



Celebrating
Ten
Years
of Shaarei Tefillah

Divrei Torah
from Shaarei Tefillah's
Learning Program



ShaareiTefillah
שערי תפילה

Torah Thoughts and Inspiration
Rosh HaShanah 5776



In late August as part of Shaarei Tefillah's 10th Anniversary celebrations, the community held a week of lectures and Shiurim mainly dedicated to Rosh Hashana and Tishrei themes. The Shiurim were inspiring and uplifting and an ideal preparation for the Yomim Nora'im.

Since our early days we have been fortunate and privileged to learn Torah and hear Droshas and Shiurim from some of the most outstanding Torah personalities in Melbourne, all of whom have greatly contributed to the ru'ach in our shul. Many of the Rabbonim who presented in our week of learning have spoken and taught at Shaarei Tefillah on numerous occasions over the years.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the presenters in this program for their support, and all the other teachers of Torah that have helped make Shaarei Tefillah such a unique makom Torah.

Also a heartfelt thank you to all our members, supporters, mispallelim and guests who have been a part of our community over the journey.

We look forward with great anticipation to the next 10 years!

Wishing you, all your families and the broader Melbourne Jewish community, a K'siva Chasima Tova, and only brochos for 5776.

Rabbi Ariele Berlin



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Good morning – it's time to wake up!

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Bishul Akum

Rabbi Moshe Schreck
Kollel Beth HaTalmud

The impact of new food trends

Bishul akum is the prohibition of eating food that was cooked by a Non-Jew. It is one of a series of rabbinic prohibitions that were enacted in order to safeguard Jews against the threat of intermarriage.¹ Due to a specific danger in joint consumption of food, bishul akum was designed to limit the ability of Jews to socialize with non-Jews in a meal setting. Nonetheless, only certain types of food, as delineated in this article, are subject to this prohibition.

What makes the halachos of *bishul akum* unique and challenging is its ever-changing application. The halachic authorities need to constantly research and review prevalent eating customs and reassessing which foods are included in this prohibition.

There are two criteria must be fulfilled in order for bishul akum to be applicable.

1. Inedible in its raw state² (אינו נאכל חי)

Example:

Most canned fruit are not subject to bishul akum because they are edible raw (apple, pear, corn).³

The impact of sushi consumption on tuna

The Question:

In recent years, the popularity of sushi consumption has increased dramatically. Many varieties of sushi contain raw tuna. Is grilled tuna, and the like, no longer subject to *bishul akum*? Does the consumption of raw tuna in sushi render tuna to be considered edible raw?

The “Ginger” Precedent:

The Mogen Avroham⁴ states that ginger is considered edible raw even though it is only edible raw if mixed with sugar. One may argue that raw tuna found in sushi is analogous to ginger, and would therefore be permitted. Rav Yisroel Belsky shlita, in a recent *teshuva*⁵, maintains that we should not consider tuna edible raw. Rav Belsky contends that in the case of ginger, the clear intention is to eat

ginger. “The sugar is simply added as an enhancement. However, in the case of sushi, one cannot say that the intention is to eat fish, and the other ingredients are merely to enhance the fish. Rather, people who eat sushi are interested in all the components such as rice, avocado, and vegetables, which are also the majority. Although fish is an important ingredient in sushi it is not the same importance as the ginger mixed with sugar.”⁶

2. Suitable to be served on a “king’s table”⁷ (עולה על שולחן מלכים)

Example:

Meat, potatoes, rice, etc....

Chow Mein Noodles

The Question:

Even though chow mein noodles are not edible raw, they are not fitting to be served on a king’s table on their own. However, their primary manner of consumption is as part of a salad that is fit for a king’s table. Do they now possess both criteria for bishul akum?

The “Fish Pastry” precedent:

The Gemorah⁸ discusses a delicacy where small salty fish, which are not subject to bishul akum, are mixed with flour which is subject to bishul akum. The Gemorah concludes that the applicability of bishul akum is dependent on the main ingredient of the food. Since the flour is the main ingredient, the food is subject to bishul akum.

In our case the main ingredient, which are the vegetables, are not subject to bishul akum since they are edible raw. According to the Gemorah’s principle we are to define the food based on the main ingredient. The salad would therefore not be included in bishul akum because the chow mein noodles on their own are not fit for a king’s table and when added to the salad are secondary to the vegetables that are edible raw.⁹

1. See Tur YD Siman 112.

2. YD 113:1.

3. See OU Bishul Akum Manual pg. 7 for an explanation why corn is permitted.

4. OC 203:4, brought in Gilyon Maharsha YD 113.

5. See the OU monthly publication “The Daf HaKashrus” vol. 22 no. 4.

6. Quotation from the above article.

7. It is reasonable to assume that whatever is served at elegant weddings is considered to fit this requirement.

8. Beitza 16.

9. OU Bishul Akum Manual pg. 4 teshuva from Rabbi Belsky shlita.



Tishrei Inspiration

Rabbi James Kennard and Rabbi Leor Broh

The Ultimate Kingship

Rabbi James Kennard

Throughout the Rosh Hashanah Tefillot (prayers) during Mussaf, we daven along 3 major themes of brachot (blessings):

- Malchiyot – Kingship whereby we acknowledge Hashem as King of the world
- Zichronot – Remembrances where Hashem remembers our actions
- Shofrot – Which translates as the plural of Shofar where Hashem intercedes in events, often with the accompaniment of the Shofar.

Each of these brachot is formulaic and draws on various Biblical verses to highlight the ideas behind these themes. Within Malchiyot, once verse, perhaps the most fundamental verse to Judaism, is recited: “Shema Yisrael Hashem Elokenu Hashem Echad”. Interestingly, this verse does not contain the word

Melech – King within its words, yet it is included within the section of Kingship. Thus, the logical question drawn from this is: Why do we include it in this section of Malchiyot?

Rav Dessler offers a solution. Rosh Hashanah’s goal is the universal acknowledgment that Hashem is our King. We accept him as King over the world in two primary ways, through yirah - fear and through ahava – love. Rav Dessler explains that yirah is a lower form of this acceptance. We may want something that isn’t in line with Hashem’s will, but we will suppress our own desires for the Higher Forces at play. However, the loftier and often harder level of accepting Hashem as King is through ahava. This ultimate level is achieved through recognising the Supreme Unity of Hashem and His Oneness, the “Hashem Echad – Hashem is One” of this verse. This is the level we strive for through our actions and thoughts. Our recognition of this Unity in its truest sense aligns Hashem’s Will with our desires, unifying our world and finally crowning Hashem as our King.

