

Mesilah



AN INITIATIVE OF KOLLEL RABBONIM RABBEINU TZVI ASHKENAZI, AMSTERDAM

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The Grand Masterplan

Rabbi Yossi Krausz

It's so important for us to be grateful for the good things that we have, to pay attention and to be aware of all those things that enhance our life; the means that provide us sustenance, and for life itself. These are all the blessings that *Hashem* has bestowed upon us.

The Blessings are discharged on an annual basis. It's an annual package that gets sealed and settled on the first day of each year. This is the day we know to be "Rosh Hashana." We all surely want a great deal of blessing and bounty. What is our role on this day and what can we do to secure ourselves a positive judgement and a great blessed bundle?

Take a closer look at the prayers on *Rosh Hashana* and you may notice that only a very minute portion of the content consists of requests for a good year ahead, as one may imagine. Rather, it is much more directed towards kingship and coronation. Why is this so? Why are we not focusing more on asking *Hashem* for all those things we need and want? Also, what does it mean for us to coronate *Hashem* as King, if surely *Hashem* will rule despite our choice?

This question leads us to the root of what's taking place on *Rosh Hashanah*. Of course, it is most definitely the annual day of judgement where so much stands in the balance, yet all the blessing and bounty is discharged in accordance with

how valuable we are to this Kingship. The more we contribute to the Grand scheme and the more we are invested in the Divine mission, then the more we will be granted, so that we are well equipped to accomplish our personal role.

In Hebrew the word מלך – "Ruler" and the word מלך – "King" both denote sovereignty. The *Gaon* of Vilna famously explains the conceptual difference between these two terms: a מלך's rule is the will of His people, whereas a מלך rules indifferent of the public's will. *Hashem* is either way the Almighty Ruler, yet when we stop and choose His rule, when we find it inside ourselves to align our will with that of *Hashem*'s, then we have coronated our King, and elevated the L-rd from being a מלך to a מלך מושל.

On *Rosh Hashanah* we coronate *Hashem* as King over the entire universe, and more importantly as King over ourselves. The theme of our prayers expresses our yearning to see His Kingship in its fullest Glory - with all of creation displaying conscious awareness and directing all their efforts to further His mission. When we do this, *Hashem* will ensure that we have abundant blessing and bounty so that we can accomplish our personal role in the masterplan of creation, and we can have faith in receiving a favourable judgment and a splendid new year!

News from the Kollel

In the past few weeks, the Kollel are proud to have welcomed two new families into our vibrant team: **R' Meir and Bassi Katz, and R' Yisroel Meir and Neomi Inglis.**

Both families have been living in Eretz Yisrael for the past few years, where they have studied in some of the most prestigious Torah institutions. Aside from their advanced learning calibre, they are **committed and inspired** to use all of their talents and resources to enhance our wonderful kehilla.

In the past few weeks, R' Meir has given a number of successful shiurim, both to male and female audiences, including a topical two-part shiur on the laws of Arba Minim. He was warmly welcomed in Bendigamos where he gave a well-received drasha, and led a musical selichos in Kehal Chassidim with the help of his 'ukulele' (a small guitar-like instrument). Whilst Family Inglis have only just arrived, they are excited to add their own flavour to the community and look forward to making many new friends. The Kollel wives will separately advertise a **meet-and-greet** event for the women of the community to get to know Bassi and Neomi and to be inspired before Yom Kippur.

As always, the Avreichim and their wives have been busy over the summer. Their activities include: Numerous chavrusa sessions with members of the public; a popular daily learning program (Kinyan Masechta); women's events; and Shabbos hospitality. **We are also proud** that a number of our Avreichim are involved in prominent communal

לעילו נשמה ליטל ימימה בת לאה ליל עלייה השלים

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positions, whilst continuing their learning in the Kollel: Rabbi Simcho Stanton, in the NIHS Rabbinate and Rav of Kehal Chassidiem, R' Efrayim Arnstein, who has recently been appointed as Head of Kodesh in the BO Boys section of the Cheider, and R' Doedie Van Dyk who teaches Kodesh in the Cheider VO. We hope that we may continue to be instrumental in providing talented klei kodesh to many more important positions in the community.

