

The Weekly Farbrengens



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ROSH HASHANA

SOUNDING THE SHOFAR

The Baal Shem Tov explained the effect of the *shofar* by the following *meshal*: A king once decided to send his only son to a faraway land in order to benefit by broadening his experience. The prince set out from the royal palace loaded with gold and silver, but he frittered it all on the way to his distant destination and arrived there penniless. The local people, who had never heard of his father the king, laughed off his claims. Was this a prince?! Unable to bear the suffering any longer, the son decided to make the long trek homeward.

He finally arrived in his homeland, but he had been away for so long that he had even forgotten the local language. The poor tattered fellow tried motioning to the people around him that he was the son of their mighty king, but they mocked him and beat him.

Arriving at the palace gates, the son tried again but was ignored until, in utter despair, he cried aloud so that his father would hear him. The king recognized his son's voice, his love was aroused for him, and he came out to welcome him home.

Similarly, the King, Hashem, sends a *neshama*, his prince, down to this world to benefit by observing the Torah and fulfilling its *mitzvos*. However, when hankering after pleasures, the *neshama* loses all its wealth and arrives at a place where his Father, Hashem, is unknown. Moreover, the *neshama* forgets how things were Above, and in the long galus, even forgets its own 'language'. In desperation, it cries out by sounding the *shofar*, expressing regret for the past and determination for the future. This simple cry arouses Hashem's mercy: He shows His love for His only son and forgives him.

(כתר שם טוב, הוספות קצ"ד [בחדש])

Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev would tell the following *meshal*: A king once lost his way in the forest, until he met a man who directed him out of the forest and back to his palace. He rewarded the stranger richly and appointed him as a senior minister. Years later, that minister acted rebelliously and was sentenced to death, but the king granted him one last wish. The minister asked that both he and the king put on the clothing they had worn long ago, when he had rescued the king from the forest. This reminded the king of his indebtedness to this man, and he revoked the sentence.

Similarly, we willingly accepted the Torah from the King, Hashem, when all the other nations refused the offer. But since that time, like the minister, we have

been rebellious by doing *aveiros*, and are therefore fearful on Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Judgment. So we sound the *shofar* to remind Hashem of Mattan Torah, when we accepted the Torah and made Hashem our king, and we express our renewed eagerness to crown Him once again. This *zechus* stands by us: Hashem forgives our *aveiros* and inscribes us immediately for a good life.

(המשך וככה תרל"ז פרק ע)

Before Rosh Hashana תר"מ (1879) the Rebbe Maharash requested his *meshareis* to relay the following to the chassidim: "It is written that sounding the *shofar* is like the cry, 'Father, Father.' The main thing there is the cry."

That Rosh Hashanah, the entire village wept with remorse.

(סה"ש תש"ד ע' 4)

CONSIDER

What is the difference between our connection to HaShem expressed in the two *meshalim*? Why did the Chassidim prefer to hear a *maamar*? What did the Rebbe explain to them?

The Baal Shem Tov would usually be present for *tekias shofar* together with his *talmidim*. One year he requested one of them, the *tzaddik* Reb Yaakov Yosef of Polonnoye, to take his place there, while the Baal Shem Tov himself sounded the *shofar* with the simple folk and the children. Those unsophisticated people cried out to Hashem, "Father in Heaven, have *rachmanus!*" And that had the greatest effect of all.

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 6)

DAVENING WITH FERVOR

On Rosh Hashana the Rebbeim would *daven* with much fervor and tears, particularly the first *maariv* which would extend for many hours. The Rebbe spoke of how every individual should take a lesson to some extent from the exceptional *davening* of the Rebbeim.

(סה"ש תשנ"ב ע' 13, ה'ע 19)

In the year תרמ"ו (1885), the Rebbe Rashab was in Yalta, Crimea, and *davened* in a little *shul* of Poilishe chassidim. On the night of Rosh Hashanah, he remained there to *daven* after everyone had left. The *shamash*, before going home, ordered the *goy* who cleaned the *shul* not to extinguish the light or lock the door. When the *shamash* finished his *seuda*, he felt guilty that he had left a *Yid*, a *talmid chochom*, alone in *shul*, so he returned to see what was happening. Upon arriving, he saw the *goy* standing in the foyer and crying bitterly.

The *goy* explained, "I'm used to hearing people praying with joyful songs - but here stood a man who was pouring out his soul. So how could I hold back from crying? I remembered all my problems: my uncle died, my cow died, my aged mother is sick, and I wanted to cry."

