



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 וכנה תרל"ז פרק ע')

Before Rosh Hashana תרי"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)

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)

A visitor to the township of Lubavitch describes the first night of Rosh Hashanah: The day is ending and the large *shul* is already packed with chassidim, *orchim*, and hundreds of *bochurim*

and their teachers who have gathered to *daven Maariv*. Their faces all express arousal and awe, fearing judgment; all stand together as one, ready to accept this holy day. A few moments pass and the Rebbe arrives, his holy face aflame with *merirus*, an intense seriousness, but at the same time shining with an inner *chayus* and *simcha*. Two opposites appear there together.

Maariv is *davened* earnestly and with *hislahavus*; the *tefillos* soar aloft, piercing the heavens. As I push myself closer to the Rebbe to hear the *tefilla* of a *tzaddik*, the sound of passionate crying and deep sighing reaches my ears. There is not a word of the Rebbe's *davening* that is not soaked with a river of tears. Never in my life have I heard such soulful crying!

Maariv is over, but no one leaves. The chassidim stand close together and listen intently to every nuance of the Rebbe's *tefilla*. All eyes are focused on one point, making sure not to miss a moment. The Rebbe softly sings a *niggun* with *dveikus*, demanding and pleading, and as his heart bursts with tears, tears also course down the faces of many of the chassidim who are listening in silence – with *teshuvah* from the depths of the heart. I think to myself, "If the only reason for the *tefilla* of the *tzaddik* is to arouse thousands of *Yidden* with regret and *teshuvah*, that is enough."

Late at night, when the Rebbe finishes *davening* and turns to *bentch* all those present with a good, sweet year, his face shines like a *malach* of Hashem, his eyes radiating light and hope. He passes through the crowd and wishes each person, *Leshana tova tikasev veseichaseim!*

(התמים ח"א ע' קלב)

CONSIDER THIS!

- What is the difference between our connection to HaShem expressed in the two *meshalim*?
- Why did the Rebbe Rashab experience both seriousness and *simcha* on Rosh Hashana? How is it possible?

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A WAY OF LIFE

Rabbi Chaim Hillel Raskin
Moreh Hora'ah - Beis Horaa Rechovot

Shofar for a Goy

If I am on *mitzva shofar* and a goy asks me to blow for him. May I do so?

- Chazal say that blowing *shofar* on Shabbos is a prohibition *midrabanan*.
- The Shulchan Aruch quotes a *minhag* to sound one long *teruah* at the conclusion of *musaf*, in order to confuse the Satan. The Rama quotes a different *minhag* to blow the full thirty *tekios*, and adds that after that one may not sound the *shofar* unnecessarily.
- Some *poskim*¹ explain that the Rama's permission to blow thirty extra *tekios* is because their purpose is to serve as the obligatory *tekios* for who ever did not hear the first ones properly. However, the *mechaber*, who allows blowing to confuse the Satan, holds that sounding the *shofar* is fully permissible on Rosh HaShana, and prohibits it only on Shabbos and other Yomim Tovim.²
- However, other *poskim*³ including the Alter Rebbe⁴, explain that there is no *machlokes* here. All agree that one may not sound the *shofar* unnecessarily, however, in order to confuse the Satan is a valid reason. Beyond that, blowing unnecessarily is forbidden and is a degradation of Yom Tov.
- Although women are not obligated to hear *shofar*, it is nonetheless permissible to blow *shofar* exclusively for women, since they wish to fulfill this *mitzvah*.⁵ Although the Ashkenazi *poskim* permit the women to recite the bracha, a man may not make the bracha for them.⁶
- A child who can understand the significance of blowing *shofar* must hear the *tekios*.⁷ One may therefore blow *shofar* for them and recite the *bracha*⁸ (although they are not his children).⁹ Younger children are not obligated to hear the *tekios*, and one may therefore not blow for them alone.¹⁰ The children themselves (until *bar mitzvah*) may blow the *shofar* for play,¹¹ since it is an education for the child on how to do the *mitzvah*.¹²
- **In summary:** According to the Alter Rebbe it is forbidden to blow *shofar* for a goy or any other non-*mitzvah* purpose.

