

THE YESHIVA PIRCHEI SHOSHANIM PRESENTS:
THE ROADMAP TO PRAYER PROJECT

The Roadmap to Prayer

Lesson 45

©Yeshiva Pirchei Shoshanim 2006

This shiur may not be reproduced in any form without permission of the copyright holder

Rehov Kahanamin 54, Bnei Brac 03.616.6340
164 Village Path, Lakewood NJ 08701 732.370.3344 fax 1.877.Pirchei (732.367.8168)

The Roadmap to Prayer

Lesson

45

Erev Rosh Hashanah

Fasting on Erev Rosh Hashanah

It is customary for adults from the age of *Bar Mitzvah* and *Bas Mitzvah* to fast on *Erev Rosh Hashanah* (the eve of the Jewish New Year)¹. Since people will be arising early in the morning before dawn, there is a custom to at least take a drink before *Alos Hashachar* (dawn) and then fast afterwards. This is done to avoid any resemblance to non-Jewish people who used to have a custom of fasting on the eve of their holidays². The fast doesn't need to be completed until nightfall³.

Some people fast until *Mincha* in the afternoon⁴ or even as late as *Plag HaMincha*. It is common for people nowadays to fast until *Chatzos* (*Halachic* noon)⁵.

The *Medrash*⁶ brings a parable that was said by *Rebbe Yaakov* and *Rebbe Yehoshua* of *Sichnin* in the name of *Rebbe Levi*.

One can compare the custom of fasting during this time of year to a city that failed to pay their head-tax to the king. When the king became aware of the situation, he gathered his army and headed toward the rebellious country. As he drew closer, the leaders of that country went out to greet the king, to praise him and to plead with him to forgive them for not paying their taxes, since they really didn't have the money that the king demanded.

¹ *Simon* 581 *Mishna Berura* S"K 16

² *Ibid.* S"K 21

³ *Ibid.* S"K 16

⁴ *Machtzis Hashekel* 562:1

⁵ *She'ilas Yaavetz* 2:147

⁶ *Vayikra* chapter 30

⁷ It is apparent that this parable is not just meant as a nice perspective on these fasts as it is something that was mentioned specifically as something handed down in tradition. Thus, it is mentioned in *Halacha* that fasting on *Erev Rosh Hashanah* annuls one third of one's sins!

Upon listening carefully to this delegation, the king was willing to reduce the amount by a third. After this, as the king continued toward the city another delegation consisting of middle-class individuals came out to plead with the king to forgo the tax; and the king conceded to forgive another third of the tax. Finally, as the king and his army came to the city's entrance, the entire population of the city, men, women and children came out to greet the king to give him praise and honor; so the king forgave the rest but warned them that from now on they would be responsible for all future taxes.

Bringing the Nation to Repentance

The same thing happens with *Klal Yisrael* each year before *Rosh Hashanah*, the Day of Judgment with their sins. At first, on *Erev Rosh Hashanah* with *Rosh Hashanah* quickly approaching, the most pious of the nation fast. Then during the *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah* (the 10 days of repenting from *Rosh Hashanah* until *Yom Kippur* the average individuals begin fasting. Finally, on *Yom Kippur* everyone fasts, men, women and children⁸.

In practice, everyone may consider himself or herself worthy of fasting on *Erev Rosh Hashanah* even if he's just average. Since we have so much at stake, we feel obliged to fast on the final day of the year with the hope that our repentance on this last day of the year will rectify the rest of the days of the year⁹.

Hatoras Nedarim – Annulling one's vows

The common custom amongst Jews is to perform *Hatoras Nedarim* (annulling one's vows) on the day before *Rosh Hashanah*. After having recited the *Selichos* earlier in the morning and finishing *Shacharis*, the men who are gathered in *Shul* (the synagogue) gather in groups to perform *Hatoras Nedarim*. This process helps to prevent one from inadvertently making vows in the future unwittingly without specifically pronouncing it to be a vow. This can happen when someone does something of a *Mitzvah*-matter three times. The *Chazzan* performs this again on *Yom Kippur* by the *Kol Nidrei* (All my vows) prayer. However, the *Kol Nidrei* can even annul a real vow in the future depending on certain *Halachic* parameters and conditions¹⁰.

