

ROSH HASHANA

Sounding the Shofar

The Baal Shem Tov explained the effect of the *shofar* by the following *mashal*: A king once decided to send his only son to a faraway land in order to benefit by broadening his experience. The prince set out from the royal palace loaded with gold and silver, but he frittered it all on the way to his distant destination and arrived there penniless. The local people, who had never heard of his father the king, laughed off his claims. Was this a prince?! Unable to bear the suffering any longer, the son decided to make the long trek homeward.

He finally arrived in his homeland, but he had been away for so long that he had even forgotten the local language. The poor tattered fellow tried motioning to the people around him that he was the son of their mighty king, but they mocked him and beat him.

Arriving at the palace gates, the son tried again but was ignored until, in utter despair, he cried aloud so that his father would hear him. The king recognized his son's voice, his love was aroused for him, and he came out to welcome him home.

Similarly, the King, Hashem, sends a *neshama*, his prince, down to this world to benefit by observing the Torah and fulfilling its *mitzvos*. However, when hankering after pleasures, the *neshama* loses all its wealth and arrives at a place where his Father, Hashem, is unknown. Moreover, the *neshama* forgets how things were Above, and in the long galus, even forgets its own 'language'. In desperation, it cries out by sounding the *shofar*, expressing regret for the past and determination for the future. This simple cry arouses Hashem's mercy: He shows His love for His only son and forgives him.

(כתר שם טוב, הוספת קצ"ד [בחדש])

Reb Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev would tell the following *mashal*: A king once lost his way in the forest, until he met a man who directed him out of the forest and back to his palace. He rewarded the stranger richly and appointed him as a senior minister. Years later, that minister acted rebelliously and was sentenced to death, but the king granted him one last wish. The minister asked that both he and the king put

on the clothing they had worn long ago, when he had rescued the king from the forest. This reminded the king of his indebtedness to this man, and he revoked the sentence.

Similarly, we willingly accepted the Torah from the King, Hashem, when all the other nations refused the offer. But since that time, like the minister, we have been rebellious by doing *aveiros*, and are therefore fearful on Rosh Hashanah, the Day of Judgment. So we sound the *shofar* to remind Hashem of Mattan Torah, when we accepted the Torah and made Hashem our king, and we express our renewed eagerness to crown Him once again. This *zechus* stands by us: Hashem forgives our *aveiros* and inscribes us immediately for a good life.

(המשך וכנה תרל"ז פרק ע')

Before Rosh Hashana תרי"מ (1879) the Rebbe Maharash requested his *meshareis* to relay the following to the chassidim: "It is written that sounding the *shofar* is like the cry, 'Father, Father!' The main thing there is the cry."

That Rosh Hashanah, the entire village wept with remorse.

(סה"ש תש"ד ע' 4)

The Baal Shem Tov would usually be present for *tekias shofar* together with his *talmidim*. One year he requested one of them, the *tzaddik* Reb Yaakov Yosef of Polonnoye, to take his place there, while the Baal Shem Tov himself sounded the *shofar* with the simple folk and the children. Those unsophisticated people cried out to Hashem, "Father in Heaven, have *rachmanus*!" And that had the greatest effect of all.

(סה"ש תש"ה ע' 6)

Davening with Fervor

On Rosh Hashana the Rebbeim would daven with much fervor and tears, particularly the first *Maariv* which would extend for many hours. The Rebbe spoke of how every individual should take a lesson to some extent from the exceptional *davening* of the Rebbeim.

(סה"ש תשנ"ב ע' 13, הע' 19)

A visitor to the township of Lubavitch describes the first night of Rosh Hashanah: The day is

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

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

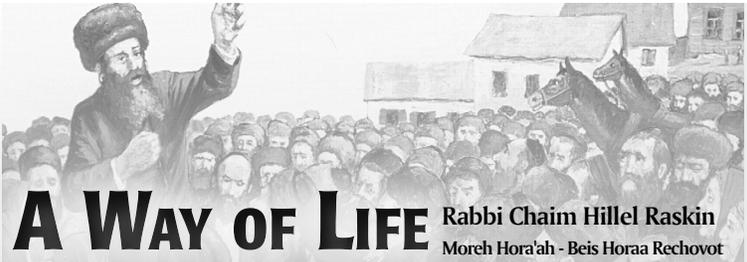
Maariv is over, but no one leaves. The chassidim stand close together and listen intently to every nuance of the Rebbe's *tefilla*. All eyes are focused on one point, making sure not to miss a moment. The Rebbe softly sings a *niggun* with *dveikus*, demanding and pleading, and as his heart bursts with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

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

(התמים ח"א ע' קלב)

CONSIDER THIS!

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



A WAY OF LIFE

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

Drinking Before Tekios

Am I allowed to drink coffee on Rosh Hashana morning before hearing the shofar?

- The halacha is that one may not eat a meal before performing a time-bound mitzva (e.g. Shema, tefillin, shofar, lulav), since one may come to miss the timeframe for the mitzva.¹ Women are not halachically required to fulfil these mitzvos, and even if they choose to perform them, they may eat beforehand.² However, since some argue that women nowadays have accepted to hear shofar and bentch lulav as obligatory, they should try not to eat beforehand.³
- However, if one designates someone to remind him or he has a designated time and place to perform the mitzva – in which case he is not likely to forget – he may eat beforehand. Since a person will not forget to attend shul on Rosh Hashana and hear shofar, (especially once in shul), some communities have the custom to make kiddush and eat something before tekios.⁴
- Yet, poskim cite a practice of “early chassidim” not to eat before a special mitzva which comes from time to time (e.g. shofar, lulav, megilah, bedikas chometz, menorah⁵), to cherish the mitzva (chibuv mitzva) and maintain focus on it.⁶ This is indeed minhag Chabad.⁷
- Does this hidur mitzva also include drinking? Many are particular not to drink either.⁸ Yet, since not drinking is itself an added stringency, there is room to be lenient with regards to drinking before shofar (when there is no concern for forgetfulness), especially when musaf ends very late.⁹ (Though before megilah and lulav where the delay isn't so long the widespread custom is to be stringent).¹⁰

