



# ישיבת הר עזיון

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Selected and Adapted by Rabbi Dov Karoll

### Quote from the Rosh Yeshiva

The Rosh Ha-shana prayers recited by all of Am Yisrael were in fact established by Chana, mother of Shmuel, who perceived not only her own personal sorrow but also the trials and troubles of the nation as a whole. She merited to have her personal salvation serve also as the salvation of the nation – her son anointed the people who came to save the nation. The Anshei Knesset Ha-gedola followed Chana's example and structured our prayer along similar lines, with the hope and prayer that God would listen to the sound of the shofar blast of His people with mercy, and that the shofar of our ultimate freedom would be sounded. -Harav Baruch Gigi

### Rosh Hashana: Akeidat Yitzchak (Binding of Isaac) Hope and Despair in the Akeida

By Harav Yehuda Amital zt"l

Based on: <https://etzion.org.il/en/holidays/rosh-hashana/hope-and-despair-akeida>



Rabbi Abahu taught: Why do we sound a shofar that is a ram's horn? The Holy One said: Sound a ram's horn before Me in order that I may remember in your favor the binding of Yitzchak, the son of Avraham, and I shall consider it for you as though you have bound yourselves before Me. (Rosh Ha-shana 16a)

Since the Akeida (binding of Yitzchak) is so central to Rosh Ha-shana, let us examine this episode. In consequence of the Akeida, God promises Avraham great blessings (Bereishit 22:13-18):

Avraham lifted his eyes and he saw, behold, a ram was behind, caught by his horns in the thicket. Avraham went and he took the ram, and offered it as a burnt offering in place of his son. Avraham called the name of that place "God will see," as it is said to this day – "On the mountain God will be seen."

An angel of God called to Avraham a second time from the heaven. He said, "I have sworn by Myself, says God, that because you have done this thing, and you have not withheld your son, your only one – therefore I will bless you greatly, and increase your seed greatly like the stars of the heavens and like the sand that is upon the sea shore, and your seed will possess the gate of their enemies. And through your seed all the nations of the earth will be blessed, because you obeyed My voice."

Why does God repeat His blessing to Avraham? He had declared all of this already in His first revelation (12:2-3):

I shall make you a great nation, and I shall bless you, and I shall make your name great, and you shall be a blessing; I shall bless those who bless you, while those who curse you I shall curse, and all the families of the earth shall be blessed through you.

It would seem that the appropriate blessing after the Akeida would have been, "Your reward is very great" (15:1), as an addition to the original blessing!

Concerning the words, "Behold, a ram was behind, caught by his thorns in the thicket," the Sages explain (Bereishit Rabba 56):

What is the meaning of "achar" (behind, after)? Rabbi Yitzchak taught: AFTER all of these things, Israel becomes caught up in sins, and suffer troubles, and they are destined to be redeemed by the horn of a ram, as it is written (Zekharia 9:14): "And the Lord God will sound the shofar..."

In order to understand the full significance of the Akeida, we must note an additional point. "There were 10 generations from Noach until Avraham." Only 10 generations had passed since God had declared, "The end of all flesh has come before Me." The Flood had come and gone, and new hope had flickered on the horizon. Suddenly, however, the world looked as though it were back at the time of the Flood, in a situation where everything lacked purpose and direction. "Avraham ha-Ivri" (the Hebrew) was so called because "all

the world was on 1 side (me-ever echad), and he was on the other side.” Just as Noach was the lonely man of faith in his generation – “For I have seen you to be righteous before Me in this generation,” so was Avraham in his: “All the world was on 1 side, and he” – the lone, strong, true individual – “was on the other.”

Avraham’s dream was to “perfect the world under the kingdom of God.” He was fully aware that this would involve a historical process lasting thousands of years, but he believed, with all his heart, that he and his descendants could realize this dream.

At the same time, Avraham feared that it was too late. Perhaps the world was already destined for destruction, before the dream could be realized. It was true that the Holy One had promised Noach not to destroy the world again (see 8:21, 9:11). But there was no guarantee that the world would not act in such a way as to activate its own self-destruction. There was no way of knowing with certainty that there would not arise an egoistic generation that would seek to exploit all of the world’s natural treasures for its own benefit, leaving nothing for the generations to come. There was no assurance that the balance of nature would not be upset, with irreversible damage to the earth’s protective layers, or with poisons flowing into the oceans, endangering all of mankind.

“And Avraham and Sarah were old, full of days, and the manner of women had ceased from Sarah” (18:11). Avraham feared that Sarah’s barrenness was a sign that there was no hope for the world, that his dream was an empty one.

