

The Jewish Weekly

The Black Shofar of Shechem

By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

Until the holy site was insanely destroyed by villainous Arab forces, built next to Kever Yosef (Yosef's Tomb) in Shechem ("Nablus") was a kollel/yeshiva called Od Yosef Chai, most recently under the leadership of the renowned American-born Kabbalist, Rabbi Yitzchak Ginsburgh. Among the holy objects in use there, were two shofars, one the usual beige color, and the other a black one that issued strikingly clear, sharp notes.

The first day of Rosh HaShanah 5757 [Sept. 1998] fell on a Shabbat, so the shofar was not blown. On the second day, after the Morning Prayer and the Torah Reading, the shofar-blower for the congregation prepared to perform the mitzvah. He preferred the black shofar because it was easy to blow and yielded a strong clear sound. This time, however, he was able to extract only a few weak tekiah blasts no matter how hard he blew and despite the numerous attempts he made. Finally, exhausted, he sheepishly passed the shofar to me, Yeshaya Ben-Pinchas, that perhaps I could succeed in his place, with G-d's help. I had been blowing the basic ten notes of the shofar in the Kollel every morning after prayers during the month of Elul, as is traditional during this last month of the year leading up to Rosh HaShanah. I too experienced great difficulty, although the shofar was ordinarily so easy to blow, but eventually managed to produce the required one hundred notes. Everyone in the hushed, trembling congregation felt that Heavenly interference was somehow blocking the call of the shofar.

A successful shofar blowing is considered a propitious omen for a successful year. It was not long until the brave settlers who maintained the holy site and the yeshiva found out the significance of the opposite. As you may recall, less than two weeks later, on Erev Sukkot, a gang of PLO criminals laid siege to Yosef's Tomb. They attacked, they burned, they plundered and they destroyed. One of the precious objects stolen was that black shofar.

About two and a half years later, on Friday 24 Adar, I went to visit a companion from the Shechem yeshiva who at that time was doing his army reserve service in the holy city of Hebron. He was excited to see me, bubbling over that he had something interesting to relate. His eyes shining, he told me that one of the soldiers in his brigade had mentioned to him that his father had somehow acquired the black shofar that had disappeared from Yosef's Tomb two and a half years before.



Kever of Yosef Hatzadik in Shechem

I was so stimulated by this good news! I still remembered that startling Rosh HaShanah of 5757 when it had been so surprisingly difficult to blow the shofar. I wrote down the phone number of the man who now had the shofar and immediately went to call him. I introduced myself as a student of the yeshiva at Yosef's Tomb, and after I explained the whole story to him, he agreed that if I came to see him after Shabbat in Rishon Letzion where he lived, he would entrust the precious shofar to me to return it to its rightful place in Shechem.

Immediately after havdalah that Saturday night, I traveled as quickly as I could to Rishon. The man graciously turned over the shofar to me and then offered to tell me the unusual story about how it had come into his possession and then to me. It goes without saying that I eagerly accepted.

"My brother has some business involvements with Arabs. About a month ago one of the terrorists who was employed as a Palestine policeman came to him. He gave the shofar to my brother as part of a deal, explaining it had been found during a search of the houses of some suspicious characters in Shechem. Presumably, the Arab in whose home it was found had been involved in the destruction and looting of Yosef's Tomb.

"My brother didn't know what to do with the shofar so he gave it to me. Three weeks later, this past Wednesday, I encountered the son of an old childhood friend whom I hadn't seen in many years. I told him the story of the shofar, which amazed him. He responded that in his current Reserve unit was a student from the Od Yosef Chai yeshiva in Shechem."

That student was the friend that I visited. I was so excited that I decided to attempt to return the shofar to its rightful home that very night! The bus ride from Rishon to Machaneh Horon passed in the blink of an eye, and with Heaven's help I just managed to catch there the 10:30pm last bus to Shechem.

As soon as I got there I ran to the Tomb. Before returning the shofar to its place I decided to blow a few tekiah blasts. The sounds were powerful and clear on the first try, just like it used to be.

