



ראש השנה

WITH

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BASED ON HIS BOOKS, TAPES & WRITINGS OF TALMIDIM

The King

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Part I. Blowing the Shofar

The Mysterious Shofar Blast

In Tehillim (89:16), it states: **אַשְׁרֵי הָעַם יִדְרְעֵי תְרוּעָה** – *Fortunate is the nation that knows the shofar blasts.* Now, in the Torah, Rosh Hashanah is known as **יוֹם תְּרוּעָה** – ‘The day of the shofar blast’ (Bamidbar 29:1), and Dovid Hamelech is telling us here that besides for blowing the shofar on the day of Rosh Hashanah, there is something called ‘knowing the shofar blasts’. It’s those individuals who make an effort to understand the lesson of the shofar blasts, they are the most fortunate among us; they are the ones who will have a successful Rosh Hashanah.

Now, who doesn’t want that? All of us here want another year, a good year of happiness and success, and therefore ‘Ashrei! How fortunate we will be if we take some time to know the *teruah*.’

Only that when you look in the Torah there’s nothing to know – it’s a mystery. The mitzvah of blowing shofar is stated in the Torah without any

reason. **וּבַחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי בְּאַחַד לַחֹדֶשׁ ... יוֹם תְּרוּעָה יִהְיֶה לָכֶם** – *In the seventh month on the first of the month ... it should be a day of shofar blowing for you* (Bamidbar 29:1). That’s all; it doesn’t even mention the word Rosh Hashanah – surely not a reason for the shofar blasts. In one other place something is mentioned: It should be a **זְכוֹרֹן תְּרוּעָה** – *a shofar blast that reminds you* (Vaykira 23:24). But to remind us of what?! It’s a blank.

Seek Out the Rabbis

Now, the first thing we see is that Hakadosh Baruch Hu wants to demonstrate the importance of *Torah Shebaal Peh* – the Oral Law that was taught to Moshe Rabbeinu on Har Sinai and handed down from generation to generation. Because you see here that the Torah is intentionally concealing information. After all, there must be something more here; all of a sudden on the first day of the seventh month you blow shofar? What’s the procedure? And what’s the idea altogether?

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And so we understand right away that the reason is concealed from us in order that we should go to the Torah Sages. Hashem says, "In the seventh month on the first day you blow shofar. That's all I'm telling you. You want to know what it's all about? Go to the *Chachmei haTorah* who received the *Torah Shebaal Peh* and they will tell you. They'll tell you that it's a Yom Hadin and that you have to blow a certain amount of blasts, with a certain procedure. From them, you can begin to understand the purpose of this mitzvah."

The Machzor's Answer

And what do the *Chachomim* tell us? So when you look in the *seder hatefillah* – the *tefillos* were written by the *Anshei Knesses Hagedolah*, the keepers of the *Torah Shebaal Peh*. And so when you look there, you see that Rosh Hashanah is all about *malchiyos*; everything revolves around Hashem's Kingship.

Yes, you'll find that there are other aspects too but even they are all connected to the element of proclaiming Hashem the Melech. When we blow the shofar, those blasts are coming to proclaim His Malchus. That was the practice in the olden days, when a king began his reign it was announced by the blowing of trumpets. And that's what we're doing on Rosh Hashanah; we're announcing that He is the Melech. 'Hashem Melech!' – that's the theme of the day.

The English King

Now, I use the word *melech* deliberately because the English word 'king' doesn't do any justice at all to the word *melech*. Because when we consider the truth of the matter, who was the king of England really? He was a *shikur* who gained the throne by assassinating someone before him. The kings weren't elected; they weren't chosen because of their good *middos*. It was somebody who was a tough brute, a buccaneer and racketeer who fought his way to the top.

I'll tell you one of the stories as it's told in the history books. I'm saying it in short but you'll understand the picture. There was a brigand in the highlands of Scotland who was more vicious than his fellow cousins, and so after committing many deeds of mayhem, he finally gained control of his clan; this big brute now became the chief. But because he was an ambitious brute, that wasn't enough, and so after a few well-timed murders he succeeded in building himself a castle and making himself a member of the Scottish nobility.