⁸ Those who are old enough to fast according to *Halacha*

⁹ *Aruch Hashulchan* 581:9

¹⁰ See *Sefer Maadanei Shlomo* page 62, 63

Hatoras Nedarim is performed particularly before *Rosh Hashanah* since we will be praying (*davening*) for our welfare and we will be examining our worthiness and accepting upon ourselves renewed commitments to *Hashem* and His Torah, we wish to perfect our resolution by ridding ourselves of any accusations of not abiding by our words. So we perform this already before *Rosh Hashanah*, rather than leave this for a later time.

There is a custom amongst some Sephardim to perform *Hatoras Nedarim* twice at 40-day intervals. The first time is on the 19th of Tammuz, which is 40 days before *Rosh Chodesh Elul*, and again on *Rosh Chodesh Elul*, which is 40 days before *Yom Kippur*.

Women and Children

Women do not need to annul their vows individually. They can rely upon the annulment of vows during the *tefilla* of *Kol Nidrei* of *Yom Kippur*. They should say the words of *Kol Nidrei* along with the *Chazzan* quietly¹¹. If they will not be attending *Kol Nidrei* on *Yom Kippur*, they can make their husband an agent to annul their vows.

Children who are in the year just before *Bar Mitzvah* or *Bas Mitzvah* can be legally bound by their vows according to Torah law. However, they were not given the dispensation of annulling vows until the age they become adults and obligated in *Mitzvos*¹².

The Custom of Visiting a Cemetery

On *Erev* (the eve of) *Rosh Hashanah* some individuals have a custom to visit the cemetery to recite prayers by the graveside of righteous individuals¹³. One must be aware that this custom strictly prohibits praying to the dead for any kind of help. Rather, our prayers are specifically that *Hashem* listen to our prayers, invoking this through the merit of the pious *Tzaddikim* who are buried in the cemetery. Alternatively, our prayers can be directed to the *Tzaddik* to intercede to *Hashem* on our behalf.

One who is not ritually clean should be sure to first immerse himself in a *Mikva* (ritual bath) before going to the cemetery.

¹¹ *Mishna Berura* 619:2

¹² *She'arim Hametzuyanim Be'Halacha* 128:24

¹³ *Simon* 581:4 and *Mishna Berura* S"K 27

At the gravesite, one should first encircle the grave, give *Tzedakah* (charity) and then proceed to recite a prayer. One shouldn't visit the same grave twice in one day¹⁴.

Reason for this custom

Perhaps this custom is based on the *Gemara* at the end of *Mesechta Berachos* 18b that relates a story of someone who got into a quarrel with his wife on *Erev Rosh Hashanah*. Feeling bad for acting haughtily he decided to go humble himself by sleeping in the cemetery. We too can gain merit by reflecting on the notion of death, by humbling ourselves and applying ourselves in our service of G-d (*Avodas Hashem*).

Naming the Jewish Months

In the *Chumash* (the Five Books of Moses), the months of the Jewish calendar do not have specific names. They are identified by number rather than by name. The names of the Jewish months were given later on during the first exile of the Jews in Babylonia. Still, the *Baal HaTurim* shows that *Rosh Hashanah* is hinted to in the Torah as being in the month of *Tishrei*. In fact, there is no real direct reference in the *Chumash* to the name "*Rosh Hashanah*" at all. The verse that has this hint is where *Moshe Rabbeinu* describes the goodness of the Land of Israel that it is "*a land that Hashem your G-d seeks out* ¹⁵ (מרשית השנה) *from the beginning of the year until the end of the year*". The word מרשית השנה (*Meireishis Hashanah*) means *Rosh Hashanah* but it is spelled without the letter *Aleph* (א). By omitting the letter *Aleph* (א), it shares the same letters as the word *Tishrei* (תשרי) = (מרשית) alluding to the *Yom Tov* of *Rosh Hashanah* in the month of *Tishrei*.

The Seventh Month: The Beginning of a Year

It is interesting to note that in the Torah, the *Yom Tov* of *Rosh Hashanah* is set to be on the first day of the seventh month, which is the month of *Tishrei*. In prayer, we say *Zeh Hayom Techillas Maasecha* (today is the beginning of your work) and *Hayom Haras Olam*¹⁶ (today is the birthday of the world) prayer after sounding the *Shofar* during the *Chazzan's* repeating of the *Amidah Prayer*.