May it be G-d's will that in this time of our redemption we should merit to soon hear the shofar of King Mashiach, the scion of the line of David. And may Kever Yosef (the Tomb of Joseph) be taken from their murderous hands and returned to us, and restored to its former glory.

Reprinted from an email from KabbalaOnline.org.

It Once Happened...

The Woman's Prayers for Burial In the Old Krakow Cemetery

By Rabbi Elimelech Biderman



Photo of the historic Old Cemetery in Krakow, Poland

The Klausenberger Rebbe zt'l heard the following story from his father, Reb Tzvi of Rudnik zt'l: There are two cemeteries in Krakow (Poland). In the older cemetery are buried many ancient scholars, such as the Bach, the Megaleh Amukot, and the Rema.

A local Krakow woman wanted to be buried in the older cemetery, but that was almost impossible. For hundreds of years, no one had been buried in the old cemetery. Even the rabbanim of Krakow were buried in the new cemetery.

But this woman didn't give up. Three times a day, by Shacharit, Minchah, and Maariv, she came to the Beit kneset and davened that Hashem have compassion on her, and she be buried in the old cemetery. She was so obsessed with this desire that all children in Krakow knew to greet her, "Good morning, aunt. May you be buried in the old cemetery."

This is what she trained them to say. At the weddings of her children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren, she would ask the chattan and kallah to bless her that she be buried in the old cemetery. It was really insane because why was this so important to her?

Furthermore, it was almost impossible to be buried in the old cemetery. But she was stubborn with her wish. On the day she left the world, there was a heavy snowstorm and snow piled high on the ground. The Chevrah Kadisha couldn't carry her to the new cemetery, so she was buried in the old cemetery.

Reb Tzvi of Rudnik commented about this story, "This taught me that even when one davens for something insane, Hashem will listen to his tefillos and answer them. So great is the power of Tefillah!"

Reprinted from an email of Torah Wellsprings.



Shabbat Times – Parshat Shoftim

	Candle Lighting	Motzei Shabbat	Motzei Shabbat ר"ת
Jerusalem	6:26	7:38	8:18
Tel Aviv	6:42	7:40	
Haifa	6:33	7:40	
Be'er Sheva	6:44	7:40	



"Double Weddings Twice" By Rabbi Yerachmiel Tilles

Two delightful young men learning in the same excellent yeshiva reached the age of marriage. They both found their matches and had already set the date for their weddings. It turned out that they both picked the same date for their weddings on the same night. The problem was that their friends wanted to rejoice at both weddings, but how is it possible to dance at two weddings at the same time?

Moreover, the conflict was compounded. This is not the first time this happened. Usually, the Rosh Yeshiva [principal] or someone appointed for this, would divide the people, half of them going to one hall and the other half going to the other hall. However, here, one of the boys was a real 'chevraman' [socially outgoing], who was involved in every aspect of the yeshiva and there was not one boy in the yeshiva who did not have something to do with him.

The other boy was a fine young man, but when compared to the first chattan ['bridegroom'] he was quiet and gentle. So despite all his fine characteristics, all the guys would rather dance at the wedding of the popular first boy.

The quiet boy was strongly affected. He decided to go to the Rosh Yeshiva to present his problem and to ask for advice. The Rosh Yeshiva realized that the boy was right; he told him that he would work on it to come up with a solution.

After thinking about it, the Rosh Yeshiva called the father of the quiet boy and presented the situation to request that for the benefit of his son, he should change the date of the wedding. The response was that after consulting with the girl's parents the date could not be changed.

Having no choice, the Rabbi next called the father of the popular boy and explained the problem that even though it was not his problem since his son was popular, but this was preventing the joy of the other boy.

The father agreed to try to help; he said he would try to change the date of the wedding. He started that same day, phone-calling halls, and he continued the next day until he found an available one.

