



HaRav Shaul Israeli zt"l
Founder and President

HEMDAT YAMIM

Parashat HaShavua

Rosh Hashana, 1 Tishrei 5781

Great Shofar, Weak Sound

Harav Shaul Yisraeli – based on Aroch Siach, Yamim Noraim, p. 106

In *Netaneh Nokef*, the liturgist describes the Day of Judgment in the Heavens as: "And a great shofar is blown, and a weak sound of whisper is heard." There is a simple question that begs asking: If a great shofar is being used, why should there be such a feeble sound? And if such a gentle sound is needed, why use such a great shofar?

Description of the activity in the Heavens is impactful. "The angels move around quickly, and they are seized by trembling." Even about the pure angels it says, "If in His holy ones He does not believe..." (Iyov 15:15). It is hard for us to understand why the angels need judgment, but we can easily make the calculation: If they are concerned, then we, simple mortal beings, who pass before Hashem to receive our allotment of days for the coming year, certainly have reason to tremble. It is not only as individuals; it is also decreed how the different nations will fare, and "He will tell a person that which he spoke" (Amos 4:13).

But what is really going on? The realization of the judgment is impactful if one's ears, eyes, and, especially, heart are open. However, if one's heart is unmoved and he goes through life as if matters are progressing normally, and his emotions are fossilized and his mind is polluted, then the mundane infiltrates the holy Days of Awe. Then we need to ask ourselves: Do we not have any belief in our heart? Why do we not sense the gravity of the moment and the significance of Hashem's decision in our regard? How can we be callous to the fact that our fate is being weighed on the divine scales?

The answer is that we certainly are Jews who are believers the sons of believers. There certainly is a hidden part of our hearts that is sensitive, but it is dormant. The noise of the tumultuous city, the Satan, who is the Evil Inclination, silences the fine emotions and even the "voice of Hashem," which is a weak sound of whisper. Let us call out like the captain did to Jonah amidst the storm (Yonah 1:6): "Why are you sleeping? Get up, and call out to Hashem!"

That is why there is the sound of shofar blowing, which is reminiscent of the shofar of Above. When the great shofar is blown, we are able to break the earplugs and pierce the shield of the heart. "Fortunate is the nation that has people who know how to blow the shofar." The weak sound of whisper is actually the sound of Hashem in the Heavens, and it is likewise the spark of the Jewish soul.

Let us hear it! Let us be aroused to do complete repentance!

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Eretz Hemdah
Deans: Harav Yosef Carmel, Harav Moshe Ehrenreich
2 Bruriya St. corner of Rav Chiya St.
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Ask the Rabbi

by Rav Daniel Mann

100 Blasts for the Homebound

Question: Because I am in the “at-risk” population, I will not go to *shul* for Rosh Hashana. I know how to blow shofar. Should I blow for myself 30 *kolot*, as is usually done for those who cannot make it to *shul*, or is it better to do 100? If the latter, should I do 31-60 during *Mussaf* and the rest later, or all later?

Answer: [We invite people to look at our website for our recommendation, based on professionals, for blowing shofar in *shul*. Presently we urge: only 30 *kolot* done outdoors (100 *kolot* for an outdoor *minyan*), with a mask held down by a rubber band to the opening of the shofar. This may be changed based on updated scientific findings.]

The basic *mitzva* of shofar blowing is independent of *tefilla* and *minyan* and is fulfilled with 30 *kolot* (Shulchan Aruch, Orach Chayim 590:1-2). *Chazal* added another element, with additional *kolot*, and connected it to *Mussaf* of Rosh Hashana, i.e., *malchuyot*, *zichronot*, and *shofarot* (Rosh Hashana 34b).

The *gemara* continues that the *Mussaf* blowing was instituted for the *tzibbur*, not the individual, as rule the Shulchan Aruch and Rama (OC 592:2). There are different opinions as to whether an individual at home may blow within his silent *tefilla* if he desires, or whether that is too sensitive a juncture (see S'dei Chemed vol. IX, pp. 92-95). One might want to connect this to the divergent *minhagim* (see Yechaveh Da'at VI:37) over whether in *shul*, 30 *kolot* are also blown during the silent *Mussaf* in addition to the 30 during *chazarat hashatz*. However, some reason that the silent *tefilla* of everyone in *shul* is considered a public *tefilla*, which is what justifies the shofar blowing then (see *ibid.*).