After a while he was so rich that his family intermarried with the reigning family in England. *Invei hagefen b'invei hagefen* – the drunkards of Scotland were *meshadech* with the drunkards of England. And then, when a suitable situation arose, this Scottish mobster hired someone to plunge a dagger into his *mechutan* and he himself took over. That's how he acquired the title 'king.'

A Different Type of King

But when we say Hashem is King, it means something else altogether. Because Hashem is not someone Who came to a country that already existed and He was chosen King or He conquered them and became their King. No, our King is something very different – He *made* the country and He *made* the people. And then He put the people into the country and that's how He became Kking.

That, by the way, is why Rosh Hashanah is on the first of Tishrei, the day He created the world. *הַיּוֹם הָרַת עוֹלָם* – *Today is the birthday of the world*. We say that again and again on Rosh Hashanah. And it's not a new idea, a separate subject from Hashem Melech. It's the explanation.

How did He become King? When He made the world *yesh me'ayin*; He brought it into being out of nothing. Before, there was no world. It was *ayin* – there was nothing at all except Hashem. And when He made the universe, He became a *Melech*. *Hashem Melech* means He created His kingdom, *u'molach*

alei hem, and thereby He became the King. Now *that's* a King! Everything else, all of creation, it's only His wish that makes it exist; but intrinsically nothing has any existence. And that's what Rosh Hashanah is saying – our King is something entirely different because He's the only real existence in the world.

A Virtual Reality

That's why when we say various *pessukim* about Hashem's *Malchus* in the Rosh Hashanah *mussaf tefillah* so the last one is **שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֱלֹהֵינוּ ה' אֶחָד**. All the other *pessukim* mention the word *Melech*. That's the point of the ten *pessukim* of Kingship. But the last one, the grand finale, seems to be missing the most important word. It's just **שָׁמַע יִשְׂרָאֵל ה' אֶחָד**; it doesn't mention anything about Hashem being the King.

But Hashem Echad, that's the true explanation of Hashem Melech, because Echad means that He is the only One Who exists. The only One? Don't we exist? So the Rambam explains that He is the *mechuyav hametzui*; it means He is the only One Whose existence is a real existence; everything else in the world exists only because Hashem wants it to be in existence. We exist only in the sense that He causes us to be in existence through His *ratzon* – if He stopped imagining us into existence we would disappear into nothing. Of course, His Imagination is a significant Imagination. You can pinch yourself; you see that you're real. But still, it's only His Imagination. Our King is the only One Who actually exists.

And that means that He's the only One we should be thinking about. Hashem Echad means that He should be the Echad in our thoughts. No matter what you are doing – no matter what you are thinking about, He's the One Who you should be thinking about most. And that's the *teruah*, the blast we blow, to announce His Kingship, to proclaim to all that His existence is the only One in the world.

Trumpeting Moshiach

Now why don't we just get together and shout? Who needs a shofar blast? The answer is that the human voice is not strong enough to emphasize the greatness of the occasion – it requires the big blast of the shofar. Like it says about that day that we're all looking forward to, the day of **תִּקַּע בְּשׁוֹפָר גָּדוֹל לְחִירוֹתֵינוּ** – Hakadosh Baruch Hu will someday sound a great shofar and take us out of *golus*. Now why will He sound a great shofar? Let Him just come and take us out. We need trumpets? Just take us out and we'll be happy.

The answer is that the greatness of the event requires a shofar blast. Just like the great event of Mattan Torah came with a blast, Moshiach will also come with a loud blast. The whole world is finally going to know the truth; it will be revealed that *Hashem Elokei Yisroel* is King and that all the ideologies of the *umos haolam* are *sheker v'chazav*.

All their religions are false. All their schools, all their teachings are loaded with *sheker*. All their *minhagim*, their attitudes toward life are all wrong. Only the way that the Am Hashem has been conducting itself throughout history, that's the only way Hashem recognizes. And now, in order that the world should hear that *emes*, Hakadosh Baruch Hu will make a *shofar gadol*, a blast that will deafen the ears. Because what's most important must be announced with a boom, a blast.