Unfortunately, this hall charged 3,000 shekel more than the original hall. It was a difficult decision, but in the end he decided to absorb the extra cost - even though it was not his problem, he went above and beyond. The other side was impressed, and happily agreed, even though the invitations with the first date had already gone out.

A few days later, the popular boy attended a Sheva Brachot [week of celebratory meals immediately following the wedding]. When he was asked to say some words of Torah, he gave a rousing speech. One of the participants approached him and asked if he was already married or engaged. He replied that indeed he was engaged and that he was getting married on a certain date.

The man choked up. After a minute or so he explained. "Just today, a close friend asked me if I knew anyone getting married on that date you just told me. He is marrying off his son on that same date. You may not know this, but many of the wealthy have the custom to help pay for another wedding on the same day they are making one, and now I am happy to be able to tell him that I found a chattan worthy of his generosity!"

Two days later, the father of the chattan received \$5,000 for wedding expenses as partnership participation.

Reprinted from website of KabbalaOnline.org.



The Jewish people and the Torah are one.

I heard from the Chief Rabbi of England and the Commonwealth, Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis, that we learn this from a verse in the Parsha of Shoftim. The Torah says, "תמים תהיה עם ה' אלהיך" - You must be complete with the Lord your G-d."

Reb Yitzchak Elchonon of Kovno taught as follows: In the Book of Tehillim 19:8 we are told, "תורת ה' תמימה" - The Torah of Hashem is complete."

As a result we see ישראל ואוריינתא חד הוא - the people of Israel and the Torah are one.

And in what respect are we similar to a Sefer Torah? Explains Reb Yitzchak Elchonon: With regard to the 'תמימות' - the complete nature of a Sefer Torah. The Torah is only perfect when every single letter within it is perfect, but if one single letter is פסול, if one letter is rendered unfit, then the entire Sefer Torah is unfit to be read from.

Similarly, with the Jewish people, every single person counts. If there is a problem relating to one particular individual it affects all of us. The Lubavitcher Rebbe conveyed this same message in a deeper way. The very last mitzvah of the Torah, mitzvah number 613, is, "ועתה כתבו לכם את השירה הזאת." It's a mitzvah to write a Sefer Torah - and with regard to the writing of the Sefer Torah, the Talmud tells us about the concept that is to say that every letter in the Torah must be surrounded by a clear space. You can't link one letter to another but at the same time, all the letters must be close enough to the other letters within that word in order to separate one word from another.

Here, said the Rebbe, we have a representation of the situation of every Jewish person. We are individuals in our own right and at the same time, we are part of our nation.

Let's therefore empathize with the situation of others. Let's be troubled when they are troubled. Let's rejoice with them at the time of their happiness. Let's reach out with compassion and kindness to be there at the time of their need. After all, whatever happens with one person affects us all, so let's join together and pray with all our hearts, for our soldiers and healthcare professionals, and Chevra Kadisha members worldwide, and for those who need healing, shidduchim, children and parnassah and may we be blessed to have the most awesome, gorgeous, beautiful, peaceful, healthy, amazing, relaxed, spiritual, loving and sweet Shabbat.

Yossi

The Jewish Weekly's PARSHA FACTS

NUMBER OF MITZVOT: 41
MITZVOT ASEH: 14
MITZVOT LO TAASEH: 27

NUMBER OF PESUKIM: 97
NUMBER OF WORDS: 1523
NUMBER OF LETTERS: 5590

HAFTORA:
Yeshayahu 51:12- 52:12 (אנכי אנכי) (this is the fourth of seven Haftorot, [the Seven Haftorot of Consolation] that precede Rosh Hashanah).