Rabbi Leor Broh

One pure request

Throughout the months of Elul and Tishrei we conclude the morning and evening prayers with Psalm 27 “L'David Hashem Ori – Of David; Hashem is my light.” One verse within the chapter states: “Achas sha-alti me-ays Hashem, osah avakesh ...— One thing that I ask Hashem, that shall I seek...”. This appears to be verbose, as the need for asking and seeking seems superfluous. The Chasam Sofer explains the need for this extra expression is to highlight that our true “one thing” is to serve Hashem. We as humans request many things, often superficial things, but we also have a higher goal. This goal is to be close to the Almighty. By stating this double expression we are saying although we ask much of You, giving us the opportunity for closeness is what we are really seeing. Therefore, we preface our request by qualifying our one pure request.

Body and Soul

During our recitation of Selichos in we pray that “The soul is Yours and the body is Your creation; have pity on Your work. The soul is Yours and the body is Yours; O Hashem, act for Your names sake”. This apparent contradiction represents the various relationships our body and soul can have between each other and their Creator. The Chasam Sofer expounds; there is a constant struggle between the Godly soul and the physical body. While “the soul is Yours”, being a loftier entity connected to something higher, the lowly body is merely a “creation”. This disconnect requires pity,

as each component pulls man in different directions. However, when the body and the soul are united in their Divine Service and both are “Yours”, then we ask Hashem to save us not for our sake, but for the sake of His holy name. This higher level demonstrates the potential level humans can reach, with our ultimate goal of serving Hashem’s holy name residing in our ability fuse both physicality and spirituality.

A Yom Kippur Transformation

During the Yom Kippur avodah (service) during the times of Holy Temple, the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) would enter the Kodesh Ha’Kadoshim (Holy of Holies) and beg forgiveness for the Jewish people and the entire world. He would dress in white clothes and after he performed the service, these clothes would be discarded never to be worn again. This symbolic gesture represents our transformation on Yom Kippur. The power of Teshuvah (repentance) is so great that we are in a sense shedding ourselves of our sinful garments. Whilst before Yom Kippur we wore certain attitudes and deeds, we are now emulating the Kohen Gadol by abandoning our previous selves. By leaving behind our prior problems, we are showing the Almighty that we have changed, we are now different. This is perhaps the reason that true Teshuvah is on such a lofty spiritual plane, that even the most righteous are unable to attain it. With this attitude throughout our approach to Yom Kippur, we are able to atone and remake ourselves achieving true repentance and greater spiritual heights.

The Power of Three

Rabbi Yonason Johnson
Rosh Kollel of Kollel Menachem

The Kabbalah of the Shofar and the Rosh Hashonah Prayer

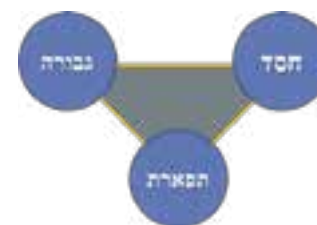
In mystical tradition, a great emphasis is placed on numerology, the significance of numbers. For example, numerology is expressed in the number of words in various Tefillos, especially during the Yomim Noraim (see Tur OC 581). These numbers have deep Kabbalistic significance and meaning.

The Mahara"l writes about the significance of the number three. Three represents totality and *Shleimus*. Time is divided into three; past, present and future and everything can be divided into three; beginning, middle and end (ראש תוך וסוף). Truth, אמת, comprises three letters; the first, last and middle letter of the Alef-Beis, because complete truth must be true on all levels.

One represents unity, but a unity which is not challenged. Two introduces a new, opposing dimension. Two ends of a line spread infinitely in opposite directions. The introduction of a third point, three, closes the triangle, joining together the two polarised extremes in a deeper level of oneness.

In Kabbalah, the number three is associated with the three primary *Sefiros*, the G-dly energies through which Hashem interacts with the world. *Chessed* is an expression of kindness, compassion or love. *Gevurah* (also referred to as *Din*) is a manifestation of judgment, distance, concealment and withdrawal. *Chessed* and *Gevurah* are opposites.

Tiferes (also referred to as *Rachamim* or *Emes*), the third *Sefirah*, completes the triangle. *Tiferes* is the fusing of *Chessed* and *Gevurah* working in balance; a kindness which is measured or a distance which is tempered. Hence *Tiferes* means beauty because of this balance.



Tekiyos and Brachos

The two primary Avodos of Rosh Hashona are Tekiyas Shofar and the special Musaf Tefillah. In both of these Avodos we find an emphasis on the number three.

The Mitzvah min HaTorah of Tekiyas Shofar is to sound three *Teruos*, each one preceded and followed by a *Tekiyah*. The Gemora records a three-way dispute as to what the *Teruah* sound is. This dispute gives rise to three different types of notes that we sound; *Tekiyah*, *Shevarim* and *Teruah*.

The Musaf of Rosh Hashona is the most unique Musaf of the entire year. In every other Musaf; Yomtov, Rosh Chodesh, Yom Kippur and Chol Hamoed, we recite seven Brachos; the three opening Brachos of praise, the final three Brachos of thanks and one middle Bracha for the Kedusha of the day. But on Rosh Hashona Chaza"l instituted three middle Brachos; *Malchios*, *Zichronos* and *Shofros*.

The Gemora describes the Kavanah of these three Brachos: Say before Me on Rosh Hashona (the blessings of) *Malchios*, *Zichronos* and *Shofaros*. *Malchios* in order to crown me as King over you. *Zichronos* so that your remembrance arises before Me for good. And how is this? Through the Shofar.

Zechus Avos

One of recurring themes of the Yomim Noraim davening is the appeal to *Zechus Avos*, the merit of our righteous Patriarchs; Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov.

Our sages teach אין קורין לאבות אלא שלושה, we only refer to three as the Avos. In Kabbalah, Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov are the embodiment of the three primary *Sefiros* of *Chessed*, *Gevurah* and *Tiferes*.

Avraham's service of Hashem and was through *Chessed* and *Ahavah*, hence he is referred to by the Novi as אברהם אהבי, Avraham My beloved. Yitzchak served Hashem through *Gevurah*, awe or fear, hence Yaakov refers to Hashem as *Pachad* Yitzchak. Yaakov, the third of the Avos, represents the *Sefirah* of *Tiferes*. *Tiferes* is specifically connected to Torah and hence to Yaakov the איש תם יושב אוהלים.