And when the *shamash* entered the *shul* itself and his eyes beheld the Rebbe Rashab *davening*, they too became fountains of tears.

(ספר המאמרים תשי"א ע' 90)

ACCEPTING HASHEM'S KINGSHIP

The activities of a person on Rosh Hashana impact his entire year, since Rosh Hashana is the head of the year. Therefore one should use one's time wisely on Rosh Hashana.

(שו"ע אדה"ז סי' תקפ"ג ע"ס ח)

The Friediker Rebbe writes: The main *avoda* of Rosh Hashanah is to accept *ol malchus shomayim*, the yoke of the kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, even for chassidim of stature, the *avoda* would be to simply say *Tehillim*, to sleep as little as possible, and to take care not to indulge in idle talk. In this they are like a servant whose service to his master leaves him not even one free moment, or like a son preoccupied with the joy of welcoming his father whom he has not seen for a whole year.

(אג"ק אדמו"ר הרי"ב, ח"י ע' 425)

One Rosh Hashanah, the sons of the *Tzemach Tzedek* and some other prominent chassidim asked him to deliver an additional *maamar* for them. He answered, "The people at large are saying *Tehillim*, and you are requesting *Chassidus!* It is better to say *Tehillim*."

The *Tzemach Tzedek* himself was seen saying *Tehillim* throughout the second night, his eyes flowing with tears. Even as he waited to say the *maamar* on the second day of *Yom-Tov*, he murmured words of *Tehillim*.

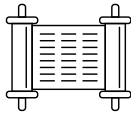
(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 10)

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SHOFAR AT HOME

What do I need to know about blowing shofar at home?

If *davening* without a *minyan*, one should wait until three seasonal hours have passed before shofar and Musaf, unless it won't be possible later. During those three hours, Hashem is occupied with the Torah—the Divine truth—and doesn't extend consideration beyond the limits of the law to private individuals. This concern doesn't apply when *davening* at the same time as a *minyan* somewhere in the world.¹

Thirty blasts should be blown before Musaf, but the blasts normally blown during Musaf shouldn't be blown, even by another who isn't *davening* then.² The Shalo Hakadosh writes that one should hear 100 *tekios*, thus although it is not obligatory, it is appropriate for one who can to hear the remaining seventy blasts during the day to complete the full 100 blasts.³

The required lengths of the blasts are measured in "*trumitin*," short *terua* beats. According to the accepted view, the 3 *shevarim* must each contain the length of 3 beats and the *terua* of 9 beats. The *shevarim-terua* together is 18 beats.⁴ In each set of blasts, the *tekia* before and after must match or exceed the **minimum** length of the *terua* (9 beats) or *shevarim-terua* (18 beats) in between—around 2.5 or 5 seconds respectively.⁵ The Rebbeim blew long *tekios*, seemingly to match the **actual** length of their *terua* (which was longer than the minimum 9).⁶

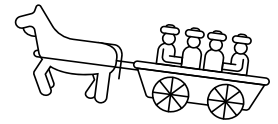
Each sound of the shofar must be independent with a pause before and after; some hold that one must actually breathe in between. The Alter Rebbe rules that one should breathe in between and while he has fulfilled his obligation even without breathing, he should still blow the set again in separate breaths.⁷

A breath in the middle of a *tekia*, *shevarim*, or *terua* invalidates that sound.⁸ In the *shevarim-terua* cycle, however, two sounds are combined, corresponding to one who cries by first moaning and then in short sobs.⁹ Since it normal to take a breath between these two stages of crying, some hold that one should take a short breath between the *shevarim* and *terua*, while others hold that one should only pause without a breath since they are one long sound.

The Alter Rebbe writes that wherever there is no fixed custom, one should not take a breath, since even by two separate sounds one is *yoitze* without breathing according to many *poskim*. Yet, by the second round of *tekios* during Musaf, one should breathe between them to take into account the other opinion.¹⁰ By the *tekios* after *davening*, we again do not take a breath.¹¹ Accordingly, when blowing the primary 30 blasts alone or on *mitvzoyim* one should only pause slightly, but not take a breath, between the *shevarim-terua*. The one listening should stand.