Let's Have a Blast

And that's why the declaration of His Kingship we do by means of a shofar. Not quietly. A *declaration with a blast*. Because in this world the great truths are not heard – **מִקוֹל הַמּוֹנֵה שָׁל רוֹמֵי** – *because of the great noise that comes from Rome* (Yoma 20b). Now it doesn't mean only from Rome in Italy. It means also the great noise that comes from the *tumah* of New York and the *tumah* of London and Paris and Tel-Aviv and Berlin and Moscow.

All over the world, the centers of gentile civilization are producing noise of *sheker*. The

scientists and evolutionists, the politicians and entertainers and televisions and newspapers; a world full of *apikorsim* making noise. And so today we make a big blast to remind ourselves that our job is to drown out their noises. Hashem Melech means we're shouting them down; we're laughing at them.

Hashem Melech means that we are drowning out all of the noise from the other religions too. Because they're nothing. I don't want to insult the religions because we are good friends of everybody. Along with being loyal citizens of our country, we're good with everybody. But it's plain ridiculous. All the religions are ridiculous. And because the world makes noise about nothing, so we need the shofar blast to drown them out.

Know the Shofar Blast

And so we come back now to אֲשֶׁרֵי הָעָם יוֹדְעֵי תְרוּעָה - *Fortunate are those who know what the teruah is all about*, and we'll say now that this is the purpose of the shofar blasts; Hakadosh Baruch Hu is being proclaimed by us as the Melech!

Rosh Hashanah is dedicated to making ourselves aware that there is only One thing in the world and there is only One thing that *matters* in the world: Hashem Melech, Hashem Echad. And as much noise as the world wants to make, we're going to stand our ground. We're putting the world on notice: as far as we're concerned ה' מְלֶכֶּךְ ה' מְלֶכֶּךְ ה' יִמְלֹךְ לְעֹלָם וָעֶד - *Hashem always was King, Hashem is King now, and Hashem will be King forever and ever.*

Part II. Listening to the Shofar

The Purpose of Too-Too-Too

And so we begin to see now what the Yom Teruah means to those who are *yod'ei teruah*. It's not just a sound that we listen to for one or two days; we listen to the shofar in order that it should have very far-reaching consequences after Rosh Hashanah too. Yom Teruah means "Make this day

your model. Make noise about Hashem all year long!"

But the question is, are we here in this world just to make noise for other people to hear, to proclaim to the world? Is it all for export? Actually the mitzvah is for every individual to hear the shofar, and so we must say that the most important target at which we are aiming all the noise is ourselves. We are the ones who will benefit most by hearing the *kol shofar* and therefore we are the ones who have to listen most.

After all, you're not doing it for Hashem. He doesn't need our coronation to ascend the throne. That's as silly as could be; a little man on this earth takes a ram, saws off its horn, stands up in shul, and gives a blow, too-too-too, and you'll give honor to the King? The Creator of the universe Who created billions of star worlds in which this earth is a speck of dust, and because one human being or a thousand or even a million human beings blow on the shofar, so He becomes exalted now from too-too-too? Of course not. We won't make Him any more of a *Melech* no matter how much we blow.

So what is meant when we say עֲלָה אֱלֹקִים בְּתְרוּעָה, that He is exalted by our shofar blowing? The answer is that when we announce Hashem's Kingship He becomes exalted *in our own minds*.

Learning to Listen

Now don't think it's such a simple matter; because people are always hearing things and never gaining anything. *Tzu derheren*, to acquire the knack of assimilating within yourself what you're hearing, there's a certain greatness in that. To listen and to take it seriously – to let it enter into your bones – it saturates your mind and you become changed gradually; you become actually a new person by listening.

And so when we make a *brachah* לְשִׁמְעֵ קוֹל שׁוֹפָר, to hear the voice of the shofar, it means more than just listening to the sound. It's not enough merely to stand and think "I'm listening." Of course we have

to listen if the kolos are kosher to be yotzei, but we shouldn't stop there – you have to understand that it's talking to you.

The Talking Ram-Horn

The Rambam says that the shofar is telling you something – the Rambam in his big *sefer* doesn't usually give reasons for the *mitzvos* and here he says that there's a teaching in the voice of the shofar: עורו ישנים משנתכם – 'Awake o' sleepers from your slumber וְנִרְדָּמִים הִקִּיצוּ מִתְרַדְּמֵיכֶם – Sleepyheads arise!' (Hilchos Teshuva 3:4).