Rabbi Yaakov Emden (Siddur Yaavetz) points out that Shofar has the Gematria of *Chessed*, *Gevurah* and *Rachamim* (*Tiferes*). The Pardes connects the three Shofar sounds to the three *Sefiros*: קשת (rainbow) which in Kabbalah represents the three colours associated with the *Sefiros* of *Chessed*, *Gevurah* and *Tiferes* is made up of the *Roshei Teivos* of **TeKiyah**, **Shevarim**, **Teruah**.

The *Tekiyah* sound, a long, unbroken note, represents *Chessed*. *Shevarim*, meaning broken, is a manifestation of *Gevurah*. *Teruah* is a hybrid; on one hand it is a long note like the *Tekiyah*, but it is broken like the *Shevarim*. *Teruah* is reflective of *Tiferes*, the harmony and synthesis of *Chessed* and *Gevurah*.

In the Kavanos of the Shofar found in the Zohar, the *Tekiyah* sound ascends on High to arouse Avraham (the attribute of *Chessed*),

Shevarim arouses Yitzchak (*Gevurah*) and *Teruah* arouses Yaakov (*Tiferes*).

From Three to Thirty

The *Shleimus* of the number three is thirty (expanded by ten). Based on the dispute in the Gemora concerning the *Teruah* sound, to be *Yotzai* the Mitzvah of Shofar one must hear thirty notes of the Shofar; *Tekiyah-Shevarim-Teruah-Tekiyah* three times, *Tekiyah-Shevarim-Tekiyah* three times and *Tekiyah-Teruah-Tekiyah* three times.

In the Brachos of *Malchios*, *Zichronos* and *Shofros* we recite Pesukim to attest to the Middos described within each Bracha. The Mishna teaches that one should not say less than ten Pesukim of *Malchios*, *Zichronos* and *Shofros*, for a total of thirty. For each of the three Brachos we quote three Pesukim from Chumash, three from Kesuvim, three from Neviim and one final Posuk from Chumash.

The number thirty is significant as well. The Mishna teaches that *Malchus* (kingship) is acquired through thirty qualities. On Rosh Hashona we are arousing Hashem's *Midas Hamalchus* to rule over the world as reflected throughout our davening.

The Gemora asks what is the significance of reciting ten Pesukim? Three answers are put forward. Rabbi Levi says that they correspond to the ten terms of praise (*Hilulim*) found in Tehillim chapter 150, which mentions the Shofar. Rav Yosef says that they correspond to the Ten Commandments. Rabbi Yochanan says that they parallel the Ten Utterances through which the world was created (Let there be light, there be a firmament etc.)

Three Tens

The Sefas Emes writes that the three tens of *Malchios*, *Zichronos* and *Shofros* parallel three tens in Jewish history; the Ten Utterances of

Creation, the Ten Plagues in Egypt and the Ten Commandments.

Malchios and the Ten Utterances:

Kisvei HaAriza"l writes that the purpose for which Hashem created the world was because Hashem had a desire אנא אמלך, I will rule; to express His Kingship in the world to be accepted by man. This was achieved on the 6th day of Creation when Adam Harishon was created and gathered the animals together and proclaimed בואו נשתחוה ונכרעה בברכה, come, let us bow down... before Hashem who has made us. This day was Rosh Hashona and each year we too crown Hashem as our King.

Zichronos and the Ten Plagues: During the plagues, the *Middas Hadin* was *Mekatreg*: What is the difference between the Jews and the Egyptians that they too do not deserve punishment? During a time of Din we need to daven and cry out to Hashem so that He remembers us favourably as it says in the Posuk quoted in *Zichronos*; וישמע אלקים את ויצחק and Hashem heard their cries and remembered. This is the connection to the Gemora which connects the ten Pesukim to the ten *Hilulim* which represents Tefillah and crying out to Hashem.

Shofros and the Ten Commandments:

Shofros begins by describing and quoting Pesukim about the sound of the Shofar which is emphasised at Matan Torah. Our *Tekiyos* remind Hashem of our whole-hearted acceptance of Torah.

Connecting Back to the Sefiros

Creation was an act of *Chessed*, כי אמרתי עולם, חסד יבנה. The works of *Chakirah* explain that Hashem created the world because טבע הטוב, the nature of (Hashem who is) good is to do goodness. It was therefore Avraham Avinu who spread the awareness of Hashem's

Kingship throughout the world (*Malchios*), the inner purpose of Creation.

The Plagues were an expression of *Gevurah* and a time when the Jewish people were in need of a *zechus* and remembrance for good. This is connected to Yitzchak. The Posuk states וזכרתי את בריתי יעקב ואף את בריתי אברהם אזכור And I will remember My covenant with Yaakov and also my covenant with Yitzchak and also My covenant with Avraham I will remember. Rashi notes that the idea of remembrance is only mentioned in connection to Avraham and Yaakov but not to Yitzchak. The reason why remembrance is not mentioned with Yitzchak is because the ashes of (Akeidas) Yitzchak sit constantly before Hashem. In times of Din, like on Rosh Hashona, we appeal specifically to the *zechus* of Akeidas of Yitzchak, the eternal remembrance.

Matan Torah is connected to the *Sefirah* of *Tiferes*. *Tiferes* represents harmony, synthesis and peace between two opposite forces. This is the number three; the Torah, which was given in third month, on the third day, to a threefold people, through the third born is connected to the *Sefirah* of *Tiferes*. The Torah was given to make peace within the world, between the opposites of spirituality and physicality, to connect the creations to the Creator. Torah is connected to Yaakov.

Three in Avodah

The Mishna teaches that the world stands on three things; Torah, Avodah (Tefillah) and Gemilus Chassadim. Kabbalah connects these three pillars of Avodas Hashem to the three *Sefiros* and the three Avos:

Gemilus Chassadim is an expression of *Chessed*, like the service of Avraham who championed *Chessed* and *Hachnosas Orchim*. *Tefillah*, being an inwards-focused *Avodah*, is connected to *Gevurah* and Yitzchak. Torah is

connected to *Tiferes* and Yaakov as discussed above.