8. קצה המטה תקצ"ו סק"ג, מט"א תרכ"ה סנ"ט, וראה שוע"ר קס"ז סכ"ג.
9. ראה שוע"ר סי' שמ"ג ס"ג.
10. חינוך הבנים שם ס"ד וצע"ג האם מותר לתקוע לבנות מתחת גיל בת מצוה. וראה נט"ג פמ"ט סקכ"ו שנוטה להתיר כשיש לה דעת ומצטערת.
11. שוע"ר תקצ"ו ס"ב.
12. ראה מג"א סי' שמ"ג סוף סק"ג ושוע"ר סי' שמ"ג ס"ח.

1. ט"ז סי' תקצ"ו סק"א.
2. וראה פרמ"ג משב"ז שם שבטלו הגזירה שמא יתקן כלי שיר בר"ה.
3. מג"א סי' תקצ"ו סק"ב.
4. שוע"ר סי' תקצ"ו ס"ב.
5. סי' תקפ"ט ס"ב.
6. שוע"ר שם.
7. ראה מג"א סי' תקצ"ו סק"ג ושוע"ר סי' קס"ז סכ"ג.

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

לזכות התינוק הנולד שיחי'

שיכניסוהו בביתו של אברהם אבינו

ויגדולוהו לתורה, לחופה ולמעשים טובים

נדבת הוריו הרה"ת שלום דובער וזוגתו אסתר שיחיו לייך

OUR HEROES

Rebbetzin Sterna

Rebbetzin Sterna was born to her parents Reb Yehuda Leib and Beila Segel. Reb Yehuda Leib was a prominent *gevir* in the city of Vitebsk, and was from the leading community members. On 12 Av 5520 (1760), she married the Alter Rebbe and lived in Vitebsk. Her husband's holy ways were strange in her parents' eyes and they pressured her to demand a *get*, and when she refused they began to suffer greatly. She had great *mesiras nefesh* for her husband and he in return respected her greatly. After the Alter Rebbe passed away, she moved with her son the Mittlerer Rebbe to Lubavitch and lived many long years.



One Friday evening after Rebbetzin Sterna refused to demand a *get*, her father drove her out of the house. Her husband the Alter Rebbe, was davening in the attic of her father's storehouse, so she went there and waited for him in the hallway of the attic. It was winter time and it was freezing, but she did not want to disturb her husband. She stood there for a long time until her sister found her almost frostbite. Just then the Alter Rebbe finished davening and asked if there is what to make *kidush* on. She replied that she will go get something from her father's house, to which the Alter Rebbe said that according to Torah that is prohibited. Instead, her sister offered to bring something from her house.

(סה"ש תרצ"ז ע' 193)

Once during the early years of his leadership, the Alter Rebbe looked out the window and saw many chassidim flocking to his home, from far and near. He fell to the ground and exclaimed, "What do they want from me? What do they see in me?" His wife Rebbetzin Sterna, who understood that it was her job to direct the development of things smoothly, walked in and said to him "Why do you think they are coming for you? It is only that you merited being by the Mezritcher Maggid, so they are coming to hear what you received". "If that is their will", said the Alter Rebbe, "I will fulfill their will, I will teach and teach more".

(משיחת פורים תשמ"ג)

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

The Rebbe's Children

After decades of clandestine activities in Russia and surviving the horrors of its brutal regime, Reb Shlomo Matusof was sent to serve as a Shliach in Morocco.

At the first opportunity, which came in Succos 5715, he journeyed to the Rebbe. The Rebbe welcomed him warmly during his *yechidus*, and wanted to know the details of how his family was managing in a new country, with a foreign language and strange culture.

The Rebbe then asked Reb Shlomo if he has any pictures of the children. Reb Shlomo immediately took a picture out of his wallet, and placed it on the table. The Rebbe looked at the picture intently, and put it down. The Rebbe didn't hand it back, and so the picture remained on the Rebbe's table.

Two days later, Reb Shlomo accompanied Reb Binyomin Goredetzky on a visit to the Rebbe's mother. As soon as Rebbetzin Chana saw Reb Shlomo, she exclaimed, "Oh, Reb Shlomo, you have such wonderful children!"

Apparently, the Rebbe, the father of all chassidim, had shared the picture with their grandmother...

לזכות ר' שלום מרדכי הלוי שי' בן רבקה