

# Maamarei Mordechai

הסבר לפי ממש פשוט

Rosh Hashana 5785

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The reading for the first day of Chag Zichron Terura (Rosh Hashanah) commences:

**וְהָיָה כַּקֹּדֶם אֶת-שָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר אָמַר וַיַּעַשׂ ה' לְשָׂרָה כַּאֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר:**

“And Hashem noted Sarah just as He had said, and Hashem did for Sarah just as He spoke.” (Bereishis 21:1).

Hashem noted *es Sarah* not Sarah; what is the *es* adding on? What did Hashem say and speak? Also, it was “Hashem” here, specifically; why?

This is a difficult pasuk to read without pausing to think about its meaning. It really has an interesting simple interpretation. At the outset it must be pointed out that the term the Torah uses is **פקד** noted, not **זכר** recalled. On Rosh Hashanah there is halacha that ten pesukim recalling that Hashem remembered His people must be mentioned in the mussaf Amidah. (Mishnah R’H 4:6). Each of these ten verses contain **זכר** recall or remember. Yet, the tefillah about remembrance is full of this word to be noted or counted. One verse says, “You recall the deeds of man forever, and you take note of all creations from the beginning.” Another says, “Remember us with a good recollection before You, and consider us with a note of salvation and mercy.” Why is recall and take note together and why is this passage of “taking note” of Sarah read on Rosh Hashanah?

Our pasuk talks about what Hashem said (*amor*) and what Hashem spoke (*dibor*). This refers back to Hashem appearing to Avram and then changing his name to Avraham. “Hashem appeared to Avram and said, ‘I am Kel Shakkai...I will establish My covenant with you.’” (Bereishis 17:1-2). Hashem said to Avram that he will make another covenant with Avram, besides the one He already made during the revelation at the broken pieces. (Ibid 15:1 et seq.) This covenant was that Hashem was going to give the Land to Avram (soon be Avraham) and his children through Yitzchok. It was “Elokim” that changed their names to Avraham and Sarah. (Ibid 17:5,15). Then it was Hashem who “spoke” to Avraham saying, “but My bris will remain with Yitzchok, your son through Sarah...and He finished speaking.” (Ibid 17:21,22). The Torah says further, that Hashem knew He had to confide in Avraham about Sadom and its sister cities, because they would all belong to Avraham’s children. (Ibid 18:18). “It is so that he may instruct his children and his household after him...to do what is just and correct, just as I spoke to him.” (Ibid 18:19). These are the “said” and “spoke” in our pasuk.

The important item, it comes out, is that Sarah was to be the mother of Avraham’s offspring that would inherit him and the Land. How did Hashem take note of Sarah? This is the first time in the Torah that it uses the word “take note.” However, it is far from the last. Yosef’s master in Mitzrayim saw how successful Yosef was **וַיִּקְדְּמֵהוּ** “And he designated him to run the household.” (Ibid 39:4). The word is used

there and similarly later (ibid 40:4) in relation to oversight duties. Yosef advised Pharaoh that the food of plenty should be a collateral (pikadon) for the years of famine. (Ibid 41:36). Collateral is an object that assures a loan or, in a way, also oversees a duty toward something else. The food was assurance for later. When Yosef was about to die, he told his brothers, "The Lord will surely take notice of you and bring you up from this land." (Ibid 50:25,25). He did not say, "Hashem will remember the promise."

When Hashem appeared to Moshe on Har Sinai, to send him as a messenger to Bnei Yisroel for redemption, Hashem has a long discussion with Moshe. He tells Moshe He has seen the suffering and has come to rescue them. (Shmos 3:7-8). Hashem then tells Moshe "I have surely taken notice." (Ibid 3:16). It is the same words Yosef used. Previous to calling Moshe, the Torah says, "And the Lord heard their groaning and the Lord recalled His bris with Avraham, Yitzchok, and Yaakov." (Ibid 2:24). There is a difference between taking note of the people and remembering the bris.

Hashem takes note of sin. (Ibid 20:5 and Vayikra 18:25). When a census is taken it always uses the word "take note." Take the census of Bnei Yisroel "for their assignments." (Ibid 30:12). This is for purposes of knowing the numbers of their armed forces. All over sefer Bamidbar the word is used to count, number, and assign. (E.g., Bamidbar 1:3,19). The difference between remember and take note is what is being recalled. When it is a bris that is being recalled, it is remember. All ten verses in Tanakh brought in the mussaf Amidah about Hashem remember people is about a bris. Hashem remembered Noach and all the animals on the ark but really, Hashem was recalling the established bris with Noach He made beforehand. (Bereishis 6:18). Hashem recalls the bris avos, as the remaining verses refer to.

Hashem, though, takes note of His people. He took note of their suffering as Yosef predicted. He takes note of the good deeds and the sins. And when Bnei Yisroel are counted, they are noted for a special purpose. They are to be His nation. Yosef was so designated and noted for authority and responsibility. Thus, Hashem recalls the Shofar and His creations, and he takes note of Bnei Yisroel themselves and his creations to count their merits, and assign them special duty and privilege. Remembering is not that Hashem forgets, but it is recalling something Hashem promised. Taking note is when Hashem judges that thing or person favorably, counting the merits, and promoting that thing or person for a purpose.

"And Hashem took note of *es Sarah*." Hashem, the name used when dealing with humans, took note of Sarah. She is the proper noun, and encompasses everything that Sarah stood for, as her name was just changed. She was made from Sarai to Sarah for her purpose: to mother Yitzchok and the Bnei Yisroel; to mother the inheritor of Avraham and the Land of Eretz Yisroel; to be the mother of klal Yisroel.

"In all that He said." This is the promise of Kel Shakkai giving heritage to her children. That is the name Hashem uses when promising the Land's rights.

"And Hashem did for Sarah all that He spoke." Hashem healed her, gave her a child, and gave her the nation that Avraham was to raise justly.

May Hashem count us for proper and good purpose, for a Good and Healthy and Sweet New Year.