Summary

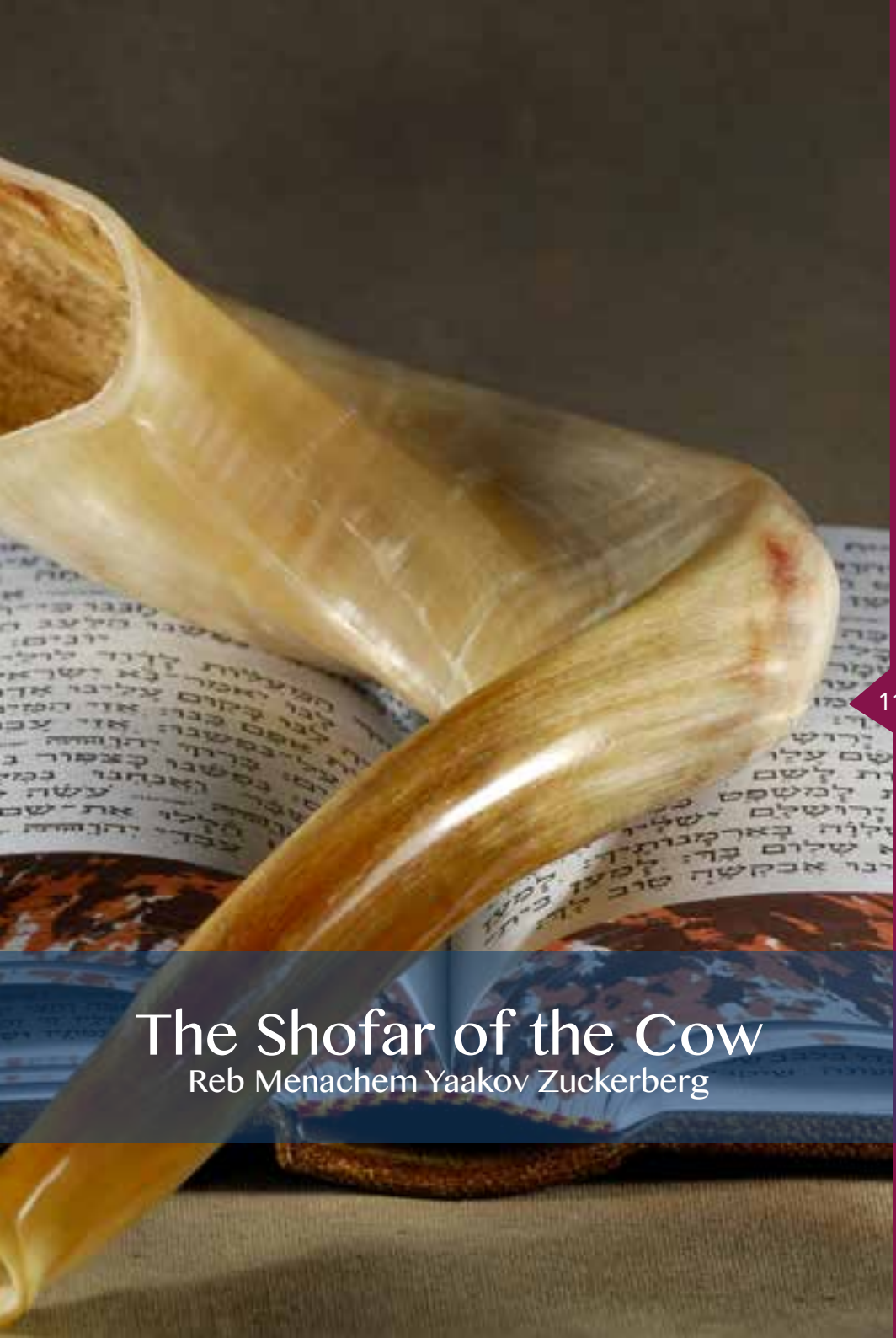
The ideas and connections discussed in this essay can be summarised in the following table;

Bracha	Malchios	Zichronos	Shofros
Sefira	Chessed	Gevurah	Tiferes
Avos	Avraham	Yitzchak	Yaakov
Sound	Tekiya	Shevarim	Teruah
Tens	Utterances	Plagues	Commandments
Avodah	Gemilus Chassadim	Avodah Prayer	Torah

On a Final Note

There is one final note which we have not yet discussed. In response to; Our Avodah of Torah, Avodah and Gemilus Chassadim, Our Tekiyas Shofar of Tekiyah, Shevarim and Teruah, Our Brachos of Malchios, Zichronos and Shofros And our appeal to the zechus Avos; Avraham, Yitzchak and Yaakov and the Sefiros which they represent, comes the final Tekiyah. This Tekiyah represents the hamshacha, the downwards flow of light and Brocha as Hashem’s response to our Avodah, which brings with it blessings for a Kesiva Vechasima Tovah, LeShanah Tovah Umesuka, materially and spiritually for all that we need.

The ultimate hamshacha will be the Tekiyah Gedolah of תקע בשופר גדול לחרותנו which will be blown to announce the arrival of Moshiach Tzidkeinu, והיה ביום ההוא יתקע בשופר גדול, when Hashem will sound the Great Shofar and bring us all back to the holy city of Yerushalayim and the Beis Hamikdosh Hashelishi.



The Shofar of the Cow
Reb Menachem Yaakov Zuckerberg

The Shofar of the Cow

The Mishna in Rosh Hashana 26a records a dispute as to the horns of which animals may be used for the mitzvah of shofar on Rosh Hashana. The view of the Chachamim is that a shofar from any animal is suitable, with the exception of that of a cow (or bull), as its horn “is a *keren*”. Rabi Yosi disagrees however, noting that a shofar from a ram’s horn, which is explicitly designated as a “shofar” in several places in Tanach, is also referred to as *keren*. Thus even if the horn of a cow is indeed designated as a *keren*, this is no disqualification for its use.

The Gemara explains that while Rabi Yosi is certainly correct that a valid shofar can also be designated as *keren*, the view of the Chachamim is based on the observation that the shofar of the ram is also referred to as shofar, and so it qualifies for the mitzvah. Bovine horns, on the other hand, are only designated as *keren*, as in the passuk, “The firstborn of his ox, beauty belongs to it, and the horns (*karnei*) of the re’em are its horns (*karnav*)”. It is never designated as shofar, and so it is disqualified.

The rishonim¹ raise a number of difficulties with this Gemara:

1. If the source for the disqualification of a cow’s horn is from the passuk, *karnei re’em karnav*, then the horns of the re’em ought to be equally disqualified, as its horns are also designated as *keren* in the same expression, and they, as well, are never designated as shofar.
2. The term “shofar” is a reference to the musical instrument fashioned from the horn of an animal, and is never used in Tanach as a reference to the horn while it is still attached to the animal. But how, in that case, can any inference be drawn from the expression *karnei re’em karnav*, as that is a reference to the horns of a living ox (as the passuk continues, “with them shall he gore nations”), which in any case can only be referred to as *keren* and not as shofar?
3. The Chachamim also permit the use of the shofar of a yael (a mountain goat), despite the fact that nowhere in Tanach is its horn referred to as a shofar.