Finally, we are saddened that our beloved Rosh Hakollel and his wife, Rav Yaakov and Rebbetzen Chava Ball shlita, will be leaving Amsterdam after the Yamim Tovim. Rabbi Ball and his wife came to Amsterdam more than fifteen years ago, and as Rosh Hakollel and Rav of Beis Hamedrash Eits Chayim, have made an enormous impact in the community. They have taught and inspired countless individuals/community members, fielded many halachic questions and projects and have made themselves available for those in need. Their departure will leave a vacuum, but we wish them tremendous hatzlacha in their future endeavours, much nachas from their families and good health.

We are active in our pursuit for a new Rosh Kollel and hope to share good news with the community in the near future. May each and every one of you enjoy a year ahead of continued success, spiritual growth, good health and peace.

בברכת שנה טובה,

Kollel Administration

Halacha

The Mitzvah of Shofar

Rabbi David Sztejnhauer

The Mitzvah of Shofar

- The *mitzvah* to hear the *shofar* on Rosh *Hashana* is **De'oraita** (Torah obligation).
- It is not only a *mitzvah*, but also carries deep spiritual meaning: it awakens our hearts in the day of judgment and connects us to our Creator (see Rambam, *Hilchot Teshuva* 3:4).
- The *shofar* is considered so important that if a person must choose between a place where they know how to blow the *shofar* but not pray properly, versus a place where they pray properly but don't blow the *shofar* well – it is better to go where the *shofar* is blown correctly.

Customs and Practices

- **Blowing on the Bima:** The first 30 sounds are usually blown from the *Bima* (where the *Torah* is read), either out of respect for the *Tzibur* or for the merit of the *Torah* to protect us.
- **Covering the Shofar:** The *shofar* is kept covered before and after the blowing, in remembrance of Avraham covering Yitzchak before the *Akeida*.
- **Standing and Sitting:**
 - The **Baal Toke'a** (the blower) must stand and not lean on anything.
 - The congregation stands for the blessing and blowing, though someone weak or ill may sit.
 - If the Baal Toke'a blew while sitting, the blowing is still valid.
- **Intention (Kavana):** The Baal Toke'a must have in mind to fulfill the mitzvah on behalf of the congregation.

Who Can Fulfill for Others

- Even after fulfilling the mitzvah, a person may blow again for someone who has not yet heard, and may recite the blessings again. (Also the *Shecheyanu*)
- Since shofar is a **time-bound mitzvah**, women are not obligated. Therefore, if a man has already fulfilled his obligation and is blowing only for women, **he does not recite the blessing**; instead, the woman listening recites it. (According to most Sfardi communities the woman don't recites the *Brachot*)
- If there is at least one man present who has not yet heard, the

Baal Toke'a
may say the blessing again.

Blessings

- Two blessings are recited:
 1. **Lishmoa Kol Shofar** (to hear the sound of the shofar)
 2. **Shehecheyanu** (on both days, on the second day is better to have a new clothing if not is also ok).
- The congregation answers **Amen**, but not *Baruch Hu u'varuch Shemo*.

Timing and Situations

- The shofar is blown only **during the day**, not at night.
- If someone arrives late and misses the blessings:
 - **Sephardim** (who recite prayers between sets of blasts) can say the blessing during one of those breaks.
 - **Ashkenazim** (who blow during Chazarat HaShatz) should say the blessing as close as possible to the blowing.
 - If he already heard all the blasts without reciting the blessing, he should not recite it afterwards, since the mitzvah was already fulfilled.

Speaking and Interruptions

- It is forbidden to speak between the blessing and the beginning of the blasts. If one spoke, the blessing must be repeated.
- If one speaks between the blasts, it is not ideal but does not require a new blessing.
- One must hear **each blast fully**. If the sound was cut off, it must be repeated.
- If a person hears the shofar in an unclean place (e.g., a bathroom), it is better to listen again.

Number of Blasts

- The Torah requires a **minimum of 9 sounds** (3 sets of *Tekiah-Teruah-Tekiah*).
- Because we are unsure what exactly the Torah's "Teruah" sound is (*Teruah*, *Shevarim*, or *Shevarim-Teruah*), we blow in different combinations, totaling **30 sounds**.
- Through the repetition in the prayers, the minhag is to reach **100 sounds** in total.

This issue of Mesilah has been dedicated
לעלוי נשמות
ר' יהושע שלמה בן ר' יצחק ז"ל שהלך לעולמו בה' תשרי תשפ"ה
on behalf of his three daughters.

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