But then hope appeared: “And God remembered Sarah as He had said, and God did for Sarah as He had said.” The Divine promise, “Your seed will be called after Yitzchak,” was coming true, revived in all its glory. Avraham was looking towards the future. The conversation in his household was turning to the future of the family. Even for Hagar, the distant future was starting to become important and tangible in the present: at the time of her distress, she received a promise: “Arise; take up the boy and hold your hand to him, for I shall make him a great nation” (21:18).

Then comes the test of the Akeida. “Take your son, your only one, whom you love – Yitzchak, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him up there as an offering.” The test is enormous, but its significance is even greater: the shattering of the dream that has been built up over many years – to establish a nation that will offer new hope to mankind and to the world.

The Akeida presents Avraham with the possibility that the great dream will dissolve in a second. Its memory will descend into the depths of oblivion, dragging with it Avraham, who will have passed like a burst of light in human history for just a moment, leaving behind him no real impression.

Avraham accepts the Divine decree. He presents no complaint, never asking, “Where is Your promise, ‘I shall make you into a great nation’? Where is the blessing, ‘I shall make your name great, and you shall be a blessing’?”

Indeed, “Your thoughts are not My thoughts, and your ways are not My ways.” Before Avraham has managed to digest the significance of the shattering of the dream, “an angel of God called to him from the heaven, and said, ‘Avraham! Avraham!’” Avraham is beside himself. His response is a single word: “Hineni!” (Here I am!). The Holy One commands: “Do not lay your hand upon the boy, and do not harm him, for now I know that you fear God, for you have not withheld your son, your only one, from Me.”

Avraham looks at the ram that has been bound in place of his son, and understands that it is not the future that is being offered up on the altar, but rather the present.

From this point onwards, the picture changes. The Holy One repeats His promise, “For I shall bless you greatly...” (vv. 17-18, see above). Avraham returns to his original dream. The terror has passed, and his anxieties have dissolved. From now, he is certain, the promise will be fulfilled:

And it shall be on that day that a great shofar will be sounded, and the lost ones will come from the land of Ashur and the forgotten ones from the land of Egypt. And they shall bow down to God at the holy mountain in Jerusalem. (Yeshayahu 27:13)

The Akeida thus bears an important message for all generations. Even when it appears that dreams and aspirations have shattered on the rocks of reality, there is no place for despair. Individuals have the power to build worlds – if only they will believe in their power.

I do not know if there were many generations that suffered such a sense of helplessness as has our generation. Ours is a generation that survived the Holocaust – “a nation that is remnants of the sword;” a generation that shortly thereafter had to stand – vastly outnumbered – and fight a war for its independence. It is a generation that, while meriting to witness the establishment of the State, could not then retire in peace and quiet. War followed war: the Sinai campaign, the Six-Day War, the War of Attrition, the Yom Kippur War, the Lebanon War, the war of rocks and Molotov cocktails, day by day, hour by hour.

Together with the security danger – the external war – we also face a spiritual danger: the internal war. The rate of Jewish intermarriage around the world continues to rise; the birth rate amongst the Jewish population continues to fall. Many sectors of

Jewish society tend to follow the empty “in” culture, a nihilistic lifestyle. They espouse a culture that lives by the motto, “Eat and drink for tomorrow we die,” a culture devoid of commitment, a culture that recognizes no responsibility.

There can be no doubt: it is far easier to live in a world in which the future is known, which is rosy and secure. But we are little people; it is not enough for us to know that the dream will be realized in the distant future. We want, here and now, that “The name of the Lord be exalted and sanctified in the world that He created as He willed. May He give reign to His kingship in your lifetimes and in your days, and in the lifetimes of all the house of Israel.”

At this time, we have an obligation to aspire to the characteristic of Avraham Avinu: to believe in the power of individuals to change the world, to dream and to fight for a world that is more moral, more spiritual, more just. Every person has the ability to bring closer a world in which “every creation will understand that You have created it, and everything that is alive will declare: The Lord, God of Israel, is King, and His Kingship rules over all!”

(Adapted from a sicha delivered on Rosh Ha-shana 5750 [1989]. Adapted by Aviad Hacohen, Translated by Kaeren Fish)

## Rosh Hashana: Hilkhot Shofar

### Defining the Mitzva of Shofar: How Many Sounds Must We Hear?

By Rav Doniel Schreiber



Based on: <https://etzion.org.il/en/holidays/rosh-hashana/defining-mitzva-shofar-how-many-sounds-must-we-hear>

Who is unfamiliar with the call of the shofar? Its mystical, resonant cry annually proclaims the coronation of the Almighty and has the power to move the hardest of hearts to repent. Indeed, as the centerpiece of the Rosh Ha-shana service, tekiat shofar (blowing the shofar) generates a mingling of excitement, tension, and anticipation unparalleled throughout the year.