1. שו"ע"ר סי' תקצ"א ס"ג-ג' י"ד.
2. שו"ע"ר סי' תקצ"ב ס"ז, ע"פ הג' ר"ה דף ל"ד ע"ב, וראה מנהגי מהר"ל הל' שופר סי' י', וראה בדרישה סק"ב טעמים לתקיעה לפני מוסף זריזין מקדמין או לערבב השטן.
3. פסק"ת סי' תקצ"ב אות ג.
4. ראה שו"ע"ר סי' תקצ"ב ס"ד י"ז.
5. פסק"ת סי' תקצ"ב סק"ד, ע"פ ס' קצור הל' מועדים ע' י"ו.
6. ראה פסק"ת סי' תקצ"ב סק"ד, וראה אוצר מנהגי חב"ד תשרי ע' קכ"ב-קכ"ג, ומשמע שם שהרביים שבו המועדים ע' 30 בנוגע תקיעות אחרונות.
7. נהגו שהתקיעה תמיד יהיה כפי שיעור השברים תרועה של אותו סדר וככתב בפסק"ת שכן ראוי לנהוג בדאווייטא.
8. גמ' ירושלמי ר"ה פ"ד ה"י מכשרה, תוספתא ר"ה פ"ב ה"יב פוסל, ש"ע אורח סי' תקצ"ב ס"ה סתם יצא ו"א לא יצא והלכה כסתם. שו"ע"ר אורח סי' תקצ"ב ס"ט.
9. שו"ע"ר סי' תקצ"ב ס"ח.
10. גמ' ר"ה ל"ד ע"א, שו"ע"ר סי' תקצ"ב ס"ב.
11. שו"ע"ר סי' תקצ"ב ס"ח-ט.
12. שו"ע"ר שם, ולהעיר מהמלך במסיבו ח"א ע' רל"ו. שבו המועדים ע' 30 בנוגע תקיעות אחרונות.

לע"נ מרת ציפא אסתר בת ר' שלום דובער ע"ה



REB MEIR REFOEL'S

Reb Meir Refoel's was a community leader in Vilna. In the peak of the sharp opposition against chassidim, he became a chossid of the Alter Rebbe through two personal *mofsim*.

Rebbe stood up and handed Reb Meir a sum of money in the exact amount that he paid for the *tzitzis*. The Alter Rebbe explained that it was none other than *Eliyahu Hanavi* who had come to test him.

Once, during a business trip, Reb Meir noticed that one of his *tzitzis* became *possul*. He immediately told his driver to stop, so as not to carry on four *amos* without kosher *tzitzis*. For several hours, they waited on the side of the road, hoping that someone will pass by with an extra pair of *tzitzis* strings. Just before dusk, they noticed somebody. Reb Meir called for the man but his calling went unheard. He called louder until he was shouting. Finally the man turned towards him. "Do you have any *tzitzis* strings?" asked Reb Meir. "And if I would have," said the man, "do you think I am going to undo my entire bag just for a few strings?" Reb Meir bargained with the reluctant man until he offered all the money he was carrying. The man finally accepted and Reb Meir got the *tzitzis*.

The home of Reb Meir was always full of chassidim who would come to discuss *Chassidus* and *farbreng*. The *chassidische minyan* was in his house and any chossid who came to Vilna knew that he could find lodging in the home of Reb Meir.

Reb Meir hired and housed a *melamed* in his home to teach his children. The classroom and *shtible* were separated by only a thin wall. The *melamed*, though not a *chossid*, could not help himself from listening to the *Chassidus* that was being discussed on the other side of the wall. Reb Meir admonished him, "Why did you stop the teaching the children?!"

Try as he may, the *melamed* could not resist listening to the *Chassidus*. After a while he approached Reb Meir, "I beg you! Let me join your group. What is being spoken here is *mechayeh nefashos mamash* (it literally brings life)!"

Quite some time later, Reb Meir took a trip to visit the Alter Rebbe. As Reb Meir entered the *shul*, the Alter

A Moment with The Rebbe



WHY WOMEN DON'T LEARN GEMARA

In the days preceding Rosh Hashanah 5713 (1952), the Rebbe received a group of university students for a joint *yechidus* in his room. After a few words on the significance of the time, the Rebbe allowed for questions.

women.

"The reason for this is not because they are less capable, but because Hashem has entrusted them with a more important, loftier duty, and they are therefore absolved from learning Torah.

One student asked, "Is Torah learning equal for girls as it is for boys? Does Lubavitch offer higher education in Torah for girls, such as Talmud studies?"

"That holy duty," the Rebbe explained, "is to imbue a spirit of *Yiddishkeit* in the next generation. In order to allow them to do this, they are exempt from *limud haTorah*."

The Rebbe responded, "No. Men are obligated to study Gemara, but not

(*Teshurah Sandhaus, Shevat 5768*)