That's the purpose of the shofar, so that we ourselves should wake up and hear that Hashem is the King. Because we've been fast asleep for many months now – Olam Hazeh does that to a person; it's a lullaby that knocks us out – and so the shofar comes along and blows, "Tooooo-tooooo-tooooo! Wake up, you sleepers!" That's how a person has to stand in shul when the *baal tokeia* is blowing; he's trying to wake himself up. "Miller! Do you hear that?! Wake up, Miller! They're announcing 'Hashem Melech!'"

Bestir yourself! Throw off all the styles and fads and ideas of the day, all the things that people are busy with and go back again to the original Source where it's Hashem Melech and nothing else. *Shema Yisroel, Hashem Echad!* Hashem is the only One to Whom we listen. All of our attitudes have to come back to the Torah; that's our Source for our thoughts and for our emotions. That's what the *shofar* is telling us. That's what Hashem Melech means. It means that we are going to be busy all year reminding ourselves that there is nothing important in this world except for Hashem

A Thoughtful People

How is that? How is Hashem One? Only if people make up their minds to listen only to Him. It means to learn Torah, to think Torah thoughts as much as possible. We are a nation whose existence is the study of the Torah. We're not a nation merely that lives with *kedushah*, a nation that is virtuous

and does good deeds and *chessed* – we're much more than that! We're a nation of thought, of *machshavah*.

That's a point unfortunately which most people overlook. Hakadosh Baruch Hu wanted that the nation should be a thinking nation; וְדַבְרַתְךָ בָּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ וְדַבְרַתְךָ בְּבֵיתְךָ וּבְלִבְתְּךָ בְּרֶדֶךָ וּבְשִׁבְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ. Constantly, always, the Am Yisroel should be engaged in studying Torah and thinking Torah ideals.

Of course, Torah can have many aspects. It can be Torah that's complicated and difficult; we call it technicalities, *halachos*. There's Torah, the principles of the Torah, the *darkei haTorah*, *mussar*, *emunah*. Even women have so many parts of Torah that are applicable to them. Women can also always be thinking and talking in the ideals of Torah. But whatever it is, we're a nation of *machshavah*. And the shofar is saying, "Hashem is your Melech and therefore get busy making for yourself a Torah mind."

A Television for a Diamond

Of course, included in that is also to shut out from our minds all other influences that contradict that lesson. Certainly someone who listens to the shofar's lesson won't have a TV. Imagine someone who proclaims Hashem King and then he goes home to a TV or radio. It's ridiculous! It means he didn't hear anything yet; he didn't hear the *tekios* yet.

If you heard the shofar so you go home right after Yomtiv and you throw your TV out the window. Make sure that nobody is walking on the sidewalk below – if the coast is clear, drop it out the window. Your wife won't let? So give her some money to go shopping and when she's out on the avenue put it out with the garbage. The magazines too! And if you have to buy her a diamond ring to make her happy again, it's worth it. You must! Because if *tzu derheren*, if you were affected by the shofar so you'd begin to understand clearly all the issues involved in living and that life has a purpose. If you were listening to

the coronation of the King you'd understand that the coming year means a year of responsibility.

New Year's Resolutions

And that's why on Rosh Hashanah among the most important functions is to make *kabalos*, to take upon ourselves certain plans for the ensuing year or for our entire lives. The *kadmonim* used to do that. They would spend some time thinking about themselves and seeing in which areas they need improvement and then they planned certain stratagems, *eitzos v'tachbulos*, how to solve the problems of their behavior.

Like it says, לְעוֹלָם יְהִי אָדָם עָרוּם בְּיָרָאָה – a man should always be cunning in order to acquire *yiras Shomayim* (Brachos 17a). You have to plan ahead with various strategies. You can't just go against your enemy when you're unprepared for any tactics he might present against you. בְּתַחְבֻּלוֹת תַּעֲשֶׂה לָּךְ מְלַחְמָה – You have to make war with stratagems (Mishlei 24:6). You have to find ways לְהַגְדִּיל הַיְרָאָה וּלְהַקְטִין הַנִּסְיוֹן, of making the fear of Hashem greater and reducing the amount of risk by keeping out of the way of temptation (see Ohr Yisroel 2:5).