Yet, even the mitzva of shofar, sublime and supernatural as it is, requires discipline and structure. Its fidelity to specific sounds, its extensive framework and multiple note patterns seem almost an encoded message to God. The question naturally beckons: what is the nature of the mitzva of shofar, and from whence do its enigmatic notes arise? We will treat here the latter question.

#### 1. Nine Kolot

The gemara (Rosh Ha-shana [henceforth RH] 33b) derives the mitzva of shofar on Rosh Ha-shana from the verse (Bem. 29:1): “And in the seventh month, on the first day of the month... a day of terua it shall be to you.” “Terua” refers to shofar since the Torah states (Vay. 25:9): “And you shall cause the shofar terua to be sounded on the seventh month.” Moreover, the gemara deduces that every terua note should have a tekia sounded before and after it, as is illustrated in the verse: “And you shall cause the shofar terua to be sounded (ta’aviru shofar terua) on the seventh month... you shall sound the shofar (ta’aviru shofar) throughout your land.” Since “ta’aviru,” which implies an extended sound (tekia), is cited both prior and subsequent to the word “terua,” on Rosh Ha-shana we blow a tekia, or a peshuta (a straight, flat sound), both before and after the terua. This pattern is called a TRT, or a “tekia-terua-tekia.”

Chazal further adduce (RH 34a) that the TRT pattern must be sounded thrice, since the term “terua” is specified 3 times in the Torah, and every terua, as we have established, must be preceded and succeeded by a tekia. Nonetheless, Amoraim (RH 34a) dispute whether this threefold repetition of TRT is a biblical or a rabbinic requirement. Rambam (Hilkhot Shofar 3:1), Tur (OC 590), and Shulchan Arukh (OC 590:1) all rule that the Torah itself requires that we sound TRT 3 times – a total of 9 kolot (sounds).

#### 2. Thirty Kolot

If we are required by the Torah to sound only 9 kolot on Rosh Ha-shana, why do we instead blow 3 sets of tekia-shevarim-terua-tekia (TSRT), 3 sets of tekia-shevarim-tekia (TST), and 3 sets of tekia-terua-tekia (TRT) – a total of 30 kolot? Rambam (Hilkhot Shofar 3:2, based on Gemara RH 34a) explains:

Due to the great passage of time and extended exile, we are no longer sure as to the nature of the “terua” cited in the Torah.

We do not know whether it is similar to wailing of weeping women (i.e. a terua, or 9 short blasts), or the slow, deep sobbing of someone heavily burdened (i.e. a shevarim, or 3 medium blasts), or whether it is like a sobbing which naturally turns into a wailing (i.e. a shevarim-terua). Therefore, we perform all three variations.

On its face, this procedure seems absurd! Why must we sound 30 kolot to fulfill all the opinions? Merely sounding the TSRT 3 times

would accomplish this, as it contains both the shevarim and the terua! The gemara (RH 34a) poses this question, responding that we cannot rely on the TSRT alone because we desire uninterrupted continuity between the kolot. Since either the shevarim or terua is an incorrect version of the Torah's "terua," sounding both together will certainly create a hefsek (interruption) between the valid kolot.

The problem with this answer is that the gemara itself (RH 34b and Sukka 53b-54a) rules in accordance with Rabanan who state: "One who has heard 9 tekiot in a period of 9 hours has fulfilled his obligation," against R. Yehuda's opinion (Sukka *ibid.*) that in such a case one has not fulfilled his obligation. If so, considering that one will inevitably experience an "interruption" in a period of 9 hours, the gemara apparently rules that an interruption between tekiot does not invalidate them. How then can the gemara be concerned that either the shevarim or terua may be considered incorrect and thus a hefsek?

Rishonim offer different solutions to this problem. Rabbeinu Tam (cited in Ran, RH 10b in the pages of the Rif) understands that indeed, fundamentally, an interruption between tekiot does not invalidate them. Accordingly, one could fulfill all opinions of the correct "terua" by blowing 3 sets of TSRT, regardless of any interruption. Nonetheless, the gemara legislated that we blow each version of "terua" because the rabbis' enactment aspires to fulfill all opinions related to tekiat shofar. Thus, we blow 30 kolot to satisfy R. Yehuda's opinion that an interruption between the tekiot invalidates them.