¹⁴ *Kaf HaChaim* 581:93, 97

¹⁵ *Devarim* 11:12: (דברים פרק י' ב) ארץ אשר השם אלקיך דרש אתה תמיד עיני השם אלקיך בה מרשית השנה ועד אחרית שנה:

¹⁶ See *Rosh Hashanah* *daf* 10b and 27b

When was the world created Tishrei or Nissan?

There is a dispute in the *Gemara* whether the world was created in the month of *Tishrei* or in the month of *Nissan*.

This prayer follows the opinion of Rebbe Eliezer that the world was created in Tishrei.

The celebration of Creation that we celebrate on the first of *Tishrei* is not called the first month of the year since our calendar is set by the Torah to be counted from the month in which *Yetzias Mitzrayim* (the Exodus from Egypt) took place, the month of *Nissan*.

More on Rosh Hashanah in the Seventh Month

The *Abudraham*¹⁷ writes that the reason for the Day of Judgment in the month of *Tishrei* is because the month is represented by *Mozna'im* (a scale) in the constellations representing the months of the year. He then quotes a beautiful explanation from the Rambam, that

Hashem the Merciful One chooses to judge in a setting, which is most favorable for us and has the most *Mitzvos* that we can perform.

Since *Tishrei* is full of *Mitzvos*, He would rather judge in this month. In Hebrew the word for seven is *Shiv'ah*, which has the same letters of *Save'ah* (satiated/saturated) since this month is so saturated with *Hashem's* holy *Mitzvos*.

Preparing for Yom Tov and Hallel

Although *Rosh Hashanah* is a Day of Judgment, when *Hashem* judges all of mankind, one should still prepare for this *Yom Tov* much like any other *Yom Tov*. One should bathe and groom oneself and dress in fine *Yom Tov* clothing. However, since *Rosh Hashanah* is a Day of Judgment one shouldn't dress in very expensive clothing or jewelry. Many people have a custom of dressing in white clothing to remind oneself of the day one passes away and is buried in white shrouds, in order to humble one's heart. Also, it is a sign that our sins should turn white and be forgiven as the verse

¹⁷ *Abudraham* – R' David Abudraham - Lived in Seville, Spain during the late 13th – 14th century. Wrote a guide to prayer when as he wrote in the introduction to his works "the need for a guide to familiarize all with the meaning and the laws of the prayers."

says "If your sins will be like a red thread, they will turn white as snow"¹⁸. Therefore, some men don their *Kittel*¹⁹ on *Rosh Hashanah*. Others have the custom of donning it just on *Yom Kippur*.

Not Saying Hallel

Since in fact *Rosh Hashanah* is a Day of Judgment we do not recite *Hallel* as we normally would on another *Yom Tov* (festival) day. About this the *Gemara*²⁰ states that G-d said to the Heavenly Angels, "When the King sits in judgment with the Book of Life and the Book of Death open before Him, can *Bnei Yisrael* sing praise?"

One should not delay until *Erev Yom Kippur* to seek forgiveness from anyone he may have wronged during the course of the year. One should start this process already from before *Rosh Hashanah*.

Of course, one should start seeking forgiveness for one's sins against *Hashem*, which is the main point of our reciting *Selichos*.

Distributing Charity

One should apportion *Tzedakah* (charity) to poor people on *Erev Rosh Hashanah*. There is a custom to send ready cooked food to poor people as well as the verse in *Nechemia*²¹ mentions this was done on *Erev Rosh Hashanah*. This was after *Ezra HaSofer* (the Scribe) read from the *Sefer Torah* that if Jews will lead their lives in a way that is contrary to Torah and *Mitzvos*, *Hashem* would visit strict judgment upon them. Upon hearing these words, the assembled Jews wept openly, thus, eliciting the above response from *Ezra*.

¹⁸ *Yeshayahu* 1:18

¹⁹ This is a special white robe without pockets resembling shrouds

²⁰ *Rosh Hashanah* 32a

²¹ נחמיה פרק ח (ז) ויאמר להם לכו אכלו משמנים ושתו ממתקים ושלחו מנות לאין נכון לו כי קדוש היום לאדנינו (8:10) ואל תעצבו כי חדות השם היא מעוזכם (And he said to them go eat delicacies and drink sweets, and send prepared portions to those who have no prepared food, for this day is holy to our Master, and do not despair for the joy of *Hashem* is your strength).