1. ראה שו"ע ר"ה סי' ע"ה, שו"ע סי' רל"ה ס"ב, סי' תרנ"ב ס"ב.
 2. קיצור שו"ע סי' קכ"ט סי"ט, הליכות בת ישראל פי"ט ס"א, א"א מובטשאטש אור"ח סי' תקפ"ט.
 3. ראה א"א מובטשאטש מהדו"ת סו"ס תקצ"ב. ולהעיר שלא הזכיר אדה"ז הענין דקבלוהו עליהו חובה בתק"ש אף שהזכירו בספירת העומר. וראה תש' שלמות חיים (לר"ח זוננפלד) ר"ה סי' שכ"ט של"א בתק"ש קבלו עליהו.
 4. ראה נט"ג ר"ה פרק מ', וראה שם הע' א' שיזכור מחמת אימת היום. וראה משנ"ב סי' תרנ"ב סק"ז ובשעה"צ שם.
 5. ויש שנהגו כן לענין מילת בנו, וכנהנים לברכת כהנים בחור"ל (שבאה מזמן לזמן).
 6. רוקח הג' סי' שנ"ג חסידים הראשונים היו מתענים על מצוה חביבה. כף החיים סי' תרנ"ב ס"ק י"ח.
 7. ראה אוצר מנהגי חב"ד ר"ה אות קע"ו.
 8. ראה מט"א סי' תקפ"ח סק"ב ובאלף המגן שם סק"ב, אוצר מנהגי חב"ד שם.
 9. שיעורי הלכה למעשה סוף סימן ע"ב. וכן שמועתי מנמו"ח הר"מ שי' חפר בשם סבו הרב ח"י דונבלום ע"ה שבליובאוויטש שתו תה ר"ה בבוקר.
 10. פסק"ת סי' תקפ"ה סק"ב, אוצר מנהגי חב"ד שם.

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

Chassidische Insights and Stories on Whatsapp

Add +13474711770 to your contacts and send a message "subscribe"



347.471.1770

info@LmaanYishmeu.com

www.LmaanYishmeu.com

OUR HEROES

Reb Shilem Kuratin



Reb Meshulam Yedidyah Gotlieb-Kuratin, known as "Reb Shilem," grew up in a spiritually simple home and ended up in a secular Russian High School. A relative convinced him to accompany him to learn in Lubavitch, where he became one of the greatest Temimim ever. He had an amazing mind and became the chozer of the Rebbe Rashab, and later was chosen to be the mashpia in the yeshiva. The Rebbe Rashab said of him, "No one is a pnimi like Shilem!"



R. Shilem optimized the mandate of Tomchei Temimim for pnimiyus, thoroughness and genuine intent in every move.

He once said at a farbrengen, "A 'pnimi' is one who serves Hashem without show and is thoroughly engrossed in what he is doing. A 'chitzoni' also serves Hashem, but isn't particular not to show and he may not be totally involved. A 'chitzoni' is an empty vessel who serves Hashem out of personal interests, and wants others to think highly of him."

In the yeshiva in Schedrin a dispute arose between the bochorim and the baalei batim over the aliyos on Shabbos. R. Shilem was mortified and rebuked the bochorim, "Be ashamed! Quarreling over aliyos suits baalei batim, not temimim whose interest should lie solely in the pursuit of Chassidus."

(אוצר החסידים ברה"מ ע' 94, 106)

One day, during the years of the Russian revolution, soldiers descended upon the complex in Kremenchug where Reb Shilem and his family lived, and ordered all the tenants into the courtyard. They were accused of assisting the landlord's son who belonged to the opposing political faction, and would therefore all be shot. Suddenly, a soldier came with a message that they must appear immediately before their commander, and thus everyone was spared.

A chossid later said to Reb Shilem that he is jealous of the teshuva he had done facing death. Reb Shilem replied, "It's difficult to do proper teshuva opposite a firing squad. Proper teshuva is best done in shul under the talis..."

(ר' שילם ע' 48)

Reb Shilem once asked the Rebbe Rashab, "How is feasible for the bochorim to be truly involved in the study of Chassidus, the study of nigleh, and davening at length?" The Rebbe replied, "Nigleh is Torah and Chassidus is Torah, and Torah does not disturb Torah!"

(אוצר החסידים ברה"מ ע' 98)

A MOMENT WITH THE REBBE

The Rebbe's Message

"During the winter of 5730 (1970)," related Professor Velvel Green, "I was invited to London, UK to take part in epidemiological research, my field of expertise. Upon the Rebbe's directive I also invested much time to assist the work of Lubavitch there.

"One day, while I was busy at work in the hospital, I received an urgent call. 'There is an emergency meeting at Lubavitch house,' I was told. 'An important message from the Rebbe came in. Drop everything - come now.'

"I took the train. At Lubavitch house, I saw all the local chassidim and Lubavitch affiliates already assembled in hushed silence. Reb Bentzion Shemtov was seated at the head of the table, but did not utter a sound. I was told that he had just arrived from New York with an important message for all anash.

"Suddenly, Reb Bentzion got up and announced, 'The Rebbe said that davening must be "nice"!' "

"The meeting was over. From that day on, everyone davened in one minyan, there was no talking and the chazanim were chosen carefully; the davening revolutionized, becoming 'nicer.' "

(Professor Green Sholom Ubracha, p. 153)