In answer to this last question, several rishonim write that since the horn of a yael is never referred to in Tanach as *keren*, there is no need to refer to it as shofar in order for it to qualify as a shofar. But this makes the Gemara very difficult to understand for the following reason:

4. If there is no need for the Torah to refer to a horn as shofar for it to qualify for the mitzvah, and a designation as *keren* is also not a disqualification (as is evident from the shofar of the ram), then why should the bovine horn be disqualified? It would seem quite odd to suggest that because the Torah in one place refers to it as *keren*, an innocuous term as evidenced by the ram’s horn, it must offset that reference somewhere else by referring to it as shofar.
5. Finally, how are we to understand the meaning of the disqualification, “because it is a *keren*”. What is the difference in meaning between *keren* and shofar?

The Ramban in his Drasha leRosh Hashana makes the following suggestion, which seems to unlock this Gemara: He writes that the term “shofar” refers to a sheath – a hollow keratin cover that envelopes the bone growing from the animal’s head. Thus deer antlers, which are just dead bone with no keratin sheath, or rhinoceros horns, which are solid keratin, or giraffe horns, which are fur covered protrusions, are not shofars at all. They are all *keren*, as is every horn of a living animal from which the keratin cover has not been removed; none are shofar (answering question 5).

With this insight, the Ramban suggests that the re’em possesses a solid horn, and thus its horn is not a shofar at all, and does not need to be excluded (answering question 1). He further explains that the proof that the horn of a cow – which does indeed meet the technical definition of the term shofar – is nevertheless to be treated as if it were just a *keren*, is that the Torah writes *karnei re’em karnav*, i.e. the ox’s horns are (to be treated as) the horns of the re’em – which are not shofars at all and never will be even after being removed (answering questions 2, 3, and 4).

But while the Ramban’s explanation answers all the questions beautifully², it rests on the assumption that the horns of the re’em are solid and therefore not in the category of shofar. The problem is that the two usual suggestions as to the identity of the Biblical re’em, namely the oryx (a type of antelope), and the aurochs (a species of large wild ox, considered the ancestor of modern bovines), both possess keratin covered horns. There is however, a third possibility. An aggadic re’em is described in Bava Basra 73b and Midrash Shmuel 22 as an enormous creature the size of a mountain. And while it would seem that the Ramban did not take these descriptions literally, he seems to have nevertheless understood the re’em to be a very large creature (which is also the implication of the Gemara in Zevachim 113b). This creature, needless to say, is neither an oryx nor an aurochs, and the Ramban seems to have supposed that its horns were solid.

If we adopt the view however, that the re’em is an oryx³ or an aurochs, then the Ramban’s explanation will no longer suffice. Perhaps we may suggest that the core distinction between shofar and *keren* is that *keren* is a part of the anatomy of an animal, while shofar is a musical instrument. To say that a shofar of an ox is disqualified because “it is a *keren*”, means that even after it is removed and made into an instrument, it does not escape its core identity as a part of the animal. The reason for this is that the dominating character of an ox’s horn is as a dangerous weapon – it is after all one of the fundamental classes of damages. This so indelibly stamps the character of the ox’s horn in the human eye that even after being transformed into a musical instrument, its new

identity cannot wash away or even modify its original one. This may be the sense of quoting a passuk that describes in poetic terms how one who is ox-like gores nations with his *keren*. The meaning of the ox’s horn, from the human perspective, is an instrument of damage and destruction. It can never escape this. It is always just a *keren*⁴.

With this we can perhaps understand the sequence that follows in the Gemara, in which the Gemara goes on to offer an alternative explanation for the view of the Chachamim disqualifying bovine horns. The Gemara suggests that they are reminiscent of the golden calf, and the “prosecutor cannot be the defender”. But it is quite puzzling how this can be stated as the reason of the Chachamim, when the Mishna states that their reason is because bovine horns are *keren*.

The explanation however may be that these two ideas are in fact related, with the second bolstering the first. The disqualification of the ox’s horn due to being a *keren* should be taken to mean that while the Torah does in fact require that an animal horn be used for the mitzvah, indicating that the instrument by which we are to pledge our belonging to God should be one that frames us as part of the world of nature, it nevertheless does not wish for it to be an instrument that conveys completely untrammelled animal nature. The worship of the golden calf was a worship of the divinity that in pagan belief resided in the untrammelled power of the ox. A shofar that would glorify this same power would indeed be reminiscent of that pagan view, and is unsuitable for the mitzvah.

1. See the Ramban’s Derasha leRosh Hashana in Kisvei Ramban I pg 226 – 230 for a lengthy discussion. The same issues are discussed by most of the rishonim in Rosh Hashana 26a as well.

2. It does remain to be explained though, why the Torah should have chosen to treat bovine shofar as if it were not a shofar at all. The Gemara later suggests two other reasons why the horn of a cow may not be used: it is reminiscent of the golden calf, and it is comprised of sections. Possibly these are the underlying reasons for the disqualification, but the way the Torah conveys the fact of disqualification is by comparing the cow’s horn to that of a re’em.

3. The Sifri on the passuk, *vekarnei re’em karnav* writes that Yosef was compared to an ox and to a re’em, because the ox has great strength but lacks beautiful horns, while the re’em possesses beautiful horns, but not great strength. This seems to be a strong indication that the Sifri took the re’em to be the oryx. The description in Iyov 39 : 9 – 12 however, seems to describe the re’em as a more powerful, but wild, version of

an ox, which is more consistent with an aurochs.

4. Thus the purpose of the Gemara in quoting the passuk is not to provide an example in which bovine horn is called *keren*, as there is no significance in this. It is rather to bolster the claim that the absence of a passuk referring to bovine horn as shofar is not accidental. The fact that its *keren* character is so indelibly stamped upon it that it acts as a metaphor for destruction and conquest is of a piece with the claim that its dominant impression is “*keren*” and not “shofar”. Note though that if re’em is an oryx, there is nothing in the passuk that indicates that its horns cannot be termed shofar (as it is the ox and not the re’em that is goring), and as mentioned, the fact that they are described as *keren* in the passuk is of no significance. If however, re’em is an aurochs, then presumably its horns should be excluded as well. But this poses no difficulty, as it is also a form of ox, and would fall under the Mishna’s category of “cow”. The same presumably holds for buffalo and bison.

Yom Kippur From Teshuva to Geulah

Reb Gideon Morrison-Wood

Yom Kippur: From Teshuva to Geulah

Uniquely in Neila, the word “Keitz” is used in two places; first negatively: ‘Ein **Keitz** l’Ishei Chovoteinu’ describing the lack of a limit to the number of offerings that would be necessary to expiate our transgressions, and second positively: ‘Vatitein lanu Hashem Elokeinu b’ahava et yom tzom ha’kippurim hazeh, **Keitz** u’mechila u’selicha al kol avonoteinu’ describing Yom Kippur itself as a ‘deadline’ or ‘endpoint’. In the whole year of davening Nusach Ashkenaz, this word is only used here; and in order to understand why, we must look at the significance of Yom Kippur in the cycle of the Jewish year.