In general, one should do meritorious *Mitzvos* to increase one's merits on the final day of the year²².

Balancing our Emotions

The *Yom Tov* of *Rosh Hashanah* carries with it two opposite emotions. On the one hand we are supposed to fear Heavenly judgment, and recognize its penetrating and exacting manner. But at the same time, we need to put this judgment into perspective in a way that it serves as a method to motivate us to repent and to mend our ways so that we serve *Hashem* properly according to the dictates of the Torah.

Trusting in Hashem to forgive our Iniquities

This comes from a feeling of trust that *Hashem* wants to forgive us for our iniquities so that we can have a fresh start in our *Avodas Hashem* (Service of G-d). Therefore, although this day doesn't carry with it the same expression of joy as a regular *Yom Tov* (Festival day), which is why *Hallel* is not recited, it still demands us to be hopeful that in the end we will come clean and that we will merit having another wonderful year filled with fulfillment of Torah and *Mitzvos* as well as physical and financial well-being.

The Mitzvah of Separating Challah from the Dough

Another custom that some have is that the woman of the house kneads an amount of dough that would obligate her in the *Mitzvah* of *Hafroschas Challah* (separating a portion of the dough and designating it for the *Mitzvah* of *Challah*) from the dough that she makes for the *Challos* (bread rolls) that will be eaten on *Yom Tov*.

Why Women are responsible for Separating Dough

The *Gemara* in *Shabbos*²³ relates that a woman is responsible for the *Mitzvah* of *Hafroschas Challah* (separating a portion of the dough and designating it

²² *Aruch Hashulchan* 581:13

²³ *Daf* 32a

for the *Mitzvah* of *Challah*) because she caused that her husband *Adam Harishon* (Adam the First Man) should be chased out of *Gan Eden* (the Garden of Eden) and to be punished by death by giving him fruit from the Tree of Knowledge. The *Medrash Rabba* likens *Adam Harishon* (Adam the first Man) to be the *Challah* of the world; therefore the woman should involve herself in the *Mitzvah* of *Hafroschas Challah*. *Rashi*²⁴ explains that *Adam Harishon* was taken from the dirt of the ground, as the portion of *Challah from the world*, much like the act of *Hafroschas Challah* that separates a portion of dough off the dough.

Just like women perform this *Mitzvah* weekly on *Erev Shabbos* as a rectification for *Chava's* sin in causing *Adam Harishon - the Challah of the world* - to die, since the sin occurred on a Friday afternoon of Creation, so too on the eve of *Rosh Hashanah* which is the eve of that day of Creation, women perform this *Mitzvah* for that very same reason.

INTRODUCTION - PART 1

The Two-Day Yom Tov of Rosh Hashanah

The phenomenon of a two-day *Yom Tov* is something that developed in the time of the Talmud when Jews settled in communities outside of *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel), away from the *Beis Din* (Jewish court) where the Lunar Calendar was set monthly through witnesses testifying on the citing of the New Moon. Those people that lived in areas far from the central courthouse would only become aware of the exact day of the new month when messengers would arrive in their town to notify them of the event. If there were an upcoming Festival-day that month, it would be of utmost importance that every Jewish community be informed of the exact day the new month began. However, the further away people lived, the more difficult it became for the messengers to notify all the communities in time for the holiday. For this reason those communities would have to take the precaution of keeping

רש"י מסכת שבת דף לב עמוד א הריני נוטל נשמתכם - ותאבד רביעית דמכם, ויכבה נרכם, ויבטל שם ראשיתכם, ונשים²⁴ נצטוו על כך, כדאמרינן בבראשית רבה: היא איבדה חלתו של עולם - שעל ידה נטרד אדם הראשון שנתרם כחלה, וכבתה נרו של עולם, ושפכה דמו, ועוד, שצרכי הבית תלוין בה.

the first two days as a *Yom Tov* instead of just one day. This is called *Safeka Deyoma* which means that in effect only one of the two days is really a *Yom Tov* day except that we keep both as such because of our *safek* (doubt).

