

The Weekly Farbrengens



למען ישמעו • נצבים תשפ"א • 634
EDITOR - RABBI SHIMON HELLINGER

ROSH HASHANA

SOUNDING THE SHOFAR

The Baal Shem Tov explained the effect of the *shofar* by the following *mashal*: 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 *mashal*: 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 Poilische 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 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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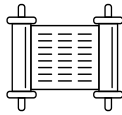


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GOOD NEWS.



PRUZBUL

Must women make a *pruzbul* on Erev Rosh HaShanah?

The Torah instructs that all debts be released during the *shemita* year, and one may not collect any past loans from his “fellow.” Hillel the Elder noted that people were avoiding giving loans close to *shemita* out of fear they would not be repaid. He therefore instituted *pruzbul*, by which one entrusts one’s loans to *beis din*, by writing or telling a *beis din* that the loans are transferred to them to collect. This way the loans become “public” and are not released by *shemita*.¹

The *posuk* says that the absolving of loans (*shemita*) takes place “at the end of seven years”² which Chazal interpret as the end of the **seventh** year.³ However, some *rishonim* hold that the prohibition to **demand** repayment of the loan begins earlier—from the start of *shemita*. According to them, one may not make a *pruzbul* during *shemita* since that is a step towards collecting the loan.⁴

The Alter Rebbe rules that one should *l’chatchila* make a *pruzbul* at the end of the sixth year to satisfy all opinions. The Rebbe would often publicize this ruling of the Alter Rebbe and asked chassidim to publicize it as well.⁵

The *pruzbul* can only take effect if the borrower owns, rents, or borrows some real estate, even a tiny piece. Even a place to sleep in someone’s home qualifies. If needed, the lender or *beis din* can be *mezakeh* to him a tiny parcel of land for the moment.⁶

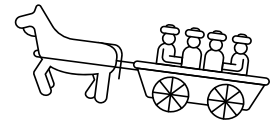
Women who lent money need to make a *pruzbul*.⁷ Married women may rely on their husband’s *pruzbul*, except when the loan was from their personal money. Children are included in their father’s *pruzbul* as long as they are financially dependent on their father.⁸ A father or husband can be a *shliach* to make a *pruzbul* for his wife or daughter.

Pruzbul is customarily done on Erev Rosh HaShanah so that (a) it will include all loans given until then, (b) one doesn’t come to forget, and (c) it is convenient to say it to the *beis din* already gathered for *hataras nedarim*.⁹ However, one who will not be able to do it then may do it earlier.

Pruzbul may also be done by filling out a document, transferring the debts in writing to the *beis din*. The Rebbe encouraged this option to help the masses make a *pruzbul*, as this is more practical for women, *mekuravim*, or people who will not be by a *beis din*. This also has an advantage in that the formal *beis din* can be *mezakeh* land if necessary. The Rebbe suggested lending money before *shemita* specifically to fulfill the institution of *pruzbul*.¹⁰

1. גיטין ל"ו ע"א.
2. דברים ט"ו א'.
3. ערכיו כ"ח ע"ב. וראה רמב"ם שמיטה פ"ט ה"ד.
4. ע"פ תוספתא שביעית פ"ח ה"א ורא"ש גיטין פ"ד סי' כ"ו.
5. שו"ע ד"ר ח"י הלכות הלוואה ס"ל. לקו"ש.
6. שו"ע ד"ר ח"י הלכות הלוואה ס"ל. לקו"ש.
7. ראה נט"ג הל' שמיטת כספים ופרוזבול פל"א בדינים אלו.
8. שמיטת כספים כהלכתה פכ"א סי"א.
9. לקו"ש ח"ז ע' 355.
10. לקו"ש חכ"ד ע' 317-316.

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



REB CHAIM YONAH LUTZKI

When Reb Chaim Yonah was a *bochur* in Tomchei Temimim he was known as ‘a cut above the rest’; a *ba'al madreiga*, an *oved* and *maskil* of a lofty caliber. He was very much cherished by the Rebbe Rashab who gave him rare ‘*kiruvim*’. At one point he began concealing his greatness by conducting himself in an unusual manner. He passed away young after a difficult illness.

Reb Shlomo Chaim Kesselman would occasionally speak about Reb Chaim Yonah. He related that as an older *bochur* he would sometimes *farbrenge* for the younger *bochurim*. In preparation, he would stand and think for six hours straight. You could see how his entire being was involved in preparing for that *farbrenge*.

Reb Nochum Goldshmid related:

There were always rumors going round that Chaim Yonah was a great ‘*maskil*’ of *Chassidus*. But there was no way to verify this, as he never spoke with anyone about ‘*haskalah*’ in *Chassidus*. I too would try and speak to him about *Chassidus* but could not get anywhere.

One day, I was walking down the street and I saw Chaim Yonah carrying two large suitcases. I seized the opportunity and I went over and said, “Let’s make a deal. I will take those cases to wherever you need, but as payment, I want to talk with you in *Chassidus* for one full hour.” Not having a choice, Reb Chaim Yonah agreed. For one hour, Chaim Yonah spoke about the deepest concept in *Chassidus*. After sixty minutes, and not a minute more, Chaim Yonah stopped and said, “That’s it. An hour has passed. I did not promise more than that.”

A Moment with The Rebbe



THE SILENT ONE WITH THE SILK GARTEL

During the Friediker Rebbe's USA visit in 5690 (1930), chassidim in Riga were left to spend Tishrei by themselves. Reb Elya Chayim Althaus described the experience in his diary:

“Before *Selichos* on Erev Rosh Hashana we all stood quietly, broken. Oh, how we awaited that perhaps soon the door will open, and the Rebbe will enter...The first one that could not contain himself, and broke down in tears while quietly reciting Tehillim, was the Rebbe’s son-in-law. That silent one, with the silk *gartel*. He gave the first cry, from the depths of his heart, and all the chassidim followed...”

“The Rebbe’s son-in-law, Reb Menachem Mendel *shlita*, *davened* the *maariv* of Rosh Hashana for more than two and a half hours, shedding many tears, crying from the innermost recesses of his heart. In general, his

conduct was wondrous. I closely observed his *tevilos*, *davening*, the way he spoke, ate, drank, and slept, and I thank Hashem for the great kindness he has done to our community.

“He refuses all honors usually given to the Rebbe. The Rebbetzins encouraged him, not once or twice, and I tried earnestly at length to convince him to be honored with *maftir*, or to recite the *pesukim* before *tekias shofar*, until we realized that he is genuinely not interested.

“The Yom Kippur *davening* finished later this year in the Rebbe’s *minyán* than ever before, for the Rebbe’s son-in-law became totally absorbed in his *tefilos* and oblivious to anything else during *neilah*. A while passed before he awoke from his reverie. We were all filled with pleasure from this pleasing wait.”