Ramban (cited in Ran, *ibid.*) disagrees, understanding that according to the gemara an interruption between tekiot invalidates them, and thus sounding the 30 kolot is not merely an added concern or stringency, but rather is required for the basic fulfillment of this law. This does not contradict the gemara's ruling in accordance with Rabanan that "One who has heard 9 tekiot in a period of 9 hours has fulfilled his obligation," since this only teaches that a long period of elapsed time does not invalidate the tekiot. The gemara would agree, however, that an interruption of an incorrect kol would invalidate the tekiot.

### 3. Sixty Kolot

If sounding 30 kolot on Rosh Ha-shana is either the result of a stringency or in fact mandated by the basic halakha, why then do we blow 60 kolot – 30 before Musaf, and 30 during Musaf? The gemara (RH 16a-b) also asks this question, explaining that this is a rabbinic legislation designed "to confuse the Satan." Chazal thus established that we sound 30 kolot after the Torah reading – tekiot de-meyushav, i.e., the tekiot for which one can sit (while sitting is permitted, the custom is to stand) – and 30 kolot in tefillat Musaf – tekiot de-meumad, i.e., tekiot for which one must stand (since one must stand while in the midst of the amida prayer). Accordingly, only one set of 30 kolot is the primary mitzva of shofar, whilst the other set of 30 is merely a rabbinic diversion of the Satan.

Which set of 30 sounds is the primary set of tekiot designated for fulfilling the biblical mitzva of shofar: the tekiot de-meyushav or de-meumad? The answer is important because only regarding the primary set ought we apply any stringencies, and ought we have intention to fulfill the biblical mitzva. This issue is a subject of dispute amongst Rishonim and is not resolved definitively in the Shulchan Arukh. Thus, it is best to have intention to fulfill the biblical mitzva in both sets of tekiot.

### 4. One Hundred Kolot

We have explained the rationale for sounding 60 kolot. Nine kolot do not suffice, since we are unsure as to the precise sound of a terua. Thirty kolot, which fulfill all versions of terua, do not ensure defeat of the Satan. Blowing 60 kolot, then, seems to solve all problems, and fulfills the various opinions of terua. If so, why do we have the custom to blow, not 9, 30 or 60, but 100 kolot? Rishonim (Arukh, cited in Tosafot, RH 33b) cite a most intriguing reason: "To nullify [the effect of] the 100 sobs wept by Sisera's mother."

There are 2 different customs in the blowing of 100 kolot. While all have the custom to blow 30 kolot after Torah reading before Musaf, there is a difference of opinion on how to blow during Musaf. One custom is to blow 30 kolot during the silent Shemoneh Esrei, another 30 during chazarat ha-shatz (the cantor's repetition) of Musaf, and an additional 10 kolot after the completion of the repetition of the Amida prayer. A second custom is to refrain from blowing shofar during the silent Shemoneh Esrei of Musaf, but to sound 30 kolot in chazarat ha-shatz of Musaf, and an additional 40 at its completion.

It is also noteworthy that there is a dispute among Rishonim as to the order of the kolot sounded in Musaf, whether in the silent or repeated Shemoneh Esrei. One opinion is that TSRT should be sounded for "Malkhiyot," TST for "Zikhronot," and TRT for "Shofrot." This is the ruling of Shulchan Arukh (OC 592:1). A second opinion understands that TSRT alone should be sounded for "Malkhiyot," "Zikhronot," and "Shofarot;" this is the ruling of Rema (*ibid.*). A third opinion (Ari z"l, cited in Shelah, p. 217) feels that TSRT, TST, and TRT should be sounded for each berakha of "Malkhiyot," "Zikhronot," and "Shofarot." Currently, this is the most widespread custom.

Clearly, then, tekiat shofar is a vast, multi-leveled mitzva. Indeed, its unique mixture of beauty and discipline serves to elevate and transform mere sound vibration into an exalted kol shofar. However, the most obvious testimony to the sanctity of kol shofar is its powerful, poignant effect upon all of us. The depths to which we are moved, if properly internalized, can change the course of our lives and alter our very destinies. May we merit that the kol shofar reach not only our ears, but our hearts as well, as we usher in a shana tova u-metuka.