Good people would plan ways and means how to cope with our problems in the new year. And some wrote down their *kabalos* right after Rosh Hashanah so they shouldn't forget them. A whole year they kept that list with them.

So why shouldn't we do that too? Maybe we can't do it like the *kadmonim* did but even small *kabalos*, at least it's a promise for the future that things should be somewhat beyond what they were up till now. Whether it's in *shalom bayis*, your behavior towards your fellow man, in the way you *daven*, your ambitions to learn Torah, undertaking *masim tovim* and new *mitzvos*, or more *hidur mitzvahs*; whatever it is, to listen to the voice of the shofar and to understand that there's work to be done.

The First New Year's Resolution

And yet, among all the resolutions, as important as each one might be, the first and most important Rosh Hashanah resolution is that this year I'm going to make Hashem the Melech in my life. That's more important than any other *teshuvah*.

Now that explains something, it answers a *kasha* that everyone asks. We know that Rosh Hashanah is a day of the greatest *sakanah*. *Yom Hadin!* It's a very great danger because if a man is judged on Rosh Hashanah and Hashem considers that he has more sins than he has *mitzvos*, he's finished *chas v'shalom*. They won't give him an opportunity to wait for Yom Kippur. Who knows if he's going to be a *beinoni* that will be kept over until Yom Kippur for the final decision? Very many people are inscribed immediately on Rosh Hashanah and it's finished.

Emergency Teshuvah

Now since the *din* depends on *zechuyos* and on non-*zechuyos*, on merits and not merits, it would seem that our biggest job, the main function of Rosh Hashanah, would be to stand all day long and to say *al cheit*. How can it wait? Who knows where we're holding? Maybe even one *aveirah* less will be *machria lekaf zechus* so how can we postpone this *teshuvah* and wait until Yom Kippur? It's an emergency! If we could throw overboard some *aveiros* on Rosh Hashanah we might save ourselves – and instead we're busy with Hashem Melech and shofar blasts.

And the answer is that we're throwing overboard the biggest sin of all. We're doing the biggest *teshuvah* possible by saying 'Hashem Melech' all day long. There's nothing as important as that because without that nothing is worthwhile. You can say *al cheit* from now till tomorrow – *yiras Shomayim* without *Shomayim* is worthless.

Teshuvah on details is a very good thing but the most important *teshuvah* is, "Am I thinking, 'Hashem Melech?'" Not only now on Rosh Hashanah; Rosh

Hashanah *teshuvah* means that I'm *mischareit* on all the times this past year that I forgot this *yesod hayesodos*; I forgot to listen to the lesson of the shofar all year long. And that this year is going to be different.

Next Week Is For Details

Now after a person has successfully utilized Rosh Hashanah to gain the feeling that Hashem is a Melech, but still there remain some stains on his *neshamah* which he has to remove yet, some sins. After all, who doesn't commit some misdeeds in the details? And so Yom Kippur comes to take off the spots. Yes, Yom Kippur is vital for a Jew but if he didn't succeed in the most important function of Hashem Melech, then Yom Kippur is a failure for him. It's like taking spots off a *meis*; a dead body has some spots. What good is it to clean them off?

So first you have to be a *chai*! You have to be alive! And how do you do that? You have to blow the shofar and shout with all your heart all day long that Hashem is a Melech. You'll shout and blow and shout and blow and maybe you'll listen a little bit to what your mouth is shouting, that you're crowning Hashem as Melech.

Part III. Blowing the Tekios Again

Stop Blowing It

But there's a question here. Because it seems like the Am Yisroel goes a bit overboard with this mitzvah. After all, how many *tekios* are required to coronate Hashem as King? According to the Torah a few short blasts are sufficient to fulfill the Torah obligation. And yet we do much more than that.

The Gemara in Rosh Hashanah (16b) asks that question. לָמָּה תּוֹקְעִין וּמְרִיעִין בְּשֶׁהֵן יוֹשְׁבֵינָן וְתוֹקְעִים וּמְרִיעִין - Why do we blow shofar again and again on Rosh Hashanah? Besides for the *tekios* before *mussaf* – that's already enough to fulfill our obligation – we blow again more *tekios* during *mussaf*; and then again another set of *tekios* after

mussaf. The *seudah* is waiting for us at home but we keep going strong. 'Let the food wait,' we say, 'we're busy blowing shofar.' And so the question is, why is this so? Why do we blow so much?