Safeka Deyoma: Calculating the Two days of Yom Tov outside of Israel

If for example by the 15th of *Tishrei* (first day of *Sukkos*) no messengers would arrive to tell us about when the month began, we would keep the 15th and the 16th of the month as *Yom Tov* because perhaps the month began on the second day of this month instead of on the first, pushing *Yom Tov* ahead by one day. Generally, most communities in *Eretz Yisrael* would be notified before too many days have passed in the month. Therefore, in *Eretz Yisrael*, the *Yomim Tovim* (Festivals) of *Pesach*, *Shavuot* and *Sukkos* would be celebrated on the first day only. The second day of *Shavuot* would be a regular day while on *Pesach* and *Sukkos* the next day would be *Chol HaMoed* (Intermediary Festival-Day). On *Pesach* and *Sukkos* that have a day of *Yom Tov* at the end as prescribed by the Torah, they would be subject to the laws of *Safeka Deyoma*, ending *Yom Tov* in *Chutz La'Aretz* (the Diaspora) a day later than in *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel).

Rosh Hashanah falls on the first day of the Month

However, since *Rosh Hashanah* is on the first day of the 7th month, even the communities outside of *Yerushalayim*, outside of the main courthouse where the witnesses testified about the new month wouldn't be sure on which day to observe the *Yom Tov* of *Rosh Hashanah*. For this reason even in *Eretz Yisrael*, two days would be observed for *Rosh Hashanah*, not just in the Diaspora. Therefore, *Rosh Hashanah* became a two-day festival in every Jewish community even in *Eretz Yisrael*.

Rosh Hashanah – Two days or One Long Day

In the time of the *Beis Hamikdash* (Temple) the new month would depend on the testimony of witnesses sighting the new moon. At

times, even in the main *Beis Din* (Jewish court) where this procedure took place, they would sometimes end up having two days *Yom Tov* on *Rosh Hashanah*. In the event the witnesses would show up too late in the day for *Beis Din* to process their testimony, they would keep the second day as *Yom Tov* as well. In this scenario, the first day would be considered as a *Yom Tov* even when they knew that witnesses could no longer come to testify to make the first day *Rosh Hashanah* the first day of the month. Therefore, the nature of the two days of *Rosh Hashanah* is considered according to some *poskim* as *Yoma Arichta* (a single lengthened day).

Making a She'hechyanu or Not

This has *Halachic* ramifications as well regarding the recital of *She'hechyanu* blessing on the second day of *Rosh Hashanah*. Generally, a *She'hechyanu* blessing is recited for experiencing something new like the beginning of a new *Yom Tov*. A woman would recite the *She'hechyanu* blessing at the time of candle-lighting and by a man at the end of *Kiddush*²⁵. In *Chutz La'Aretz* (the Diaspora) *She'hechyanu* is recited again on the second night of a new *Yom Tov* because perhaps this is really the correct day to start the *Yom Tov*. Since the second day of *Rosh Hashanah* could be viewed as a continuation of the first day, and not a *Safeka Deyoma*, there is a doubt whether *She'hechyanu* should be omitted for the second day. Therefore, the *Poskim* advise to place a new fruit on the table or wear a new garment when reciting this blessing on the second night of *Rosh Hashanah*, having mind that the *She'hechyanu* is for the new item as well as for the second day of *Yom Tov*.

The Two Days Rosh Hashanah according to Kabbalah

Since *Rosh Hashanah* is a Day of Judgment, we must understand why we have two days *Rosh Hashanah*. If the first day is when an individual is judged, then what's the reason for the second day? If only *Hashem* sits in judgment only on the second day, why have the first day?

²⁵ On *Yom Kippur* it is recited in *Shul* at the beginning of the evening prayers since *Kiddush* isn't recited because of the fast. Anyone that doesn't recite by candle-lighting or in *Shul* should recite individually at the beginning of the *Yom Tov*.

Two Kinds of Judgments – Strict and Soft

The *Ari zt"l*²⁶ explains that in fact, we undergo two kinds of judgments, one on each of the two days. On the first day it is referred to as Harsh Judgment while on the second day we refer to it as Soft Judgment - *Dina Kashia* and *Dina Rafia*²⁷.

INTRODUCTION - PART 2

The Mitzvah of the Day: The Shofar Blasts

The main *Mitzvah* of the festival of *Rosh Hashanah* is the sounding of the *Shofar*. The Torah commands us to sound the *Shofar* on *Rosh Hashanah* in the daytime. Listening to someone blowing a hollowed out horn from a kosher animal fulfills the *Mitzvah*. The specific sounds one is required to blow are, *Tekia*, *Shevarim*, *Terua* and *Tekia*.

