

High Holy Days

Using Feminine Energy to Transform Ourselves

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A careful study of Rosh Hashana reveals that this holiday is closely associated with women. For example, the first Torah reading says that God remembered Sarah, and the Haftora states that He remembered Hannah.



The Talmud further explains that Sarah's, Rachel's, and Hannah's prayers to have children were answered on Rosh Hashana. Another example is the Torah reading on the second day that concludes with the birth of Rebecca (Genesis 22:23), an event that was significant enough to include with the portion about the sacrifice of Isaac. A third example is that the shofar's sound and the number of sounds blown derive from the mother of Sisrah (Judges 5:28-30). And finally, according to some opinions, the wailing sound of the shofar symbolizes Sarah's cries as she learned that her son, Isaac, was almost slaughtered by Avraham.

The connection between Rosh Hashana and women is further revealed by the fact that it occurs on the first day of Tishrei, a Rosh Chodesh (first day of a month), which is a day for women. The Talmud explains that because men participated in worshipping the golden calf, Rosh Chodesh was given to the women to reward them for refusing to offer their

jewelry to the golden calf. Many centuries later the holiday was again a reward for women who gladly donated their jewelry to help construct the Tabernacle, the portable sanctuary used after the Exodus from Egypt until Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem. Rosh Hashana occurs on a Rosh Chodesh, a day long ago

earned by women who today observe each first day of the month with various celebratory customs.

Another association between Rosh Hashana and women relates to an idea expressed in the central prayer, Aleinu – the coronation of God as king over the entire world. According to kabbalistic and other sources, women have *bina yetera*, a heightened sense of insight that men do not possess. On this day, we invoke the merit of righteous women who are especially attuned to God's sovereignty and His oneness. The merit of their unique relationship with God carries everyone through the Day of Judgment.

The connection between God and both men and women is foundational in Jewish mysticism, which recognizes masculine energy as inspiration and feminine energy as what brings things to fruition. For example, rain is the masculine energy and earth is the feminine energy that produces a flower, something greater than both energies combined. With

respect to human beings, a man "rains" the gift of a seed to a woman, and she transforms it into a child. The man's contribution is brief, like a moment of inspiration, but the woman's is long and discomfoting. She is the one who brings to fruition what is transcendent, a child, who is greater than the contributions of both father and mother. Each human being is more than the sum of a sperm and egg and is instead the product of a superhuman synergy that occurs

within a woman.

The Day of Judgment is a time to go through a long and discomfoting transformation. We are asking God to look to our future potential for our lives next year and not let the past hinder us.

True *teshuva* (repentance) is making sure we will not repeat the mistakes of the past, and therefore we ask God to grant us the chance to correct ourselves. We are asking, judge me not for what I did, but for what I can become. We can

give birth to ourselves this year, and it is up to us to use the masculine energy of inspiration taken from these Holy Days and bring change to fruition, the use of our feminine energy. We should each transform ourself and give birth to a healthy new self even through the arduous, discomfoting journey. The product will be greater than the inspiration and gestation; we have the ability to become new people—better Jews than we could have imagined. ✪

High Holiday Services at Ohr HaTorah

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the day as worshippers are mostly dressed in white and it is quite palpable as the service begins. Yom Kippur is when the entire synagogue is keenly aware of seriousness and reverence that fills the air. On Yom Kippur we are compared to angles as we come clean pure before God. The melodious songs that we sing at Ohr HaTorah emanate from the heart and touch the soul. At the conclusion of Yom Kippur we experience a total transformation from solemnity to joy and happiness, the congregation breaks in to a joyous song and we blow the Shofar with confidence that God indeed has sealed our fate with the blessings for a sweet, happy, healthy and prosperous year.

Rosh Hashana begins on the evening of September 16. The service schedule at Congregation Ohr HaTorah is as follows: Evening services at 7 PM and morning services at 9 AM. Yom Kippur begins on September 24 and ends September 25 at night-fall. Kol Nidrei service begins at 6:45 and morning service is at 9. Neilah service begins at 5:30 PM. Tickets are not required to attend services. For more information

please call our office at 704-366-3984 or visit our website www.ohrhatorahnc.org. ✪

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L'Shanah Tovah

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