

# The Weekly Farbrengens



## 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.

(המשכן 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.

(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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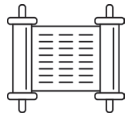


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SHOFAR WITH A HEARING AID

May one listen to the shofar with a hearing aid?

The mitzva of shofar is to actively hear the sound of the shofar as indicated in the bracha's text, "lishmoa kol shofar." Yet, the blowing itself is also a part of the mitzva and must be done by someone obligated in the mitzva.<sup>1</sup>

A person who is mute but not deaf is obligated, and he can blow for others as well.<sup>2</sup> A deaf person is exempt since he can't hear the sound, though some recommend that he blow for himself without a bracha.<sup>3</sup> However, being exempt, he cannot blow for others.

One who is hard of hearing remains obligated to hear shofar.<sup>4</sup> If he can only hear the shofar blasts with a hearing aid, poskim debate his status. Some argue that it's considered to have an additional sound mixed in, and he is therefore exempt, while others hold he is considered able to hear and thus obligated.<sup>6</sup>

The Rebbe notes that mechanical amplifiers may be used for shofar since they are simply transferring the sound, however electric hearing aids simply replicate the shofar sound. One cannot fulfill their obligation by listening to the electronically created sound.<sup>7</sup>

In practice, one who can hear the shofar blasts without a hearing aid (by standing close to the one blowing) should do so, and he can blow for others as well. If he cannot hear at all without the hearing aid, he should not blow for others.<sup>8</sup>

If a person has a hearing aid in only one ear, some hold he fulfills his obligation with the ear that hears without an aid,<sup>9</sup> while others hold that interfering sound is a problem, so it's best to remove it.<sup>10</sup>

1. ראה שו"ע או"ח סי' תקפ"ט ס"א
2. ראה שו"ע או"ח סי' תקפ"ט ס"ב
3. ערוה"ש או"ח תקפ"ט ס"ו. וראה שם ובמאירי ר"ה כ"ט ע"ב עיי"ש.
4. ראה משנ"ב סי' תקפ"ט סק"ד
5. ראה הליכות שלמה מועדים ח"ב
6. ראה שו"ת יביע אומר ח"ו או"ח סי' י"ח.
7. ראה לקו"ש חכ"א ע' 497.
8. פסק"ת ח"ו סי' תקפ"ט אות ג'.
9. ראה תחומין כ"ט ע' 385.
10. ר"א ווייס שיעור נצמ"י תשס"ז אות ג'.

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

REB ELYE CHAIM ALTHAUS

Reb Eliyahu Chaim Althaus from Nikolayev was a very close chossid of the Frierdiker Rebbe and stood by his side in all his holy activities, and was given the title "yedid beis Rebbe". He was the official shadchan of the Rebbe and Rebbetzin. When the Frierdiker Rebbe was exiled to Kastrama in the summer of 5687 (1927), he traveled along. He joined the Frierdiker Rebbe when he moved to Riga, Latvia, where he became active in the Lubavitch community, and was the gabai of the Rebbe's minyan. He served as one of the three mashpi'im of Achos Temimim, the Lubavitch girls group established by the Frierdiker Rebbe in Riga. In Kislev 5742 (1941) he was killed in Riga by the Nazis along with many other Chassidim.

About a month after the Rebbe Rashab passed away, Reb Itche der masmid, who had heard rumors of the Rebbe's histalkus came to visit Reb Elye Chaim. Reb Elye Chaim came out of his house to greet him, and

Reb Itche who was standing at the bottom of the steps leading up to the house, asked, "Is it true or not?" Reb Elye Chaim did not answer, he just let out a deep sigh. Reb Itche asked again but Reb Elye did not reply. When Reb Itche asked the question a third time Reb Elye Chaim simply fainted, and toppled down the steps.

Reb Yisroel Jacobson related:

One year on Erev Rosh Hashana in Leningrad, I walked into the room that was supposed to be used as the shul, and saw that not even one bentch had been set up. I turned to Reb Elye Chaim and said, "It's Erev Rosh Hashana and nothing is set up?!" Reb Elye Chaim responded by repeating the same words back to me, "It's Erev Rosh Hashana and nothing is set up?!"

I got the message Reb Elye Chaim was teaching me: Demand of yourself, not of others.

A Moment with The Rebbe

לזכות שניאור זלמן בן חוה לאה וכל משפחתו שיחיו לכל המצטרך בגשמיות ורוחניות



MAY YOUR TEKIOS BE HEARD

Reb Leibel Bistrizky relates an encounter that took place on Erev Rosh Hashana 5715:

It was one past midnight when I arrived at 770. I wasn't allowed into yechidus, so I walked into the upstairs Zal, and stood by the wall near the door, and began to recite Tehillim. I was planning to stay a while and go home.

Suddenly the Rebbe walked out of his room and noticed me. "Leibel, what are you doing here?"

I told the Rebbe that there is a minhag that a child comes to his father for a bracha before

Rosh Hashana. Since I wasn't allowed in, I said Tehillim.

"Are you blowing shofar this year?" The Rebbe asked.

When I answered in the affirmative, the Rebbe turned to Rabbi Chadakov and asked him to bring a copy of the maamar that was said the last Shabbos, dibbur hamas'chil 'Ketapuch Beatzei Yaar.'

"Take this," the Rebbe said as he handed me the maamar. "Hold on to it during tekias shofar, and may your tekios be heard."

(Kfar Chabad issue 804 p. 34)

לע"נ ר' חיים מרדכי ב"ר משה ע"ה

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