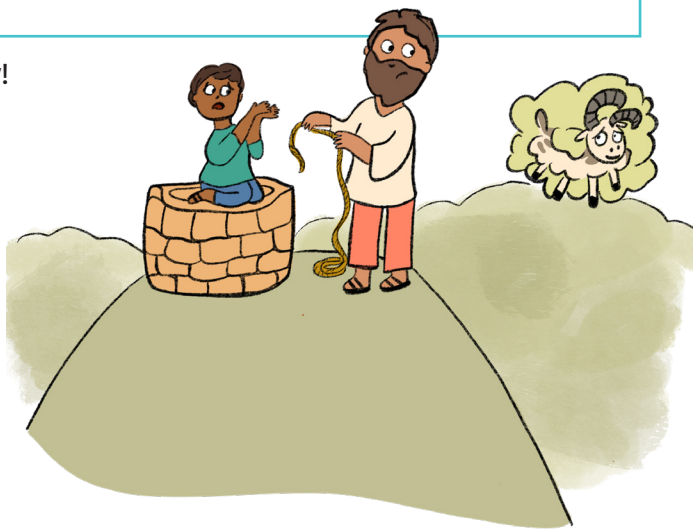
You shall sound the shofar on the tenth day of the seventh month. On Yom Kippur you shall sound the shofar throughout your land.

וְהַעֲבַרְתָּ שׁוֹפַר תְּרוּעָה בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִעִי בֶּעָשׂוֹר לַחֹדֶשׁ בְּיוֹם הַכִּפֻּרִים תַּעֲבִירוּ שׁוֹפָר בְּכָל אַרְצְכֶם:

You shall make the 50th year holy. You shall proclaim freedom throughout the land for everyone living there...

וְקִדַּשְׁתֶּם אֵת שְׁנַת הַחֲמִשִּׁים שָׁנָה וּקְרָאתֶם דְּרוֹר בָּאָרֶץ לְכָל יֹשְׁבֶיהָ...

May this year be a year of freedom and safety!



4. תְּשׁוּבָה (teshuvah, repentance)

The word shofar sounds a lot like the Hebrew word שֶׁפֶר (shefer, beautiful). Because of this, a midrash says that the shofar reminds us to beautify the way we act—a nice way of saying we have to do teshuvah (Midrash Tehillim 81).

5. עֲקֵדַת יִצְחָק (Akeidat Yitzhak, the binding Yitzhak)

Akeidat Yitzhak is the story of when Avraham almost sacrifices his son Yitzhak, but then at the last minute God tells him to sacrifice a ram instead. A midrash suggests God and Avraham had a conversation in that moment:

Midrash Tanhuma Vayera 23 | **מדרש תנחומא וירא כג**

God said, "In the future, the children of Yitzhak will sin before Me and I will judge them on Rosh Hashanah. But if they want Me to find them innocent and to remember Akeidat Yitzhak for them, have them blow a shofar of this ram before Me."

עֲתִידִין בָּנָיו שֶׁל יִצְחָק לַחֲטוֹא לְפָנַי וַאֲנִי דָן אוֹתָם בְּרֹאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה. אֶלָּא אִם מְבַקְּשִׁין שֶׁאֲחַפֵּשׂ לָהֶן זְכוּת וְאֶזְכֹּר לָהֶן עֲקֵדַת יִצְחָק, יִהְיוּ תוֹקְעִין לְפָנַי בְּשׁוֹפָר שֶׁל זֶה.

Avraham said to God, "What shofar?!"

אָמַר לוֹ: וּמַה הוּא הַשּׁוֹפָר?

God said to him, "Turn around."

אָמַר לוֹ: חֲזוֹר לַאֲחוֹרֶיךָ.

That's when the Torah says: Avraham lifted his eyes and saw—and there was a ram caught by its horns in the bushes! (Bereishit 22:13)

מִיָּד, וַיִּשָּׂא אַבְרָהָם אֶת עֵינָיו וַיַּרְא וְהִנֵּה אַיִל אַחַר נֶאֱחָז בַּסְּבַךְ בְּקַרְנָיו.

- Try it out! Each time you listen to the shofar, think about one of these five ways to understand it. What do **Har Sinai** and **Akeidat Yitzhak** have to do with Rosh Hashanah? What kind of **redemption** and **freedom** are you praying for this year? Can the shofar help you do **teshuvah**?

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הֲלָכָה • Halakhah



We celebrate Rosh Hashanah on the first and second days of Tishrei. Hazal aren't sure about whether to count these as two separate days or as one long day, called יוֹמָא אֲרִיכְתָּא (yoma arikhta) in Aramaic.

Why does it matter? Because of the בְּרָכָה (berakhah, blessing) that we say on the first nights of every holiday from the Torah, known as שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ (sheheheyanu):

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה ה׳ אֱלֹקֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ וְקִיְּמָנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לַזְּמַן הַזֶּה

Blessed are You, God our Lord, Ruler of the world, Who has helped us live, sustained us, and brought us to this time.

- If the two days of Rosh Hashanah are seen as two different days, then we should say sheheheyanu on the first night AND on the second night when lighting candles or making Kiddush.

- But if Rosh Hashanah is seen as one long day, then the time we say sheheheyanu on the first night should be enough to last all the way to the end, and there's no reason to say it again on the second night.

What to do? R. Yosef Karo and R. Moshe Isserles have a creative solution. We also say sheheheyanu on eating new fruits or wearing new clothing. So they recommend you do one of those things on the second night, and keep that new thing in mind when you say sheheheyanu:

Shulkhan Arukh Orah Hayyim 600:2

During Kiddush on the second night, you should wear new clothing or place a new fruit on the table, and recite sheheheyanu. If you couldn't find a new fruit, say sheheheyanu anyhow.

שולחן ערוך אורח חיים תר:ב

בְּקִדּוּשׁ לֵיל שֵׁנִי יִלְבַּשׁ בֶּגֶד חָדָשׁ אוֹ מַנִּיחַ פְּרִי חָדָשׁ וְאוֹמֵר שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ; וְאִם אֵין מָצוּי פְּרִי חָדָשׁ, עִם כָּל זֶה יֹאמַר שֶׁהֶחֱיָנוּ.

So hit the fruit store before Rosh Hashanah, and pick a fruit you haven't tasted in at least 30 days. Komquat or starfruit, anyone? Whatever looks exciting and new for your second night sheheheyanu!