## Rosh Hashana: Is it the Beginning of the Year?

### The Winter of Our Discontent

By Rav Asher Meir



Based on: <https://etzion.org.il/en/holidays/rosh-hashana/winter-our-discontent>

#### I. TWO ROSH-HASHANAS

The religious and scientific controversy over the age of the world has received much popular attention. However, the Gemara relates another disagreement that has more conceptual impact – a debate over the world’s exact birthday. The debate is found in a baraita in Rosh HaShana 10b:

Rabbi Eliezer says: the world was created in Tishrei. In Tishrei the patriarchs were born, in Tishrei the patriarchs died; but Yitzchak was born at Pesach. Sarah, Rachel, and Chana were all granted the ability to conceive on Rosh Hashana; Yosef was freed from prison on Rosh Hashana, and on Rosh Hashana our forefathers were freed from labor in Egypt. We were redeemed from Egypt in Nisan, but we are destined to be redeemed in Tishrei.

Rabbi Yehoshua says: the world was created in Nisan. In Nisan the patriarchs were born, and in Nisan the patriarchs died, and Yitzchak was born at Pesach. Sarah, Rachel, and Chana were all granted the ability to conceive on Rosh Hashana; Yosef was freed from prison on Rosh Hashana, and on Rosh Hashana our forefathers were freed from labor in Egypt. We were redeemed from Egypt in Nisan, and we are destined to be redeemed in Nisan.

Ostensibly, R’ Eliezer and R’ Yehoshua’s debate is of little significance. Why should the exact date of creation matter? One understanding is that Tishrei and Nisan are not mere months – they symbolize man’s relationship to the natural world.

In Tishrei, the gateway to autumn, man must combat nature in order to survive. In Nisan, the dawn of spring, nature helps man live and grow. The debate of R’ Eliezer and R’ Yehoshua, then, is whether man is fundamentally in conflict with his environment (Tishrei) or in harmony with it (Nisan).

Imagine that Adam and Eve were created in Tishrei – the autumn; they oppose nature in 2 ways. The first is that they are “out of sync” with nature: while the newly created humans blossom and develop, the world around them withers. The second is that while they depend on nature for their needs, nature does not cooperate with them: every day there is less warmth, less shelter, fewer fruits and vegetables to eat.

In contrast, if we imagine man’s creation in Nisan, the exact opposite holds. The world blossoms in tandem with man’s development; the bounty and warmth of springtime aid man’s early stages as well.

#### II. SOMETHING FOR EVERYONE

Maharsha explains that R’ Eliezer thinks the world was created in Tishrei because it “is the time of repentance,” and R’ Yehoshua thinks the creation took place in Nisan because it “is the time of redemption.” (It is evident that the sages agree as to the significance of the 2 seasons – they concur on the dating of most events in the baraita). It seems that redemption is intimately connected with the idea of collaboration with nature, while repentance – teshuva – is connected with overcoming nature. The redemption from Egypt epitomizes how all creation can cooperate to realize God’s design for mankind. The birth of the Jewish people was accompanied by many miracles – from the plagues to the splitting of the sea – that demonstrate how nature can help man.

The fact that the festival devoted to judgment and repentance falls in Tishrei suggests that the kind of repentance God seeks from us on the judgment day is that of “man against the universe.” We must struggle against the yetzer hara – man’s earthly nature and baser instincts. Judaism recognizes the potential harmony that exists between us and our material side, but Tishrei is not a suitable time for expressing this harmony. On the eve of Nisan we have Adar and Purim, when we increase our happiness and immerse ourselves in the joys that we can acquire from the material world. On the eve of Tishrei we have Elul, where we immerse ourselves in introspection, isolating ourselves from the material and concentrating on the spiritual.

### III. TISHREI, TESHUVA AND THE WORLD

From the end of the baraita we learn that there is an additional dispute between R' Eliezer and R' Yehoshua. Not only do they disagree as to when the world as we know it came into being, they also disagree as to when it will end, ushering in a new and better world. Since they agree on the symbolism of the times of year, we can extend our understanding of the first part of the debate to the second. Will the future redemption be a Tishrei redemption, dependent on repentance, or a Nisan redemption, which will come even without merit like the redemption from Egypt? And so we find in Sanhedrin 97b: R' Eliezer claims that the Jewish people will only be redeemed through repentance; R' Yehoshua claims that whether or not they repent, they will be redeemed.

According to R' Eliezer's "Tishrei" view, our "battle against nature" has very far-reaching implications. If we succeed in "holding our own" against a hostile environment, returning to God despite the many pitfalls and temptations of the withering world, we effect the perfection of nature itself – the final redemption.