This week we study Chapter 1 (Diaspora and some in Israel study chapter 6) of Pirkei Avot



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Laws & Customs: Month of Elul (Up to Erev Rosh Hashanah)

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For the year 5782

According to Nittai Gavriel, Mishna Berurah and Shulchan Aruch Harav

Based on Rabbi Shmuel Lesches's Halachah Sheets

Reviewed by Reb Elimelech Rabinowicz שליט"א, Rav of Tzeirei Kehal Chassidim, Shaarei Chesed

Compiled by Yossi Fraenkel in memory of his grandparents

ר' ראובן בן הרב משה אליעזר הלוי ע"ה והיה ברכה בת ר' נפתלי משה ע"ה רבינוביץ

ר' יוסף בן ר' אורי ע"ה ומלכה בת ר' יצחק צבי הלוי ע"ה פרינקל

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🕊 MONTH OF ELUL

On Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul, people give extra Tzedakah.

It is a Yerushalmi Minhag to go to Kivrei Tzadikim on Erev Rosh Chodesh Elul, there are some who specially go to Mearat Hamachpela and Kever Rachel.

On Rosh Chodesh Elul, Moshe Rabbeinu ascended Har Sinai to receive the second set of Luchot. He returned with them on Yom Kippur, with Hashem having granted complete forgiveness for the sin of the golden calf. These forty days are an especially auspicious time for Teshuvah.

The Arizal taught that the thirteen attributes of Divine Mercy are revealed in the month of Elul, assisting in one's efforts to do Teshuvah. The Baal Hatanya explained this idea with the famous parable of Melech B'Sadeh – the King in the field. The month of Elul is thus known as the Chodesh Horachamim (month of mercy), and the gates of mercy are open to all who wish to come close to Hashem through Teshuvah, Tefillah and Torah. These ideas should be publicized as much as possible.

Elul is the month of preparation to usher in a new year replete with good and blessing, both physically and spiritually.

The word Elul is an acronym for a number of Pesukim alluding to the ideas of Torah, Tefillah, Tzedakah, Teshuvah and Geulah. The month of Elul is an appropriate time to increase in all of these matters.

One should increase learning, particularly those topics applicable to the Avodah of the month of Elul.

One should also increase in Ahavat Yisrael and Gemilat-Chessed.

Elul is the "month of reckoning". During this month, one should make an accurate assessment of all one's thoughts, words and deeds, and reflect on all the experiences that occurred during the course of the year. One should improve and strengthen one's qualities, and at the same time, regret and correct one's deficiencies – both the errors and wrongs that were committed, as well as those things which were not performed as well as they could have been. One should resolve for the future to fulfil Mitzvot in the best possible manner; to be more diligent with regards to Torah and Tefillah; and to correct one's negative Middot as well as acquire positive Middot.

During the month of Elul, according to the Sephardic communities, Selichot is recited daily. (The Ashkenazi communities start Selichot this year, Motzei Shabbat, Sep 18th.)

During Elul, one should be enthused with much Simcha, in recognition of the special closeness that Hashem shows us – "The King is in the field".

Even though Elul is a time to arouse others to Teshuvah, this should be done in a pleasant and

humble way, and not by G-d forbid saying harsh things about others.

🕊 L'DAVID HASHEM ORI

We begin reciting L'David Hashem Ori on Rosh Chodesh. Chabad and some other Chassidim start on the **first** day whilst everyone else starts on the **second** day. During Shacharit, some recite it after Aleinu and some, including Chabad, recite it after Shir Shel Yom (or after Borchy Nafshi on Rosh Chodesh). Chabad and some others recite it during Mincha before Aleinu. Some communities recite L'David Hashem Ori at Mincha after Aleinu, and some only after Ma'ariv. When davening Mincha with a Minyan who says it after Ma'ariv, one must still recite Aleinu together with them. If one needs to defer L'David Hashem Ori as a result, he should recite it after Aleinu and before Al Tirah.

🕊 SHOFAR

Shofar is blown during the month of Elul, most have the custom to begin on Sunday, the second day of Rosh Chodesh and some on the first day. The purpose of hearing the Shofar is to arouse feelings of Teshuvah.

