

ROSH HASHANA

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BARBARA STREISAND MAY SING ABOUT THE  
BEAUTIFUL MEMORIES OF THE WAY WE WERE. BETTY  
BUCKLEY MAY GLORIFY MEMORY IN CATS.

BUT ... AREN'T THERE THINGS, MANY MANY THINGS,  
YOU WOULD LIKE TO FORGET?

WE ALL HAVE MEMORIES OF THE TIMES WE  
EMBARASSED OURSELVES, OR MESSED UP AND WE WOULD  
SURELY NOT LIKE TO REMEMBER THEM. WE ALL HAVE  
MEMORIES OF HOW OTHERS DID HURTFUL THINGS AND

HOPEFULLY WE BURIED THEM GOOD AND DEEP SO THAT  
WE DON'T BEAR A GRUDGE.

MY FATHER NEVER HAS GONE TO SLEEP MAD IN HIS  
LIFE AND NEVER BEARS A GRUDGE.

MY FATHER IS A SMART MAN. AND HIS ADVICE APPLIES  
DOUBLE TO PARENTING. I OFTEN THINK BEING A PARENT  
MEANS NEVER REMEMBERING THE BAD THINGS YOUR KID  
DID YESTERDAY. I CERTAINLY NEED TO FORGET TO  
SURVIVE PSYCHOLOGICALLY.

BUT WE NEED TO FORGET TO SURVIVE IN ANOTHER  
SENSE. WE RECEIVE MASSIVE AMOUNTS OF INFORMATION  
EVERY DAY. OUR BRAIN TAKES IN OUR SURROUNDING

TEMPERATURE, ALL THE SURROUNDING SOUNDS. IF WE  
REMEMBERED ALL THE INFORMATION THAT WE RECEIVED  
IN EVEN ONE DAY, WE WOULD GO ABSOLUTELY CRAZY  
FROM THE MASSIVE AMOUNT OF MATERIAL.

IT IS NO SURPRISE THAT RABBI SOLOVEITCHIK  
REFERED TO MAN AS THE FORGETTING ANIMAL.

BUT ROSH HASHANA HAS EXACTLY THE OPPOSITE  
THEME. IN OUR PRAYERS, WE REFER, OVER AND OVER  
AGAIN TO ROSH HASHANA AS YOM HAZIKARON, THE DAY OF  
REMEMBERANCE. IN FACT THAT THE WAY OUR PRAYERS  
REFER TO ROSH HASHANA. NOT AS ROSH HASHANA, NOT  
AS NEW YEAR, NOT AS THE DAY OF STARTING OVER. NONE

OF THAT. BUT IT IS THE DAY OF REMEMBRANCE. SO THE  
ESSENCE OF THE DAY IS REMEMBERING.

AND AS IF THAT IS NOT ENOUGH, WE KNOW THAT THE  
ADDITIONAL SERVICE WE SAY ON ROSH HASHANA HAS  
THREE PARTS: INCLUDING ZECHRONOS – THE SECTION OF  
REMEMBRANCES.

BUT THERE IS MORE. WE KNOW THAT ROSH HASHANA  
IS THE DAY G-D DECIDES WHO WILL LIVE AND WHO WILL  
DIE. WE ALL WANT LIFE. SO I WOULD EXPECT THAT OUR  
PRAYERS WOULD SAY GIVE US LIFE. BUT THEY DON'T.  
THEY SAY REMEMBER US TO LIFE. ONCE AGAIN, THE

THEME OF REMEMBERING COMES ACROSS LOUD AND  
CLEAR.

AND OF COURSE, PRAYER IS AN ECHO OF JEWISH  
PHILOSOPHY. SO WHAT DO WE SEE WHEN WE TURN  
OTHER IDEAS IN JUDAISM? THE METAPHOR IS USED OF G-D  
POURING OVER HIS BOOKS, REMEMBERING EVERYTHING  
THAT YOU AND I DID.

MAN MAY BE A FORGETTING CREATURE. BUT OUR G-D  
IS THE REMEMBERING G-D.

HOW DO I RECONCILE THIS CONFLICT? I FORGET BUT  
G-D REMEMBERS. AFTER ALL, ONE OF GOALS IS TO  
GODLIKE. WE SHOULD NOT BRING G-D DOWN TO OUR

LEVEL OF ASKING HIM TO FORGET. RATHER, WE SHOULD ASPIRE TO HIS LEVEL OF REMEMBERING EVERYTHING.

SO LET'S START BY LOOKING AT MEMORY

DIFFERENTLY. THE TRUTH IS NONE OF US REALLY WANTS TO FORGET. WE HAVE GOOD MEMORIES. AND WE THINK THAT AMNESIA IS A BAD THING.

MORE IMPORTANTLY, NONE OF US WANTS TO BE FORGOTTEN. THE STORY IS TOLD IN THE BOOK EVERYTHING I NEEDED TO LEARN I LEARNED IN KINDERGARTEN ABOUT BOYS WHO WERE PLAYING HIDE AND GO SEEK. AND ONE AFTER ANOTHER EACH OF THE BOYS ARE FOUND. BUT THE LAST BOY IS NOT FOUND. HE

SITS THERE, SECURE IN HIS HIDING PLACE, BUT NEVER FOUND. WHAT A SAD, SAD THING. HE CRIES "YOU FORGOT ME." THE CRY IS ABSOLUTELY SOUL WRENCHING.

AND THE SAME APPLIES TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH G-D. WE WANT, WE NEED TO BE REMEMBERED BY G-D FOR LIFE.