Tosafot at the end of Megilla (31b) quote a famous pesikta describing the journey that we take as a nation every year from shiva asar b’tammuz until Yom Kippur. The pesikta tells us that we should read three haftorot of ‘trouble’ (which we do during the three weeks before Tisha b’av), then seven haftorot of ‘consolation’, followed by two of ‘teshuva’ (which we read on Tzom Gedalia and Shabbat Shuva). Whilst we tend to view the process as concluding on the week before Rosh Hashana with the last of the seven haftorot of consolation, the pesikta makes clear that this is not the case. On the contrary, it would seem that the main purpose of the ten weeks prior to Rosh Hashana is to provide the context and preparation for the ‘two of teshuva’ that conclude on the Shabbat prior to Yom Kippur. Indeed, the Rambam in hilchot teshuva makes clear that teshuva is a process which has three stages: ‘Hakarat H’Chet’ (the painful realisation that past behaviour has distanced us from Hashem), ‘Vidui’ (a confession demonstrating an understanding of what went wrong, and re-establishing the close relationship with Hashem by fixing it), and ‘Kaballa al H’Atid’ (the resolve to break the cycle of sin in the future). Each year, we as a nation actually experience each of these stages of teshuva

sequentially – the mourning of the three weeks culminating in the kinnot that we say over the destruction of the Temple on Tisha B’Av reflect our national Hakarat Ha’chet. Having begun the teshuva process, as the Rambam (Hil Teshuva 6:5) based on the gemara (Shabbat 104a) says, Hashem then helps us by providing inspirational messages of consolation (as well as the yemei ratzon of Ellul) to inspire us to restore that close bond (Tikkun ma’aseh and Vidui). Finally, we are ready for the final stage (Kabbala al H’Atid) which is expressed in the two haftorot of ‘teshuva’ during the ten days of repentance, for example, ‘Ya’azov rasha darko v’Ish avein machsevotav’, which talks not about the abandonment of specific behaviours, but a shift in mindset going forward.

What then is Yom Kippur all about? As Rav Soloveichik makes clear in many places, the Mussaf repetition is much more than the regular ‘chazarat ha’shatz’ of what has been recited privately moments earlier. The Avodah section is literally a re-enactment of what occurred in the Beit Hamikdash – the chazzan is the Kohen gadol, and if the congregation close their eyes, they are in the azara. This is why everyone prostrates for the three confessions, because for those few minutes, we are all standing in a rebuilt beit hamikdash once again, lifnei Hashem. Having gone through the entire teshuva process as a nation for twelve weeks, on Yom Kippur we experience geula – redemption, complete with the binyan habayit and the joyful emergence of the Kohen Gadol from the kodesh kodashim “b’shalom bli fega”. Of course, Yom Kippur is also there to facilitate a staged teshuva process deeper than before – there is also a moment of intense pain (Hakarat HaChet) when the illusion is shattered and we realise that we are not standing in Yerushalayim (which is why the piyutim following the avoda are kinnot,

including the asara harugei malchut). The story of Yonah at Mincha once again teaches us about genuine Tikkun Ma'aseh and Vidui, and Neila is entirely about future resolve (which is why there is no al chet recited) – Neila is no longer about Viduy – pinpointing specific sins, but a desperate plea for Hashem to recognise our change in mindset. This is also the reason that according to many poskim, Neila cannot be davened unless all four other Yom Kippur prayers have been – its purpose is to be the final part of the teshuva process.

Incidentally, this analysis can explain why, according to the Rambam (Hil. Teshuva 2:6), this period of time is more 'yafeh' (auspicious) for teshuva. Individual teshuva is of course accepted throughout the year, but it is on a far higher level when as a nation we are going through the process as well. Since at this time of year the teshuva of the individual is subsumed within the teshuva of the klal, it is 'mitkabel miyad' (accepted immediately) – it is to teshuva what davening with a minyan is to tefilla.

There is an oft-quoted machloket between R' Eliezer and R' Yehoshua in the gemara (Rosh Hashana 10b / 11a) as to whether the World was created in Nissan or Tishrei. The interesting thing is that each Tanna looks through this lens to give us their view of the month in which the final geula will take place – R' Eliezer holds "B'Tishrei nivra ha'olam ... B'Tishrei atidin liga'el" – R' Yehoshua holds "B'Nissan nivra ha'olam ... B'Nissan atidin liga'el". A parallel machloket exists between these two Tana'aim in Sanhedrin (97b), in the context of discussing the final geula in more detail. Introducing this machloket, the gemara brings the argument between Rav and Shmuel: Rav says - "Kalu kol **ha'Kitzim**, ve'ein hadavar talui ela b'teshuva u'ma'asim tovim", (All **kitzim** [deadlines / fixed end points] have passed – the redemption now depends only

on teshuva and good deeds). Shmuel says: "Dayo L'Evel Sheya'amod B'evlo" (For the redemption to transpire, it is sufficient for the mourner to maintain his mourning.). The gemara then aligns Rav and Shmuel to the views of R' Eliezer and R' Yehoshua respectively. R' Eliezer says: "If the Jewish people do teshuva, they will be redeemed, but not as long as they do not". R' Yehoshua says: "How can you maintain such a thing that they will remain unredeemed?! Rather Hashem will appoint a ruler over them like Haman who will cause them to repent involuntarily..."

In the view of R' Yehoshua, the geula comes primarily from shamayim – the force behind it is 'top-down'. When we live through the period of Purim and Pesach at Nissan time, we annually experience R' Yehoshua's form of geula – first Parashat Zachor and Purim (teshuva driven by anti-Semitism), then the miraculous redemption of Pesach; without the Jewish people necessarily driving the process. This is the reason that the halacha demands that Pesach immediately follow Purim, even in a leap year where Purim could just as easily be in Adar Rishon. In Nissan, we 'pasken' like R' Yehoshua.

Not so with Tishrei. Here, although the opportunity for teshuva is given by Hashem, we take the initiative as Klal Yisrael. The final end to this teshuva process is Yom Kippur, which, according to R' Eliezer is the critical piece of the geula process. The word 'Keitz' is specifically associated with Geula both in Tanach (e.g. Shemot 12:41) and Talmudic literature (for instance, see the statement of Rav above). We therefore refer to Yom Kippur as the ultimate '**Keitz**' – indeed, according to R' Eliezer, each and every year, we are given a new opportunity to bring the geula shleima in Tishrei through the communal teshuva process that culminates

with Neila. In Tishrei, we 'pasken' like R' Eliezer.