The Confused Angel

And the answer given there is we do it in order to confuse the *satan*, בְּרִי לְעֵרֹב הַשָּׁטָן. On Rosh Hashanah the *satan* wishes to accuse the Am Yisroel and in order to throw him off balance and counter his accusations, we blow the shofar again and again, much more than required.

Now that's not so simple because the *satan* actually is not going to be confused by any amount of noise that we make. You can't fool him because he is nothing but *svarah*. He's a *malach* whose function is to present facts to *Beis Din shel maalah*. That's his job, to present the facts of the past and thereby deprive the accused of their future. And so no matter what we do, nine blasts or a hundred, he's going to present his case and say, "So and so doesn't deserve another chance."

A Wild Future

So pay attention now to the answer. If the *satan* is trying to deprive us of our future – that's his job after all – so our chief function on Rosh Hashanah is to convince Hakadosh Baruch Hu that we *do* have a future, that it *does* pay to give us another chance. And that's what we intend when we blow the shofar again and again; that's what we intend when we make even more noise than is required. We're not only proclaiming Hashem the King but we're making a *ra'ash* about it; we're getting excited about it.

That's what it means הִלְלוּהוּ בְּתַקְעַ שׁוֹפָר - You should be *m'hallel* Hashem with a shofar. Now, many people make a mistake and they think that *hallel* means 'to praise'; you should praise Hashem with the shofar. But it's a mistake. *Hollel* is someone who is excited. And הִלְלוּהוּ בְּתַקְעַ שׁוֹפָר means *go wild over Hashem with the shofar blasts*; to go all out.

And that's the promise we're making when תּוֹקְעִים וְחוֹזְרִים וְחוֹזְרִים וְחוֹזְרִים. We're not just going to anoint

You; we're going to be excited about it. We'll do it again and again until it finally runs off on us that you're Hashem Echad. We won't do it quietly. "Hashem Melech!" we'll shout.

You know in some places they do it wildly. If you walk in, you'd be amazed. They're screaming at the top of their lungs. "Hashem Melech!" You'd think maybe it's not proper, but for them that's the way to do it.

Insanity in Slabodka

I remember in Slabodka as Rosh Hashanah was approaching the air was saturated with gravity, a seriousness. All of our thoughts were, "We're approaching the Day of Judgment." But when Rosh Hashanah finally came, all of that preparation, all of that pent-up emotion, exploded in the excitement of 'Hashem Melech!' I can't forget the sight. I remember when they got up to say *Borchu* Rosh Hashanah night, it was actually wild.

It was something to see. The *shatz* got up and said, "*Borchu es Hashem hamivorach*", and a roar rose from the yeshivah people, raising the roof. "*Boruch Hashem hamevorach li'olam va'ed!*"

Then they sat down and then all together they started the first *brachah* before *Kriyas Shema*. "*Boruch, oy yoy yoy oy yoy oy yoy.*" And they were weeping and shouting. Not saying the words. *Shouting!* What a noise! They were raising the roof and stamping with their feet. They actually went wild – but it wasn't *vildkeit*; it was wild with thought. Every word they said took a long time. And finally it quieted down and the *shatz* said like this, "*Boruch atah Hashem hama'ariv aravim,*" and then there was an *amen*, a roar of an *amen!* "Amen!"

I'm sure a stranger would come in and say, "It's a madhouse here. A lunatic asylum."

And we'd say, "Mister, you're right. You come in here a lunatic and you go out sane. This is a place where you learn to have intelligence." Because what's the purpose of intelligence? To understand the truth of the world. And the truth of the world is

that there's nothing worth making noise about except Hashem.

The Missing Word

The world keeps quiet about Him. In the street we don't hear the Name of Hakadosh Baruch Hu among the *umos haolam* or irreligious Jews. The newspapers, all the media, they don't speak about Hashem at all. They ignore that subject entirely.