Is there a point of doing more than 30 at a different time? The Chazon Ish (OC 137:4) suggests two possible ways to view the *tekiot* during *tefilla* – it is a *mitzva* of shofar, enhanced by the *tefilla*; the shofar is a means to enhance the public *tefilla*. He suggests that the sign of which side is correct is whether it is permitted to talk between the *beracha* and the later *tekiot* – if it is forbidden, it is a sign that the Rabbinic requirement is related to the *mitzva* of shofar, rather than to that of *tefilla*. However, he argues that even if it is a *mitzva* of shofar, this element was only instituted in connection to a public *tefilla* and does not apply to those who did not take part in it.

As you alluded to, the clear *minhag* is that those who are excused from being in *shul* due to illness or taking care of children hear only 30 *kolot*. One can argue we do not want to impose on the one doing the *chesed* of blowing to do 100 each time (a daunting task, especially considering how small the pool of candidates is) or expect too much of the sick and elderly, or factor in the exemption from shofar regarding women. If you are happy blowing more, after *davening*, perhaps there is only possible gain?

Note that the “more is not the merrier” regarding *tekiat shofar*. The Rama (OC 596:2) says that one must not blow after fulfilling the *mitzva* for no good reason. In *Living the Halachic Process* (V, D-1) we discussed the two main objections: it is under the prohibition of musical instruments on Shabbat/Yom Tov; it may be problematic adding on to a *mitzva* (*bal tosif*). Is there enough reason here to blow more?

Piskei Teshuvot (592:3) claims that the desire to have 100 *kolot*, an old *minhag* (found in the Aruch, Tosafot (Rosh Hashana 33b), and championed by *Kabbalists* (see Shelah, quoted by Mishna Berura 596:2) justifies it. However, he does not cite sources regarding our case. It is likely that 100 *kolot* were instituted for the *tzibbur*, who are anyway obligated in 60-90 *kolot*. Therefore, we would not recommend for you to blow any more than an extra set of *tashrats* to fulfill the main doubt left after 30 *kolot* (one or two breaths – see Shulchan Aruch, OC 590:4). If it is important for you to do more, we are not saying it is forbidden. This year, in many communities, with extra (outdoor) *minyanim*, people will be able to hear 100 *kolot* from their balconies or on the street, at a safe distance from others.

Behind the Scenes with the Vebbe Rebbe

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Ein Ayah

(from the writings of Harav Avraham Yitzchak Hakohen Kook, z.t.l.)

Results that Relate Back to the Origin

(based on Ein Ayah, Shabbat 12:53-54)

Gemara: [We continue with derivations from *notrikon*:] Rav Yochanan personally said: “*Anochi*” (I, the first word of the Ten Commandments) is connected to “*Ana nafshi katvit yahavit*” (I Hashem, My spirit, I wrote and gave). Rabbanan said that it stands for: “*Amira ne’ima ketiva yahavit* (I, Hashem, have given a saying that is pleasant and written).

Ein Ayah: The previous opinion [which we saw last week, regarding the importance of Avraham Avinu to the nations of the world] explained the value of *notrikon* in the Torah as relating to the element of the thoughts that are activated by the light found explicitly in the Torah. According to that approach, there are two levels of evaluation: one relates to the essence, and is represented by that which is in the letter that is found explicitly in the word; the other relates to the expansion, the philosophical light that the written letter causes to be discernable. This is represented by the persona of Avraham, who intrinsically, with his great level, was the foundation of the essential life of Israel.

The second means of evaluation focuses on that which expands from the origin. Specifically, it relates to the elements in which the nations are nurtured by the light of Avraham. To this, Rav Yochanan adds that that which expands as a result of the power of the written letter is also included in the spiritual essence of the letter itself.