In other words, the "Tishrei" approach is that our repentance can transform the world. This connection between the repentance of the individual and the rectification of the world as a whole is illustrated by Rambam in his *Hilkhot Teshuva* (3:1-2). Rambam says that Rosh Hashana is not only the time of judgment for the individual, but also that for the world as a whole: "If [the world's] sins should outweigh its good deeds, the world is immediately doomed." Our teshuva can save the world; our lack of teshuva can destroy it.

### IV. CONCLUSION

Every month in the Jewish calendar has a unique character. Tishrei, when winter begins to fall, symbolizes our periodic necessity to confront the hostile elements in our environment – not only the material, but even more the spiritual. The fact that we are not yet in perfect harmony with nature and society implies not only an ability to resist their imperfections, but also an ability to overcome them, to perfect the world as a whole through our individual repentance.

## **Rosh Hashana: Shofar and Prayer** **Tekiya Al Seder Ha-berakhot:** **On the Relationship between Shofar and Prayer** By Rav Yair Kahn



Based on: <https://etzion.org.il/en/holidays/rosh-hashana/relationship-between-shofar-and-prayer>

#### I. Introduction

According to the mishna in Rosh Ha-shana (33b), the mitzva of shofar demands blowing 3 units of teru'a, each unit comprised of a teru'a sandwiched by 2 tekiyot. However, the exact sound of the teru'a is disputed by the Tannaim. One asserts that the proper sound is reminiscent of sobbing; we refer to this sound as shevarim. Another view demands what we refer to as a teru'a, which sounds more like weeping. R. Abbahu suggested teru'a as a complex sound beginning with sobbing, developing into uncontrolled weeping. This is the shevarim-teru'a (ibid. 34a).

In order to cover all of these views, each version of the teru'a must be sandwiched by tekiyot, and repeated 3 times. This is what we do before the Mussaf service to be certain that we fulfill the basic mitzva. This is known as tekiyot de-meyushav (the tekiyot performed prior to the Mussaf prayer, when one can still sit).

Although the mitzva of shofar has already been fulfilled, we continue with tekiyot de-me'umad (tekiyot performed during the tefilla when one is standing). The tekiyot are repeated, because the shofar must be blown together with the 3 blessings recited within the Mussaf service on Rosh Ha-shana – Malkhuyot, Zikhronot and Shofarot. Merging the shofar with these berakhot is known as "tekiyot al seder ha-berakhot," which is the subject of this shiur. We will begin by discussing the source for reciting these berakhot.

#### II. Malkhuyot, Zikhronot, and Shofarot

The gemara (RH 32a) cites a biblical source for these 3 berakhot. Similarly, the gemara (16a) states: "The Holy One, blessed be He, said 'Recite Malkhuyot, Zikhronot and Shofarot in my presence...'" From these sources it appears that the 3 berakhot are required by Torah law. In fact, Rashi in his Torah commentary (Lev. 23:24) interprets a biblical verse as referring to the berakhot of Zikhronot and Shofarot. The Ramban (ibid.) attacks Rashi's position because of a gemara in Rosh Ha-shana (34b) which states that "The mitzva of blowing the shofar is greater than the mitzva of the berakhot." The gemara applies this to a situation of 2 towns, 1 with shofar blowing, and another with the berakhot, where one should prefer the former to the latter, because "this [shofar] is from the Torah, while this [the berakhot] is rabbinic."

The Ramban concludes from this source that the obligation to recite the berakhot is rabbinic. He then claims that the gemara which derives these berakhot from biblical verses is an *asmakhta* (drawing Torah support for rabbinic law). In his commentary on the *Sefer Ha-mitzvot* (first shoresh), the Ramban claims that gemarot which quote Hashem are not necessarily to be taken literally. He proves this from the gemara cited above, which quotes Hashem as demanding the 3 berakhot, which are actually rabbinic in origin. Before attempting to explain how Rashi might respond to the Ramban's attack, let us take a closer look at *tekiya al seder ha-berakhot*.

### III. Tekiyot De-me'umad

As noted, *tekiya al seder ha-berakhot* is fulfilled by the *tekiyot de-me'umad*, where we accompany the 3 berakhot with the shofar. There is an extensive discussion in the Rishonim relating to the exact performance of these *tekiyot*. On the original custom, the berakha of *Malkhuyot* was accompanied by a unit of *shevarim-teru'a* (*tekiya, shevarim-teru'a, tekiya*), the berakha of *Zikhronot* was accompanied by a unit of *shevarim*, and the berakha of *Shofarot* was accompanied by a unit of *teru'a*. At first glance this is strange, since the *teru'a* is inconsistent, with 3 different versions of *teru'a* used alternately in the 3 berakhot. This seems to lead to a situation whereby the shofar is blown correctly in only 1 of the 3 berakhot. The Rishonim were troubled by the apparent contradiction inherent in this practice.