Even in the yiddish newspapers it's not in the headlines. It's formalized; *b'ezras Hashem* you'll find. Maybe *rashei tevot* for *bisyata dishmaya*, other stereotyped phrases. But they don't put in the headlines 'Hashem did this,' 'Hashem did that.' Unfortunately even among observant Jews, the *frumme*, I'm sorry to say that to a big extent you don't hear the *shem Shomayim*.

A Mouthful

The old Jews did that. In the olden days it was *shem Shomayim shagur b'fihem* – the name of Hashem was always in the mouths of the Am Yisroel.

You remember when Yaakov Avinu saw Yosef's little boys and he said, *מי אלה לך* – *who are these boys?*

So Yosef said, *בני הים* – "They are my children." Now he should have stopped talking – "they are my children." But he added, *אשר נתן לי אלקים בזה* – that Hashem gave me (Bereishis 48:9)

Naturally if you have children Hashem gave it. You don't go out and buy them in the supermarket. Why is it necessary to add, "that Hashem gave me"?

The answer is that they were always thinking about Him. Hashem was always in the headlines for the ancient Jew.

When Rochel didn't have any children and she complained, what did Yaakov Avinu answer her? *התחת אלקים אני אשר מנע ממך פרי בטן* – *Hashem withheld from you children (ibid. 30:2)*. He didn't say that 'you didn't have any children'. They didn't talk that way. Only Hashem gives and takes. And so when Iyov lost his property he said (1:21) *ה' נתן וה' לקח*.

You remember when Boaz was walking by his field and he saw the reapers? He said to them, “Hashem imachem”.

And they answered “Yevarechecha Hashem” (Rus 2:4)

With the *Sheim Hashem* by the way. They used Hashem’s Name in those days because they knew how to respect the Name. He was real; He was their King. That’s how they spoke in those days. Always, at every opportunity, they brought Hashem to the forefront. And not only they spoke that way, that’s how they thought.

Show and Tell

The great tragedy is when Hashem remains in the *siddur* or the *machzor*. Isn’t that a pity, that Hashem is relegated only to the *siddur* today? That’s called a King?

So at the beginning of the year we say that we’re going to turn over a new leaf – we’re going to take Hashem out of the *siddur* and bring Him out into the street. That’s what we’re saying when we blow again and again. We’ll talk about Him always and mention Him always. We’ll make noise about Him.

I know it’s not stylish today to talk that way. They’ll think you’re a *frumak*; they’ll say you’re a showoff. Let’s say you walk into a *kollel* and you’ll say something about Hashem so they know right away you’re an *am ha’aretz*. But Rosh Hashanah tells us that it’s not so! **הַלְלוּהוּ בְּתַקְעַ שׁוֹפָר** means that we should show it. We should go wild over proclaiming Hashem King with the *teruah*.

Make Big Noise

Teruah doesn’t mean merely noise; it means a big noise. Make a big noise about everything that has to do with Hashem. A big noise about Torah. Torah learning should always be praised. When somebody is a *lamdan*, praise him. When somebody is a *oved Hashem*, praise him.

Speak to your children. Praise to them the *middah* of *tefillah b’kavanah*. Speak about that constantly, how good it is to talk to Hashem about everything. Speak to them how good it is to make a *brachah* aloud. Teach your children how good it is to love *mitzvahs*, to kiss the *sefer Torah*, to kiss the *mezuzah*.

Speak highly of *yeshivahs*. Speak highly of *frum* Jews. Even to yourself you should speak. Speak highly of *gedolei yisroel*, of our *manhigim*; the *gedolim* and *tzaddikim*. Speak of them all the time in your homes. Constantly aggrandize everything, praise the Torah and praise the *avodah*. Praise good *middos* in the service of Hashem.

And by doing these things we are fulfilling our function of *teruah*, of making a big noise about Hakadosh Baruch Hu in this world.

Forget Travel and Trump

That’s what our noise has to be about, only about Hashem. Otherwise we don’t get excited at all. Sometimes you hear an Orthodox man and he says, “You know on the highway there, if you go this way and turn on that other road...”; he’s excited about the highways and how you can travel with shortcuts; take this way and the throughway. You have to know that he’s excited about the wrong subject. If he’s interested in traveling with his car Sunday, he gets into his car and he travels, then he didn’t hear the shofar yet; he’s not from the **יִרְעֵי תְרוּעָה**.