Blowing the Shofar on Shabbos

Our Sages also instructed us that although there is a Torah command to sound the *Shofar* on *Rosh Hashanah* whether it falls on a regular weekday or on a *Shabbos*, we are no longer allowed to sound the *Shofar* if it is on *Shabbos*. Accordingly, if there were only one day *Rosh Hashanah* nowadays, it would be possible that we would celebrate the festival of *Rosh Hashanah* without the main *Mitzvah* of *Tekias Shofar*!

The Prohibition of Blowing Shofar on Shabbos

The Rabbis of the Talmud prohibited blowing the *Shofar* on *Rosh Hashanah* when it falls on *Shabbos* anywhere except in a place where there is a *Beis*

²⁶ *Ari Zt"l* – R' Yitzchak Ben Shlomo Luria Ashkenazi - **Born:** Jerusalem, Israel, 1534. **Died:** Safed, Israel, 1572. **Notes:** Also known as Ari HaKodesh/Holy Lion. Great Talmudist and Kabbalist. Disciple of R' Betzalel Ashkenazi, who was one of the fathers of the Kabbalistic movement. Renown for his saintly character and ascetic way of life.

²⁷ See *Michtav Me'Eliyahu* (Rav Eliyahu Dessler zt"l) Vol. 2 page 74 for a deep philosophical treatise on this subject

*Din*²⁸. The *Gemara* explains the reason for this prohibition was to safeguard that there isn't even a single incident of transgressing the *Shabbos* by someone carrying a *Shofar* in a public domain in order to have someone teach him how to use the *Shofar*.

The Mitzvah of Lulav on Shabbos

A similar injunction was made regarding the *Mitzvah* of taking a *Lulav* on *Sukkos* and the reading of the *Megillah* on *Purim* when they fall on *Shabbos*. The *Gemara* also explains elsewhere²⁹ that although by imposing this decree of blowing the *Shofar* a *Mitzvah* of the Torah will be canceled; it's within the Rabbis purview to have us *sit back and not do a mitzvah* when they are protecting a Torah law.

Now that *Rosh Hashanah* is always observed for two days, even when the first day falls on a *Shabbos*, we have the opportunity to blow the *Shofar* on the second day, which is on a Sunday.

A Hint in the Torah about the Rabbinic Enactment Prohibiting Shofar on Shabbos

The *Yerushalmi*³⁰ (Jerusalem Talmud) states that sometimes we do not blow *Shofar* on *Rosh Hashanah* because the verse says that it will be a "remembrance of a Terua blast"³¹ instead of the usual reference in the Torah to *Rosh Hashanah* as being the "*day of Terua*". From this verse our sages see that the *Shofar* is only *remembered* but *not* sounded. The *sefer* (book) *Mincha Belulah* finds a very strong hint in the above-mentioned verse, that the verse refers to the *Shabbos* day. The *Pasuk* (verse) reads as follows: On the seventh month on the first day of the month it shall be a *Shabbason* (day of rest) *a remembrance of blowing*, alluding to *Shabbos* in the word *Shabbason* in the same verse (*Pasuk*) that states that it will be a *remembrance* of blowing.

²⁸ See *Rambam Hilchos Shofar* chapter 7 for details

²⁹ See *Yevamos daf* 90a

³⁰ *Rosh Hashanah Perak* 4:1, *Talmud Bavli* 29b brings this exegesis but refutes it in the end

³¹ *Bamidbar* 23:23

The Shofar blasts: Two Types of Sounds

The sounds that we blow from the *Shofar* are two basic sounds according to Torah Law. One is the *Terua* sound, which is a sequence of short successive sounds. The *Terua* needs to be accompanied by a *Tekia* sound before it and again after it. The Gemara derives that the Torah requirement is to listen to three sounds of the *Terua*, which automatically mean that we must listen to six accompanying *Tekia* sounds, since every *Terua* requires a *Tekia* sound before it and again after it.

The Definition of a Terua

The *Gemara* in *Rosh Hashanah*³² explains that the *Terua* sound that the Torah requires can be nine short consecutive blasts (.....). Or perhaps each sound is a little longer and there are supposed to be three such consecutive sounds (- - -). We refer to this as a *Shevarim* sound. Additionally, it is possible that a *Torah Terua* sound is a combination of the two sounds in this order (*Shevarim Terua*) (- - -).