Various solutions are raised to this problem. Rav Hai Gaon and the *Ba'al Ha-ma'or* claim that the opinions regarding the sound of the *teru'a* are not mutually exclusive. While the exact sound of the *teru'a* is preferable, any version of the *teru'a* is acceptable. The Rif and Rambam argue that accuracy of the *teru'a* is indispensable. Yet, they explain, accuracy during the *tekiyot de-me'umad* is not required, since the Torah requirement has already been fulfilled. *Rabbeinu Tam*, on the other hand, claimed that the *shevarim-teru'a* is inclusive of all options. He thus altered the custom so that a *shevarim-teru'a* would accompany all 3 berakhot. Our custom, based on the *Arukh*, includes all 3 versions of the *teru'a* in each of the 3 berakhot.

Most solutions accept the basic assumption that a proper *teru'a* is essential for *tekiyot de-me'umad*. The Ramban boldly swept aside the entire problem. He claimed that there is a basic difference between the obligation of shofar on Rosh Ha-shana, and the obligation to accompany the berakhot with the shofar. This difference stems from 2 independent sources. In Parashat Emor (Lev. 23:24), we are commanded to blow the shofar on Rosh Ha-shana. This obligation focuses on the shofar, demanding a precise rendition of the required sounds (*tekiya-teru'a-tekiya*, 3 times). In Parashat Beha'alotkha (Num. 10:9), we are commanded to sound trumpets when the Jewish people face danger. According to both the Rambam (*Hilkhot Ta'aniyot* 1:1) and the Ramban (commentary on *Sefer Ha-mitzvot*, Asei #5), this is essentially an obligation of prayer, accompanied by and expressed through the trumpet. As such, the Ramban claimed that precision of the trumpet sound is not essential. The Ramban then identified *tekiya al seder ha-berakhot* on Rosh Ha-shana with the obligation to sound the trumpets in times of danger, since Rosh Ha-shana (as a day of judgment) poses a degree of danger.

According to the Ramban, blowing the shofar before *Mussaf* (*tekiyot de-meyushav*) fulfills the obligation of shofar specific to Rosh Ha-shana. The additional obligation to accompany the berakhot with the shofar (*tekiyot de-me'umad*) is rooted in the halakha of prayer in times of danger. Thus, while precision is essential during the *tekiyot de-meyushav*, it is unnecessary during the *tekiyot de-me'umad*.

Those Rishonim who reject the Ramban's solution may argue with his assertion that precision is unnecessary when sounding trumpets at times of danger. Alternatively, they may reject his entire thesis. These Rishonim may argue that *tekiyot de-me'umad* is not a separate obligation. Sounding the shofar during the berakhot is a fuller, more complete fulfillment of the mitzva of shofar specific to Rosh Ha-shana. This assumes, however, that the mitzva of shofar on Rosh Ha-shana is more than merely listening to the sounds of the shofar. The shofar is a form of prayer, an unutterable cry to Hashem which cannot be expressed verbally (see *Tosafot Pesachim* 115a). Yet, when accompanied by the 3 berakhot, the prayer of the shofar is enhanced by the content of the berakhot. Thus, while the basic mitzva was completed with the *tekiyot de-meyushav*, a fuller fulfillment is attained by sounding the shofar within the context of *Malkhuyot*, *Shofarot* and *Zikhronot*. On this understanding, the criteria which govern the *tekiyot de-meyushav* may be applicable to *tekiyot de-me'umad* as well.

### IV. Ramifications

The Rambam in *Hilkhot Shofar* (3:11) rules: "The person who blows the shofar when the congregation is sitting, is the one who should blow *al seder ha-berakhot* when they are standing, and he should not talk between the *tekiyot de-meyushav* and the *tekiyot de-me'umad*." This halakha can be seen as specific to the one blowing the shofar, because the berakha that he makes prior to blowing the shofar the first time should also relate to the subsequent *tekiyot*. However, some opinions extend this halakha to everyone (see *Maggid Mishneh* *ibid.*). If we view the *tekiyot de-me'umad* as fulfilling the mitzva of shofar, then it is reasonable to demand continuity between the beginning of the

mitzva and its completion. If, on the other hand, the halakha of tekiya al seder ha-berakhot is independent, a break separating the 2 tekiyot is acceptable.