Some have the custom to blow Shofar also after Mincha or Maariv. Those who blow Shofar after Maariv, should do so also on Motzei Shabbat

Some have the custom to blow just Tekiah-Shevarim-Teruah-Tekiah and others, including Chabad, blow ten sounds. [Tekiah-Shevarim-Teruah-Tekiah; Tekiah-Shevarim-Tekiah; Tekiah-Teruah-Tekiah.]

If one was unable to hear the Shofar with a Minyan, he should still endeavor to hear the Shofar.

During Elul, one does not need to repeat the sounds, if the Shofar was Passul (e.g. it had a crack or hole). Similarly, one does not need to repeat any sounds blown incorrectly (e.g. the Tekiah was too short). If the Ba'al-Tokeah chooses to fix his mistake, he certainly does not need to redo the entire section, as he would, were it Rosh Hashana.

🕊 OTHER CUSTOMS OF ELUL

There is a tradition to recite 10 extra chapters of Tehillim each day of Elul, which will equal the completion of Tehillim twice (300 chapters – numerically equivalent to כפר – atonement). Chabad have the custom to only recite three extra chapters of Tehillim each day. Ideally, these should be recited immediately after the Tehillim that is normally said at the end of Shacharit.

If one neglected to recite these chapters of Tehillim on the appropriate day, he should do so at the earliest opportunity.

Beginning on the first day of Rosh Chodesh, most, including Chabad, have the custom to wish (both in person as well as in writing): "Ketivah V'Chatima Tovah L'Shana Tova U'Metukah". [The Lubavitcher Rebbe included

these wishes at the end of his letters. From Rosh Chodesh onwards, he would write only "Ketivah V'Chatima Tovah", and would begin adding "L'Shana Tova U'Metukah" from around the 18th of Elul onwards.]

Although the basic requirement is to check Mezuzot and Tefillin twice every seven years, some have the custom of checking them every Elul (unless they were checked within the last 12 months).

🕊 DATES IN ELUL

7 Elul – Shabbat Parshat Shoftim. The sixth chapter of Pirkei Avot is recited.

14 Elul – Shabbat Parshat Ki Teitzei. When reading the last Passuk of the Parsha, the word Zeicher is read twice, first with a Tzeirei (Zeicher), and then again with a Segol (Zecher).

The first and second chapter of Pirkei Avot is recited. The opening Mishna ("Kol Yisrael") and concluding Mishna ("Rabbi Chananya") are recited only once.

15 Elul – Being thirty days before Sukkot, one begins learning its Halachot. This thirty-day period should also be utilized to ensure that the Chag needs of the poor are met, as well as planning Sukkot festivities.

18 Elul – The birthday of the Baal Shem Tov and the Baal Hatanya. On this day, the Chabad Rebbeim would wish one a "Chag Sameach".

The last 12 days of Elul (18-29 Elul) correspond to the 12 months of the year. On each of these days, one should make a reckoning of the corresponding month, and make all necessary corrections.

21 Elul – Shabbat Parshat Ki Tavo. The third and fourth chapter of Pirkei Avot is recited by all. The opening Mishna ("Kol Yisrael") and concluding Mishna ("Rabbi Chananya") are recited only once.

🕊 28TH ELUL "SHABBAT MEVARCHIM"

Shabbat Parshat Nitzavim. We don't bentsh the new month before Musaf, however Av Harachamim is recited. The Baal Shem Tov explains that Hashem Himself bentshes the month of Tishrei, and with this power, we bentsh the other months of the year.

Many make a kiddush after davening, in honor of "Shabbat Mevarchim".

Tzidkatecha is recited.

One learns the final two chapters of Pirkei Avot after Mincha. The opening Mishna ("Kol Yisrael") and concluding Mishna ("Rabbi Chananya") are recited only once.

Vi'hi Noam and V'atah Kaddosh are omitted on Motzei Shabbat.

🕊 SELICHOT

Due to the very varied customs on Selichot, we advise everyone to make themselves familiar with their own particular customs.



The Jewish
Weekly
 will be releasing a Tishrei guide of
 Stories, Halachot and Minhagim