If a man is interested in talking to you about business and the market and politics, if he’s excited to tell you about a baseball game and special sales in the stores, so the shofar says, “Shah! Quiet! There’s nothing in the world to be excited about. Only the *emes*. The real *emes* is Hashem Melech. That’s where you have to make the noise.”

The Non-Stop Resolution

And by blowing shofar once and then again during *davening* and then again after *davening* we show we mean business. And even when we can’t

blow we shout 'Hashem Melech' again and again. We'll make a blast of noise and another blast and we'll keep at it, even more than required, because we're making a commitment now. "Don't listen to the *satan*," we say, "He's talking about the past but we're thinking ahead. We're telling you what's going to be in the future. We're going to be making noise about Hashem Melech non-stop."

And when the *satan* sees that we mean business, that we're committed for the future, that confuses the *satan* and makes him give up. "Oh," says the *satan*, "what can I do with these people?" And he retires in confusion; he gives up.

It means that we are worthy of getting a charter for the new year, a new year of life and happiness and success, because we are committed to this program of making a big noise about Hashem always, about being excited always only about Him.

L'shanah tovah tikasvu v'seichasmu kulchem

l'alter lechaim tovim

b'sifram shel tzaddikim gemurim

atem v'chol hanilvim aleichem.

-From end of Tape E-248,
the Rav's last Rosh Hashanah Lecture

LET'S GET PRACTICAL

A Year of Proclamation

This Rosh Hashanah I will *bli neder* listen to the *tekios* and *tefillos* with the intention of reinforcing the attitude that this coming year I will proclaim Hashem King all year long by going out of my way to speak about Him as much as possible. And I will spend time thinking through strategies and plans for how I can actually implement this resolution in my daily living.

This week's booklet is based on tapes:

31 - Hashem Is King | 609 - Shofar of Rosh Hashanah I
657 - Shofar of Rosh Hashanah II | 892 - Aspects of Rosh Hashanah
E-27 - Birthday of the World | E-43 - Be Excited Over Me

Listen: 718.289.0899 Press 1 for English and 2 for Thursday Night Lectures



Now that the judgment is coming, what can we do in order to find happiness as we approach Rosh Hashanah?



The truth is I'm not interested in making people happy in facing the Day of Judgment. I'd like to make them afraid. Happiness is something that you'll get if you'll go to a doctor who wants to give you some pills in order to distract you. But we *want* you to face it! We want you to be very much afraid! And that's the best thing that I can give you right now - *eimas hadin*, fear of being judged.

Old-time Jews told me they remembered in Europe years ago, way back, a hundred years ago, they used to weep on Rosh Hashanah. They used to weep. Everybody wept on Rosh Hashanah. So don't look for any special ways of being happy on Yom Hadin.

That's why I started out the lecture tonight with these *pesukim*, סָמַר מִפְּחָדֶךָ בְּשָׂרֵי - I shudder at the fear of Your judgment (Tehillim 119:120) because it's important for everyone to put foremost in his mind, the fear of the Yom Hadin. *Somar* means inflamed; sometimes if a person is very much frightened then he has gooseflesh on him, as if he's inflamed on his skin. To actually shudder, that's the healthiest thing you can do for yourself to prepare and that's going to give you a good start in the year ahead.

Of course you can eat meals tomorrow, on erev Rosh Hashanah, if you want. Some people don't but you can eat meals if you wish. You can sleep soundly tonight. I don't think my words will make you lose any sleep. I'm sure you won't tremble that much. But if once in a while you can give yourself a little artificial shudder, it pays to try it; it pays to shudder a little bit when you think of the Yom Hadin.

בראש השנה כמה דכייף איניש דעתיא טפי מעלי - On Rosh Hashanah, the more your mind is bent over and humbled, the better off you are (Rosh Hashanah 26a). Because Hakadosh Baruch Hu says, "Oh, this man is humbled before Me; there's some chance that he might make a change in his lifestyle." But if a man breezes through Rosh Hashana with a happy mind, then I'm afraid he has no intention of changing.

TAPE # 425 (September 1982)