The berakha we recite before a mitzva is known as a birkat ha-mitzva. There are some berakhot which use the term “al” (on), e.g., al netilat yadayim, while others use the prefix “le-” (to), e.g., le-hadlik ner shel Shabbat. The gemara in Pesachim (7b) seeks a pattern or principle to explain these 2 different versions. However, the gemara’s unclear conclusion generated a heated debate among the Rishonim. Rabbeinu Tam claimed that the term “al” applies to mitzvot which are fulfilled through a defined, limited act. However, “le-” is used regarding a mitzva whose fulfillment continues beyond the initial act (e.g., talmud Torah or hanachat tefillin).

The Ramban argues with Rabbeinu Tam, citing several berakhot inconsistent with his thesis. One of the questions involves the berakha of shofar, which is worded with a “le.” The Ramban claims that shofar should be a classic case of a mitzva which is fulfilled through a clearly defined act. After all, one merely has to hear the 3 units of teru’a. The Rosh defends Rabbeinu Tam’s position, claiming that shofar is not fulfilled through a defined act, since one must also hear the tekiya al seder ha-berakhot. The Ramban, who maintained that tekiya al seder ha-berakhot is independent of the basic mitzva of shofar, would not have been convinced by this argument. The Rosh, on the other hand, explicitly supports the alternate approach which perceived the berakhot as enhancing and completing the mitzva of shofar. Categorizing shofar as a mitzva whose fulfillment is not clearly defined, may not be only because of the time lapse between tekiyot de-meyushav and tekiyot de-me’umad. The perception of shofar as a form of prayer (which is thus enhanced by the berakhot) is by definition not clearly defined. On this understanding, even if the berakha were made immediately preceding tekiyot de-me’umad, the prefix “le-” and not “al” would be appropriate. The Ramban, however, viewed shofar not as prayer but rather as hearing or sounding certain sounds. Thus, according to the Ramban, the mitzva of shofar is clearly defined.

#### V. Rashi

The gemara (34b) says that the berakhot and tekiyot of Rosh Ha-shana are interdependent. Rashi interprets this to mean that the mitzva of the 3 berakhot cannot be fulfilled without sounding the shofar, and the mitzva of shofar cannot be fulfilled without reciting the berakhot. Tosafot (33b) reject this explanation. According to Tosafot, each one of the 3 berakhot is dependent on the other 2. Similarly, the 3 units of teru’a are interdependent. However, the berakhot and tekiyot are independent of each other.

If, like the Ramban, we maintain that shofar and berakhot are independent, then there is no reason to assume that the fulfillment of one should be linked to the other. If, on the other hand, we view berakhot as enhancing the shofar and filling it with content, then the idea of dependency can be entertained.

Tosafot reject Rashi’s interpretation based on the gemara (quoted above) which ruled that one should prefer shofar without berakhot over berakhot without shofar, since shofar is required by Torah law, while berakhot is a rabbinic obligation. If, as Rashi claims, shofar is dependent upon the berakhot, what is gained by hearing the shofar without the berakhot?

Perhaps we can solve this problem according to Rashi by interpreting the gemara in a slightly different manner. We suggested that Rashi maintains that the berakhot enhance the mitzva of shofar. Although Rashi must admit that the basic mitzva of shofar is fulfilled without the berakhot, the berakhot are indispensable to achieve a complete fulfillment of shofar.

What happens in the opposite case, when the berakhot are recited without the shofar? The Ramban maintained that tekiya al seder ha-berakhot is not rooted in the mitzva of shofar, but rather the obligation to pray in times of danger. Accordingly, the berakhot are of primary importance, while the shofar is a helpful but not critical addition. It follows that lack of the shofar would not invalidate the berakhot. However, according to Rashi, the berakhot do not play an independent role. They merely enhance the mitzva of the shofar. Thus, absent a shofar, the berakhot lose their basic meaning.

The Ramban proved that the 3 berakhot are of rabbinic origin from the gemara which preferred shofar without berakhot over berakhot without shofar. The gemara explained that the Torah obligates shofar, while only the Rabbis demand the berakhot. According to the Ramban’s opinion that tekiya al seder ha-berakhot is basically an obligation to pray, the proof is very convincing. After all, the gemara explicitly regards the prayer as rabbinic. Rashi, however, understood the berakhot to be an enhancement of the mitzva of shofar. As such, when the berakhot are recited without the shofar, they lose their basic meaning. In such a situation the obligation is only rabbinic. However, when the berakhot accompany the shofar, the obligation is rooted in the Torah, as the optimal method of fulfilling the mitzva of shofar.

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