



ACTIVITY/STORY



There was a Jewish farmer who used to pray in the synagogue of the Baal Shem Tov on the High Holidays. The farmer was a simple man, barely able to recite the Hebrew prayers. One year when he came for Yom Kippur, he also brought his son, who had turned Bar Mitzvah. As little as the father knew, the son knew even less. The young boy, being a shepherd, always carried a flute with him. He loved to play while the sheep were grazing. Without the father's knowledge, the boy brought the flute with him.

As the Cantor was reciting the final Neilah prayer, the boy felt an urge to express his feelings for G-d. He took out the flute and let out a sound. Everyone was shocked! But when the prayers were finally over, the Baal Shem Tov approached the boy and thanked him!

The Baal Shem Tov explained, "The innocence, sincerity and pure intentions with which this lad blew the flute made a great impression in heaven. It accomplished more than all our prayers. In fact, all of our prayers were elevated and reached their desired heavenly destination only as a result of this lad's sound which came from the bottom of his heart in great sincerity!"

- ▶ Why did the child play on his flute in shul during Yom Kippur davening?
- ▶ What was the Baal Shem Tov's response? Why do you think he responded that way?

Older Grades:

- ▶ What's your "metaphorical flute" that you can bring with you to Tefillah this Rosh Hashanah?
- ▶ Are there any Rosh Hashanah songs or tefillot that make your prayer more meaningful?

The learning is dedicated by Philip and Nicola Garcia in honour of their second grandchild, Yael Miriam – another daughter for Micol Bedarida-Garcia and Jonathan Garcia, and a sister for Noa. We also take this opportunity to wish our friends, family, and all readers of MiDor L'Dor a sweet and peaceful New Year.

Mi'dor L'dor

מִדּוֹר לְדוֹר

ROSH HASHANAH



BLOWING THE SHOFAR: OVERVIEW

Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year, the day that Hashem created the world. On Rosh Hashanah, we crown Hashem as King of the world, blow the shofar, and pray for a good year for the Jewish people and all of humankind, as this is the day that Hashem judges the world. We also celebrate the holiday with festive meals and some other customs, such as eating apples and honey on Rosh Hashanah evening



THE INSIDE SCOOP

The Torah tells us that we must blow the shofar on Rosh Hashana, but doesn't tell us why! The commentaries offer many reasons -- here are two of them

- ▶ Reason #1: **Rambam**

RAMBAM, HILCHOT TESHUVA 3:4

Even though the sounding of the shofar on Rosh Hashana is a decree [without a reason], there is a hint in it -- it is as if [the shofar's call] is saying: Wake up you sleepy ones from your sleep... and think about your actions, do teshuva (see last week's sheet) and remember your Creator.

רמב"ם הלכות תשובה פרק ג הלכה ד

אף על פי שתקיעת שופר בראש השנה גזירת הכתוב, רמז יש בו, כלומר עורו ישינים משנתכם ונרדמים הקיצו מתרדמתכם וחפשו במעשיכם וחזרו בתשובה וזכרו בוראכם.





LET'S DISCUSS

▶ Reason #2: Abudraham

ABUDRAHAM ON SHOFAR

Today is the day of the beginning of creation, on which Hashem created the world and ruled over it. Blowing the shofar is the way to accept the King, since that is what they do for kings - blow before them to inform everyone that they are beginning their rule

אבודרהם על שופר

היום תחילת הבריאה שבו ברא הקב"ה את העולם ומלך עליו, ותקיעת השופר היא דרך קבלת המלכות, כי כך עושים למלכים, תוקעים ומריעים לפניהם להודיע את תחילת מלכותם.

KIDS:

- ▶ In your own words, how would you explain the reasons given here for blowing the shofar? Which of them do you like the best or makes the most sense to you?
- ▶ When you hear the sound of the shofar what does it make you think about?



OLDER GRADES:

- ▶ According to reason #1 above (from the Rambam), why do you think that the sound of the shofar specifically is used to "wake us up"? Why not use a bell or an alarm clock? Is there something different about the sound of the shofar that makes us stop and listen?

PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS:

- ▶ Share with your grandchild some of your thoughts when hearing the shofar on Rosh Hashana. Do you think more about yourself & others in your family, or the Jewish people and the world as a whole?



BONUS



Look at this additional reason-given in the Gemara of Rosh Hashana for blowing the shofar.

ROSH HASHANAH 16A

Rabbi Abbahu said: Why do we blow with a shofar from a ram? Hashem said: Blow before Me with a shofar from a ram so that I will remember for you the binding of Yitzchak, son of Avraham, and I will consider it as if you had bound yourselves before Me.

מסכת ראש השנה טז.

אמר רבי אבהו: למה תוקעין בשופר של איל? - אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא: תקעו לפני בשופר של איל, כדי שאזכור לכם עקידת יצחק בן אברהם, ומעלה אני עליכם כאילו עקדתם עצמכם לפני.

- ▶ How does this reason differ from the other two reasons cited above?
- ▶ In this Gemara, we can see that the shofar reminds us to dedicate our lives to Hashem just as the Avot (forefathers) did. Give an example from your own life of how you could dedicate your actions to Hashem.

MORE ON THE HOLIDAY – FOR GROWNUPS

In this audio shiur, Rabbi Nathaniel Helfgot examines the structure and key themes of Ch. 31, the beautiful prophecy of consolation that is found in the middle of the book of Jeremiah. He then proceeds to suggest a new insight as to why the sages of the Talmud chose this chapter to serve as the haftarah for the second day of Rosh Hashanah.



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