

# The Weekly Farbrengens



לחנן ישמעו • נציבים תשפ"ב • 689  
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 Berdichev 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, הע' 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.

(ש"ע אדר"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*.

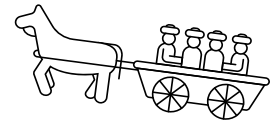
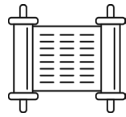
(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 10)

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## MEZUZA IN A CASE

**What should I look for when buying a case for a mezuzah?**

On the outer side of the *mezuzah* scroll, Hashem's name spelled *shin daled yud* is written. The Zohar writes that *v'haya* protects from inside and Hashem's name protects from outside.<sup>1</sup> Some *Rishonim* understand that it should be aligned with *v'haya*, while others place it opposite the space between *shema* and *v'haya*. In practice, *Sefardim* follow the first view and *Ashkenazim* follow the second.<sup>2</sup>

This particular name of Hashem was chosen since it is an acronym for *shomer dalsos Yisroel* ("Guardian of the doors of the Jews").<sup>3</sup> If it is missing or rubbed out, the *mezuzah* is still kosher.<sup>4</sup>

The *mezuzah* is to be wrapped from left to right, so that it opens from where the lines begin. If it was wrapped from right to left or wasn't wrapped at all, it is kosher *b'dieved*. (If it was wrapped from top to bottom or bottom to top, some hold it isn't kosher.)<sup>5</sup>

*Rishonim* write that one should leave a hole in the case, so the *shin* remains visible, though it is recommended to cover the hole with glass (or plastic) to prevent the letters from getting rubbed out when people touch and kiss the *mezuzah*.<sup>6</sup> Moreover, it is improper to touch the holy scroll unnecessarily.<sup>7</sup>

When the *mezuzah* is in a location where some aren't always dressed *tznius*, it should be in an opaque case. Even when a double covering is required for *seforim*, some hold that one opaque cover is sufficient for a *mezuzah*, since it is a part of the structure. The Alter Rebbe rules one may be lenient.<sup>8</sup>

The Baal Shem Tov noted that a *mezuzah* case should not be made of metal, since metal is used to shorten life and a *mezuzah* is meant to lengthen one's life.<sup>9</sup> The Rebbe is quoted as having said in the years 5702-5703 that according to Kabbalah, a *mezuzah* shouldn't be in any [hard] case, rather it should be wrapped in paper or plastic, and this is what they did in 770.<sup>10</sup>

The Rebbe writes it is customary for the *shin* printed on *mezuzah* cases to be approximately aligned with *shin* written on the outside of the scroll.<sup>11</sup>

1. זוהר ואתחנן דף רס"ו ע"א.
2. ראה קסת הסופר סי' כ"ז ס"ז.
3. ראה דרכ"מ י"ד סי' רפ"ח. וראה הנסמך בלקו"ש ח"ט ע' 123.
4. קול יעקב סי' רפ"ח אות ל'.
5. שו"ע י"ד סי' רפ"ח סי"ד. וראה חובת הדר פ"ט וראה שם סקכ"ה.
6. דרכ"מ ס"ט רפ"ח בשם המרדכי.
7. ראה שו"ת רעק"א סי' נ"ח. וראה חקירה י"ט בקסת הסופר. וראה מוקדש מלך ח"ב ע' 439.
8. ראה שו"ע ר"מ סי' מ"ה. וראה סימן ע"ה ס"א.
9. ראה פתחי שערים ע' שלה.
10. מוקדש מלך ח"ב ע' 439.
11. לקו"ש חכ"ד ע' 374.

## HARAV YAAKOV VIDEREVITCH

Harav Yaakov Viderevitch (5595-5671) was a chossid of the Tzemach Tzedek and the Rebbe Maharash. A *yoshev* in Lubavitch by the Tzemach Tzedek, he was later chosen to serve as the publisher of the Tzemach Tzedek's *teshuvos*. He served as the Rov of Kopishok and later as the Rov of the Chassidim in Moscow, and he corresponded with the Rebbe Maharash on matters of *halachah*.

In 5653, the Jews were expelled from Moscow, and R. Viderevitch moved to America where he was appointed as the Rov of a union of "Nusach Sefard" shuls. He was one of the leading Rabbonim in America at the time. R. Viderevitch was famous for his sharp sense of humor and witticisms, and many witty stories are told about him. A number of *teshuvos* written by R. Viderevitch are extant in manuscript.

The Frierdiker Rebbe related:

While in Moscow, R. Viderevitch was once taking a walk with Mr. Zev Wissotzky, founder of the tea company and Rosh Hakahal. R. Viderevitch respected Wissotzky for his incredible *tzedaka*, but he was displeased with how he ran the community, by handing it over to modern elements.

As they strolled on the Chistye Prudy boulevard, they noticed young rich Jews walking their well-adorned dogs, big and small, in the latest style. Those with small dogs could lead the dogs, but those walking big dogs, it was the dog leading the owner.

Mr. Wissotzky turned to R. Viderevitch, "Look at the new style of these young people - to love and befriend dogs?! They have found new friends to walk with! What do you say to that?"

"What should I say?" R. Viderevitch replied, "They're creating a new society in which people are led by dogs. And the richer one is, the bigger the dog..."

(אג"ק ריי"צ ח"ז ע' קג-קד)

When R. Viderevitch settled in America in 5653 (1893), he had a sign hanging outside his home naming him the "Chief Rabbi of America." When someone questioned who appointed him to this position, he answered wittily, "The sign painter!"

When asked why he chose this title, he replied that they will need to come together from all across the country to demote him.

(אוצר זכרונותיי - אייזנשטיין, עמ' 77)

## A Moment with The Rebbe



## A DAILY RECKONING

In the ways of Chassidus, *Kerias Shema Sheal Hamita* (the *Shema* recited before going to sleep) is dedicated to self-reflection and to making a personal accounting of one's *avodas Hashem*.

As a *bochur*, Reb Shlomo Zarchi once asked the Rebbe for directives on how to implement this *avoda*. The Rebbe guided him to think Chassidus for half an hour as a preparation to the *Kerias Shema*.

On another occasion, the Rebbe told him

that the appropriate times for this *avoda* are Thursday night, Erev Rosh Chodesh and Chodesh Elul.

However, although one cannot perform the full *avoda* of *Kerias Shema Sheal Hamita* on a daily basis, there must be a minimal daily reckoning.

The Rebbe concluded, "How can one go to sleep without having clarity as to what transpired that day?"

(As heard from Reb Shlomo Zarchi)

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