AND THAT WHAT IS REFLECTED IN OUR PRAYERS. PLEASE G-D REMEMBER ME. REMEMBER US. REMEMBER US IN A SKEWED, PERHAPS IRRATIONAL REMEMBERING. REMEMBER US FOR GOOD, FORGET THE BAD.

BUT WE MUST CONFRONT THE FACT THAT OUR PRAYERS SAY "THERE IS NO FORGETFULNESS BEFORE

THE THRONE OF YOUR GLORY". THAT IS, NOTHING IS FORGOTTEN BY G-D. WE HAVE TO FACE UP TO WHAT WE HAVE DONE. AND KNOW THAT G-D REMEMBERS EVERY SINGLE ACTION AND INACTION.

WE MUST FACE UP TO OUR ACTIONS. WE MUST BE RESPONSIBLE BECAUSE G-D WILL HOLD US RESPONSIBLE.

BUT ONCE WE ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY EACH OF THE REMEMBRANCE PRAYERS TALKS ABOUT G-D REMEMBERING SOMETHING FOR THE GOOD. THEY TALK ABOUT GOD REMEMBERING ABRAHAM, ISAAC AND JACOB. THEY TALK ABOUT G-D REMEMBERING HIS COVENANT WITH US. THEY TALK ABOUT GOD REMEMBERING THE YOUTHFUL

DAYS OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE. THEY TALK ABOUT G-D

REMEMBERING THE LOVE OF OUR BRIDAL DAYS.

WHAT A FABULOUS METAPHOR. WE YEARN FOR OUR  
YOUTHFUL LOVE WITH G-D. A LOVE FILLED WITH PASSION.  
A LOVE OF A NEW HUSBAND FOR A NEW WIFE WHERE BOTH  
PARTIES ARE IN LOVE THAT THEY SEE ONLY THE GOOD ON  
EACH OTHER.

WE ARE PROMISED BY G-D RIGHT IN THE TORAH ITSELF  
THAT NOTWITHSTANDING EVERYTHING BAD THAT MAY  
HAPPEN TO US, G-D WILL REMEMBER US. THAT WAS G-D'S  
PROMISE TO ABRAHAM. IT IS G-D'S PROMISE TO US.

WE ARE NOT GOING TO BE LIKE THAT LITTLE KID IN THE  
HIDE AND SEEK GAME. WE WILL NOT BE FORGOTTEN. G-D  
DOES NOT FORGET.

SO AS A TOOL TO GET G-D TO REMEMBER YOU, I ASK  
YOU TO START BY REMEMBERING G-D.

TRY TO FEEL G-D'S PRESENCE. FEEL THE STRENGTH  
THAT G-D'S PRESENCE CAN GIVE YOU. FEEL THE LOVE AND  
WARMTH THAT COMES WITH FEELING G-D IN YOUR LIFE.  
PUT YOUR TRUST IN G-D. FEEL, REALLY FEEL THAT HE WILL  
KEEP HIS PROMISE.

YOU KNOW, RAV SHLOMO CARLEBACH USED TO SAY  
THAT COMING INTO ROSH HASHANA WE ARE LIKE THE

RICHEST MAN IN THE WORLD WHO GOT AMNESIA. THE  
RICHEST MAN IN THE WORLD WHO HAS AMNESIA,  
EFFECTIVELY HAS NOTHING. HE DOESN'T KNOW WHERE HE  
LIVES. HE LIVES IN THE STREET. HE GETS ALL DIRTY. HE  
HAS NOTHING.

SO WHAT DOES HE NEED TO DO? HE NEEDS TO  
REMEMBER WHO HE IS. HE NEEDS TO CLEAN UP. HE  
NEEDS TO GO HOME.

AND THE SAME IS TRUE FOR US. ON ROSH HASHANA,  
WE NEED TO REMEMBER WHO WE ARE. ON YOM KIPPUR,  
WE GET CLEANED UP. WE GET CLEANED UP FROM ALL OUR

SINS. AND ON SUKKOS WE MOVE BACK HOME. WE MOVE INTO G-D'S HOUSE.

SO LET'S UNDERSTAND WE ARE RICH. WE ARE RICH WITH COMMANDMENTS WHICH CONNECT US TO GOD. WE ARE RICH WITH HOPES. WE ARE RICH WITH DREAMS. AND WE CAN BE RICH WITH OUR LOVE FOR G-D.

LET THE BLOWING OF THE SHOFAR BE A CELEBRATION OF THAT RICHNESS. LET IT BE A CORONATION. A SOUND BLOWN TO CORONATE THE KING, G-D IN OUR LIVES. WE ARE CHILDREN OF THAT KING – PRINCES AND PRINCESSES AS WE REMEMBER WHAT G-D- IS AND WHAT HE DOES. BUT

IN REMEMBRANCE OF G-D WE NEED TO KNOW THAT HE  
REMEMBERS US. HE REMEMBERS ALL OUR ACTS.

ARE THEY WORTHY OF BEING REMEMBERED? ARE  
THEY IMPORTANT? OR DO WE LIVE IN THE TRIVIAL?  
WOULD WE REALLY ACT THE SAME WAY IF WE TRULY  
BELIEVED G-D REMEMBERED ALL OUR ACTIONS? I THINK  
NOT. SO THIS YEAR, LET US RESOLVE TO BE WORTHY OF  
G-D REMEMBERING US. AND MAY WE BE REMEMBERED  
FOR LIFE.