But we might be tempted to be downhearted – is it possible that we can live up to the ideal of R' Eliezer and as a nation do teshuva wholeheartedly? Generations of tzaddikim have gone before us, and apparently have not lived up to this standard as the beit hamikdash has yet to be rebuilt. How can we hope to do better? Also, how can we as individuals make a difference – surely success depends on everyone doing the right thing – even a single individual can cause the whole process to go awry! But there is an astounding and humbling gemara (Yuma 86b): "R' Meir would say: 'On account of a single individual who does teshuva, the entire world is pardoned'. According to R' Meir, the complete teshuva of even a single individual brings forgiveness and closeness to Hashem for the whole Jewish people. Based on what we have said above, this means amazingly that in bringing the geula, the actions of everyone else are irrelevant. At this time of year, when we pasken like R' Eliezer, the ultimate responsibility for bringing the geula is ours – each one of us, from the greatest gadol b'Yisrael downwards. In parshat Nitzavim, we learn "Ki Karov eilecha hadavar me'od" – the Ramban (ad loc.) writes that this teaches us that teshuva is close to everyone, we must just seize the opportunity with both hands.

This message is especially pertinent this year, being the end of the shmitta year, also, incidentally, described as "**Mikeitz** sheva shanim ta'aseh shmitta". According to many, next year, 5776, would have been a Yovel year and commences the 49th Yovel cycle since Ezra restarted the count just after the second Temple was constructed. The connection between the Yovel year and geula is explicit in psukim at the beginning of parashat Behar (and a much more comprehensive teshuva

process – here there is even a physical, familial and social teshuva "**V'shavtem** ish el achuzato, v'ish el mishpachto **tashuvu**", paralleling the spiritual teshuva occurring on that very special Yom Kippur). Nistar sources allude to a deep connection with the final geula as well (see Zohar Chadash on Parashat Balak). We pray therefore, that this year truly will be the last in exile, and that even this upcoming Yom Kippur, we will be zoche to witness the avoda of the Kohen Gadol in the rebuilt beit hamikdash, and hear the shofar gadol l'cheiruteinu.

ELUL

Good morning – it's time to wake up!

Mrs Ariella Lew

ELUL: Good morning – it's time to wake up!

1. Tonight I would like to put some meaning into the shofar and indeed into one of the names of RH – Yom Terua – what does this funny little trumpet do for us, what should it mean and how should it make us change our lives for the better? The shofar is our literal alarm clock.... But alarm clocks are all very well but if they are on our phones and we press snooze for the next hour, the effect of them is minimal. How then can we jump out of bed the minute our spiritual alarm clock sounds during Ellul and of course on Rosh Hashana? At the core of what we speak about tonight for me is an aim of developing a knowledge and understanding of the shofar and it's message.. Lets begin by looking at the are the verse from tehillim that we read immediately after Shofar blowing.

2. Tehillim ch 89 vs 16 – 18 is as follows:

טֹאֲשָׁרִי הָעָם יִדְעִי תְרוּעָה יְהוָה בְּאוֹר פְּנִיךָ יְהִלְכוּן:

Fortunate is the people that know the blasting of the shofar; O Lord, may they walk in the light of Your countenance.

3. The obvious question is why it says people are only fortunate if they "know the shofar" wouldn't hear the shofar be a more appropriate word? There is an explanation given by Rabbi Moshe Taragin from Yeshivat Har Etzion in an article entitled animal

or art which I think answers this question in a very profound way. "The term "yodei terua" implies that the experience of shofar constitutes more than just the mechanical creation of sound; it includes layers of symbolism which demand examination and elaboration. Those "fortunate" enough or wise enough to appreciate this symbolism transform the experience from one of pure listening into a rendezvous with God, as the verse continues - "Hashem be-or panekha yehaleikhun," They will walk in the light of Your countenance, O Lord."

4. I believe that with anything in life, true knowledge comes from understanding – therefore in order to be Yodei Terua we need to understand what the shofar is and what it represents not only on Rosh Hashana but in Judaism and Jewish thought as a whole. If we can relate better to the history and symbolism contained within the shofar, maybe we will be able to then attune ourselves more to the message we should receive from it and the assistance it can provide within our own tefillot.

5. R' Saadiah Gaon lists 10 symbolic ideas as to why we have the Mitzva of Shofar and how it relates to and adds meaning to Rosh Hashana. While I have not included all of them let's now go through a few of them.

HISTORICAL EVENT

Rosh Hashana is the anniversary of creation of world; the day on which Hashem was crowned King over everything

In the episode of Akeidat Yitzchak which we read on Rosh Hashana Avraham substitutes a Ram for his son as an offering to Hashem

When Bnei Yisrael accepted the Torah at accepted at Har Sinai the shofar was sounded continually

At the time of the prophets (Yechezkel 33: 2-3) the shofar was blown to warn the people of impending attack and call them to Teshuva

Yirmiyahu (4: 21) discusses the shofar as being sounded at the time of the final redemption

RELATION TO CURRENT PRACTICE OF SHOFAR

Trumpets are blown at a coronation – (Musaf section of Malchiut)

As part of our RH liturgy (leining and davening – musaf section of zichronot) we are invoking Hashem's remembrance of the Avot. Also the origin of the animal horn being used in service of Hashem

Rosh Hashana shofar reminds us to renew the original commitment made at that time as well as our relationships with Hashem

At this time of year, we are called to Teshuva

Our Tefillot on Rosh Hashana (Shofrot section of Musaf) talk about a shofar being central to the coming of Moshiach.

6. I would like to revisit where it all began.. As we have mentioned it was when Avraham following the episode of the Akeida, took the ram that was caught in the thickets and substituted it for Yitzchak. The Gemara in Rosh Hashana 16a tells us that by sounding the shofar, we are asking and calling on G-d to remember the merits of Yitzchak at the time of the Akeida and therefore think kindly on us as his descendants. This is a theme that is further developed in the Musaf Amida during zichronot.

7. Rav Yehuda Amital writes an article Remembrance before G-d in which he further elaborates on these verses. This quote comes section titled the shofar of the Akeida: "The origin of the shofar is that ram caught in the thicket by its horns. It is astonishing that Avraham is silent during the entire akeida. Aside from word "Hinneini – Here I am" at the beginning of the episode the instructions to his lads, and his answer to Yitzchak, "God will show for Himself the lamb for a burnt offering, my son" ; Avraham does not utter a word. And then, at the climax of the akeida, the angel tells him, "Do not lay your hand upon the lad!" What passed through Avraham's heart at that moment? Where is the author, where is the poet who can describe it?!

