

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 *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 תר"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.

(שר"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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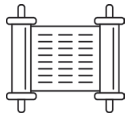
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TASHLICH BY A FISH TANK

If there is no river or lake within walking distance, can I recite tashlich by a fish tank?

There is an early minhag, recorded by the Maharil, to recite tashlich, "throwing away our sins," on the first day of Rosh Hashana at a river. This serves as a remembrance for the merit of the Akeida when Avrohom Avinu went up to his neck into the river that Satan put as an obstacle for him, and a fulfillment of the metaphorical posuk, "You shall cast into the depths of the sea all their sins."1 Also, we are crowning Hashem as King, and kings are customarily anointed by a river. Moreover, water signifies Hashem's kindness.2

In his Shulchan Aruch, the Alter Rebbe highlights the need for live fish as a sign that ayin hara should have no power over us and that we should be fruitful and multiply like fish. Based on the Arizal, he adds that it is preferable to be outside the city, similar to the "sea's depths" away from civilization.3

In his siddur, however, the Alter Rebbe mentions a spring and not the requirement of fish, similar to the Arizal, who didn't mention this requirement either. Though the Alter Rebbe does mention the symbolism of fish whose eyes remain constantly open.4

If there is no river or lake within walking distance, the list of options for tashlich in order of halachic preference is: (1) Body of water with fish outside of city limits; (2) body of water with fish within city limits; (3) spring, well, or body of water without fish;5 (4) fish tank; (5) open faucet.6

If doing tashlich on Rosh Hashana near an open faucet, it is preferable to recite tashlich a second time at a body of water during Aseres Yemei Teshuvah,7 preferably on the day known as "Yud-Gimmel Midos"8 (the closest Thursday or Monday directly before Yom Kippur). Similarly, if one could not do tashlich on Rosh Hashana, they should do it during Aseres Yemei Teshuvah, particularly on that day.

Is there an inyan to see the fish when saying tashlich? While the Rebbe relates that the Friediker Rebbe would make a point of seeing the fish, it is clearly not a halachic requirement.9 One should also bear in mind that we are disposing of our sins not in the physical water but in its spiritual counterpart, the "yam ha'elyon."10

When the first day of Rosh Hashana falls on Shabbos, there is a dispute about whether to recite tashlich on the first day or the second. While some insist on saying on the chosen day, others delay it out of concern that people will carry their siddurim. Moreover, according to Kabbalah, tashlich should not be said on Shabbos.11 Minhag Chabad in this scenario is to recite it on the second day.12

1. מנהגיה מהר"ל. הל' ראש השנה. ע"פ מיכה ז' י"ט.
2. סידור רבינו הזקן סדר תשליך.
3. שוע"ר סי' תקפ"ג ס"ו. תו"מ חס"ב ע' 4.
4. סידור רבינו הזקן סדר תשליך.
5. ראה פסק"ת סי' תקפ"ג סק"ט אפילו בורות.
6. הוראה מהרבי לרב "וי העכט - ראה כפ"ח גל' תקל"ג ע' 14. וראה נתיבים בשדה השליחות ח"ב ע' 112 והע' 30.
7. וראה נתיבים שם.
8. ראה לקו"ש ח"ד ע' 382. רשימת היומן ע' קס"ה. וראה המלך במסביב ח"ב ע' 20.
9. ראה תו"מ תשנ"א ח"ב ע' שע"ח הע' 28 והמסומן שם.
10. ראה כף החיים סי' תקפ"ג ס"ל.
11. ראה פסק"ת סי' תקפ"ג סק"ט והמסומן שם בהע' 55-56.
12. רשימות חוברת ד' ע' 9. אוצר מנהגי חב"ד ע' קמ"ו. משנ"ב סי' תקפ"ג סק"ח.

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



REB ZALMAN KURNITZER

Reb Zalmen Kurnitzer was a tremendous gaon in nigleh as well as an important business man in Vilna. He became a chossid of the Alter Rebbe and later of the Mitteler Rebbe and the Tzemach Tzedek. He was from the First Cheder of the Alter Rebbe, reserved only for the greatest geonim. The Tzemach Tzedek's son, Reb Boruch Sholom, known as the Rabash, was his mechutan.

Reb Zalman was a dear friend of Reb Binyamin Kletzker. Once, Reb Zalman was heading to Prussia on business when Reb Binyamin asked him to lend him a large sum of money. Reb Zalman promised the loan upon his return from the business trip. Unfortunately, the business opportunity turned sour and Reb Zalman lost all his invested

money. When he returned home, he sold some valuables and promptly lent the money to Reb Binyamin as he promised.

Reb Gronem - the Mashpia in Lubavitch, related: After the histalkus of the Alter Rebbe, Reb Zalman became a chossid of the Mitteler Rebbe. Once, the Mitteler Rebbe visited Kurenitz where he said a ma'amar. When he finished the ma'amar, the Rebbe asked Reb Zalman, "Do you remember how the Rebbe (the Alter Rebbe) said the ma'amar and what I added myself?" Reb Zalman proceeded to chazer the ma'amar from the Alter Rebbe, pointing out what the Mitteler Rebbe added. This was a ma'amar he heard from the Alter Rebbe thirty years earlier!

A Moment with The Rebbe



WHEN HE DOESN'T REALIZE THAT THERE'S A SHAILA

The Luach Kolel Chabad, the familiar staple in every Lubavitch shul, was written by the great Chabad posek Reb Avrohom Chaim Noeh. His son, Reb Boruch, republished it every year, updated with corrections and annotations.

Unofficially, the Rebbe was actively involved. There were years when the Rebbe actually edited the Luach and communicated with the editors over its content.

During the last Rosh Hashana Farbrengen that we merited, in 5752, the Rebbe brought up the Luach:

"With all the changes in davening and

minhagim of yom tov, it is imperative to learn the necessary halachos in Shulchan Aruch for these days. Alternatively, as has lately become the custom, to look at a luach, for example the Luach Kolel Chabad."

Here the Rebbe explained its importance:

"It is actually important to memorize the Luach by heart. Because sometimes a person is in a situation when he is not permitted to talk, or there is no one at hand to ask, or worse: sometimes one doesn't realize there is a shaila at all to be asked..."

(Noda Bashiurim ch. 25; Sichos Kodesh 5752 p. 21)

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