Let us see how this plays out in the *notrikon* of the word “*anochi*.” One can look at Hashem speaking about Himself from the perspective of the level of the giver, who influences those around Him. Then we can evaluate it on the highest level even before that which is given makes it to the recipient. The second way is focused on the ability to influence the recipients, which depends on the latter’s capabilities as well. It must be viewed only after the gift of sanctification has already been given. While it appears as if there are real distinctions between the various levels, at their root there is only one source of sanctity, and there is no intrinsic difference between that which is included in the letter that is written explicitly and the light of that which is expanded based on the words arrived at through *notrikon*.

Anochi therefore starts with *ana*, I: Hashem Himself and no other. *Nafshi*, My spirit, is the intrinsic attribute of the light of life, which gives life to all, just as the spirit gives life to the body. *Katvit* – I have written – that which Hashem has influenced those who received the Torah by that which is written explicitly is similar to: *yahavit* – I have given – that which Hashem has allowed to expand based on the abilities of the recipients of the holy present. All of this is unified in the secret of lofty unity, which is the light that glows forth from the beginning of the Ten Commandments, which represents the moment of the most powerful unity of sanctity.

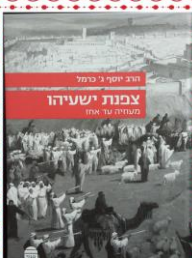
Rabbanan say that it is not enough that the upper root is wonderful, so that there is no real difference between the light of that which is written and that which is understood from it. Rather, even from the side of the recipients, it has to be similar. This found expression in the pleasantness of the sayings. The pleasantness is in what was written and in what was received, and it is glowing with completeness and the good feeling that it gives off.



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P'ninat Mishpat

Was the Renter Normal?

(based on ruling 71093 of the Eretz Hemdah-Gazit Rabbinical Courts)

Case: The plaintiff (=pl) bought an apartment for investment from defendant #3 (=def3), with the help of a lawyer (=def1) and a real estate agent (=def2). In order to complete the deal, def3 was supposed to give pl the keys to an empty apartment. A renter (=ren) lived in the apartment at the time, but pl agreed to become her landlord in exchange for the checks ren gave, on condition that ren is "normal." These conditions were written in a new agreement, which def1 and def2 supported. Since that time, ren has not paid any rent for five months, and it required legal intervention at *Hotza'ah Lapoal* to get her out, for which pl demands compensation. 5,000 NIS for the purchase remains in escrow, originally because def3 owed pl certain documents and now because pl claims breach of contract due to ren's lack of pay. The defendants respond that ren always paid properly, and there were no signs of problems, so they are not guilty of misrepresentation. Pl is also suing for the 1,000 NIS he needed to fix water damage in a wall. Def3 responds that pl had seen the water marks and signed a contract that states he accepts the apartment "as is."

Ruling: There were certain sociological signs that ren might have difficulty paying, and def1 and def2 should have experience checking things such as ren's bank statements to determine this. Their recommendation to pl to agree without further investigation was damaging bad advice. Since the damage is only in lost revenues, pl has monetary claims on def1 and def2 only for the period in which it is relatively easy to find renters, which according to two *dayanim* was only for three months. The *dayanim* disagreed whether def3 is also responsible for this loss because he did not fulfill the contractual obligation of giving an empty apartment.

The ruling is that ren is not a normal renter as promised. We reject def's claims that pl should have acted more quickly and did not need a lawyer to go to *Hotza'ah Lapoal*, as acting with some patience toward a renter and being afraid to go to *Hotza'ah Lapoal* unrepresented are normal decisions.

Def3 also claimed that pl did not deserve rent because he did not finish paying. This claim is to be rejected out of hand. Every feasible element of giving over control of the apartment was completed (especially, giving ren's rental checks to pl; a key was not given because def3 claimed that all of their keys were by ren), and the fact that 5,000 NIS was in escrow was originally because pl was waiting for def to get around to giving routine paper work. Thus, the rights of the apartment are pl's.

Regarding the water repairs, the fact that they accepted the apartment with its apparent problem is a sign of *mechila* of those issues. Pl admitted, in fact, that he decided to sue for the water issues only after the matter of the rent came up. At that late point, one cannot undo the *mechila*.

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