Avraham seeks to express what is in his heart, but his power of speech fails him. Instead of the Torah describing Avraham's feelings or immediate reaction, it instead continues by saying: "Avraham lifted up his eyes and saw, and behold, a ram was caught in the thicket by its horns, and Avraham went and took the ram and brought it as a sacrifice instead of his son" We blow that same ram's horn, to emulate Avraham in expressing what is too big for words. Thereby we express the hidden thoughts and feelings that we cannot organize or put into words."

8. Taking this idea one step further, a shofar if you think about it is a beautiful link between humans and animals on the very day that celebrates the creation of us all. I want to focus for a second on animal communication – Their communication is totally based on a complete understanding of it's dependence and therefore is communicating regarding what is needed for it's survival. In case you think I have gone nuts – this is an idea developed further by R' Moshe Taragin step further in the continuation of his article animals or art and says that this is what we are

aiming for on Rosh Hashana. The understanding that our tefillot are merely a plea for survival and that our justifications of why we need what we need should be silenced.. in that case what is left? Only the cry that Hashem should grant us what we need understanding us in a way that a master understands his animal.

9. This cry of the shofar is often likened to the crying of Sisera's mother. When someone is crying, the emotion of the wailing and tears express far more than we can ever hope to achieve in words. It is raw emotion from the very depths of our beings and souls. The shofar is this cry, permeating the physical limitations and cutting through to what matters. This form of expression is known in Hebrew as Tzeaka – crying out. This is the crying whether happy or sad that occurs almost involuntarily in response to a situation. Most human being however, hide this involuntary response well behind layers of defense mechanisms and barriers to the world and so the shofar's aim is to cut through all of that to the core of what matters.

10. Indeed, the Ba'al Shem tov refers to the shofar as the axe that cuts away the layers of hyperbole and everyday wear and tear and allows us to reconnect to our source. In order for the shofar to work though, we have to be able to cut through the layers and figure out who we are and what lies deep inside each of us. And make no mistake, that is something, that takes time, energy and effort.... Are we making the time to do the analysis that needs to be done or is there too much background noise?

11. The idea I began this shiur with of the shofar being G-D's alarm clock is not mine but rather the Rambam's. I used it as it is certainly for me at least the most relateable of all the ideas we have mentioned so far. An alarm clock is all about time management – are we where we should be at the right time? Did we leave enough time to drive the distance we need to go – in the world of alarms on our phones, and internet shopping this is true of everything. We are all so busy. Time management experts will tell you that there are 2 categories of things we need to get done, one is urgent and the other is important. Most of us spend our days dealing with the urgent and the important gets neglected until we have more time.

12. The shofar is G-d's email message to remember the important.. the things that take time and effort that we have put in the too hard box to look at again later... now is that time- are we making the most of our spiritual lives? And even if we are, are we always able to access the spirituality and the kavanna we need when it matters the most, such as on RH and YK or when the shofar is being blown.

13. If we think again about the teifillot on Rosh Hashana.. the verses we read throughout Musaf make it clear that shofar plays an integral role in the process of Tefilla and impacts on it by improving it... What isn't clear is how this occurs and what we need to do to access the kavanna that actualises this improvement/ upgrade of our own tefilla.

There is a story told by Rabbi Twerski in his Rosh Hashana Machzor about what Kavanna means when it comes to the shofar "Our Kavanna at time of shofar blowing needs to be that we are fulfilling Hashem's commandment but there many other deep ideas in Kabbala. R' Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev interviewed many candidates before Rosh Hashana to try out for the job of being his Ba'al Tokea. It was understood that he expected them to be well versed in the kabbalistic ideas and he would interview them all. Each one would explain their Kavanna behind blowing with kabbalistic mysticism. One year, the final candidate was a simple but sincere Jew and R' LY was surprised to see him and that he would any of this Kabbala. The man said to him "I know nothing of Kabbala. My kavanna is that I have several daughters of marriageable age but I cant find grooms for them as I do not have the money for their dowries. Therefore I am going to blow shofar with my kavanna being saying to Hashem – "I am blowing the shofar because that is your wish as you told us in the Torah. Please therefore Hashem fulfil my wish and bless me with the means to marry my daughters!" The Rabbi impressed by the sincerity and declared it "the finest Kavanna of all" The man blew shofar for him.

14. But why Sisera's mother? Because.... It is the cry of a woman waiting to hear the fate of her son. She is waiting for that phone call; those test results; the confirmation text that all is well. Without it... she cant plan, she can only wait. So too on Rosh Hashana, throughout the month of

Ellul, we hear the Shofar reminding us to play our parts, to fix what we need to and to right our wrongs.. when the day comes and the shofar calls, it is hard not to feel the uncertainty – what will be? For whom and how? All the possibilities listed in Unatanah Tokef come to call... The idea is that this should inspire our tears and teshuva.

15. There is a positive here too.. the word shofar reminds us of the word shipur which means to improve... this is a theme discussed by Esther Jungreis and I would like to share her ideas with you: The shofar is a call for reconciliation with our Heavenly Father. It is a call to undo our mistakes, renew ourselves and realize our God-given potential. Who among us has not indulged in wishful thinking? Who among us has no regrets? Who among us has not day dreamed, "If only I could do it all over again...If only I could have another chance...If only I could undo the mistakes of the past..." The shofar, however, comes to tell us that we can reinvent ourselves, we can undo our past, we can convert our mistakes into learning experiences and start anew. But, you might wonder, how does the shofar convey this? On Rosh Hashana, God created man. Therefore, it follows that, if we so desire, on Rosh Hashana, God can recreate us, and the shofar comes to remind us of that awesome, miraculous opportunity.

16. There are many things that distinguish 1st Tishrei from 1st January and the nature of our resolutions is one of them. New Year's resolutions are not just about going on a diet, getting to the gym more often or quitting our vices. Usually these last no more than 5 minutes, but the shofar's message is a timeless one – keep trying, keep going, like all the generations that came before. Our resolutions are invoked by the call of the shofar and need to be about improving ourselves in order to reconnect with our source. When we hear the shofar this year, I hope we can all confidently feel that we know the Terua and understand it's messages. And if we can't fully focus, don't despair – just accept that it is a commandment and the will of Hashem and use that as a kavanna that he should fulfil your wishes just as in the case of the Ba'al Tokea of R' LY Bercitchev.



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