Therefore, in order to be sure that one fulfills the Torah command to blow Tekia, Terua, Tekia, three times, one will have to listen to at least three sets of each:

- 1) Tekia, Shevarim, Terua, Tekia (Tashrat),
- 2) Tekia, Shevarim, Tekia (Tashat) and
- 3) Tekia, Terua, Tekia (Tarat).

In order not to over simplify this matter, it must be pointed out that there are various opinions amongst the *Rishonim* how to best fulfill the *Mitzvah* of *Tekias Shofar*. Some of the issues that they grapple with are:

§ *The length of each Shofar sound*

§ *How many Shofar sounds should be sounded*

§ *The sequence of the Shofar blasts*

³² *Daf*34a

- § *The proper way to sound and combine a Shevarim Terua*
- § *Its placement into the order of Tefilla*
- § *What constitutes an error that obligates one to repeat the entire portion of a set*

The *Rishonim* and the *Poskim*³³ (Rabbinical Authorities) discuss all these factors at length. Their *Halachos* are numerous and complicated. Anyone that blows the *Shofar* to fulfill the *Mitzvah* must be familiar with these laws, so that the *Mitzvah* will be properly fulfilled.

³³ See *Shulchan Aruch Orach Chaim* Simon 590

Questions:

- 1) Why do we fast on *Erev Rosh Hashanah* and how late into the day does this fast go?
- 2) When is *Hatoras Nedarim* performed according to the various customs?
- 3) What is the custom regarding visiting a cemetery on *Erev Rosh Hashanah*?
- 4) In which number month do we celebrate as *Rosh Hashanah*? Why is it not the called the first month?
- 5) What opposite emotions are brought into conflict in the *Yom Tov* of *Rosh Hashanah* and how do we overcome this conflict?
- 6) What special *Mitzvah* should women perform on *Erev Rosh Hashanah*?
- 7) What's the basis for celebrating the first day of the *Yom Tov* of *Sukkos* for two days in *Chutz La'Aretz* (the Diaspora)?
- 8) Why is *Rosh Hashanah* celebrated for two days by all communities, even in *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel)?
- 9) How does the nature of the two-day *Yom Tov* of *Rosh Hashanah* affect the *bracha* of *She'hechyanu* on the second day *Yom Tov*?
- 10) What *Mitzvos* did the *Rabbis* prevent us from performing on *Shabbos*?
- 11) What do the two days of *Rosh Hashanah* represent according to *Kabbalistic* teachings?
- 12) What are the two basic sounds of the *Shofar* mentioned in the Torah?

Answers:

- 1) Since *Rosh Hashanah* is approaching, it's customary for the *Tzaddikim* to fast because of the impending Day of Judgment. Anyone who wishes to join in this fast can do so as it can rectify the sins of the entire year. Indeed the custom is for all to fast, at least until midday.
 - 2) According to all customs, we perform it individually on *Erev Rosh Hashanah* and with the congregation on *Yom Kippur* night by *Kol Nidrei*. Some Sephardim perform this two additional times at 40-day intervals; on the 19th of *Tamuz* and again on *Rosh Chodesh Elul*.
 - 3) The custom is to go to a cemetery and circle the grave, give *Tzedaka* (charity) and recite a prayer. One should have in mind the merit of the righteous people buried there, and ask *Hashem* to forgive us in their merit. Alternatively, one may ask them to intercede in Heaven on our behalf.
 - 4) *Rosh Hashanah* is on the first (and second) day of the Seventh Month, which is the month of *Tishrei* and was the day on which *Adam Harishon* was created. The numbers of the months are based on the Exodus (*Yetzias Mitzrayim*), which occurred in *Nissan*, which is counted as the first month.
 - 5) On the one hand there is the fear of the impending Day of Judgment, while on the other hand we are supposed prepare ourselves in a manner of measured joy almost as by any other *Yom Tov*. These opposite feelings can be put into perspective by recognizing and putting our faith in *Hashem, Our Father, our King*, Who desires and waits for our *Teshuva* - our return to Him.
 - 6) They should prepare enough *Challah*-dough to perform the *Mitzvah* of separating (*Hafroschas*) *Challah*.
 - 7) The basis for this started when the New Month (*Rosh Chodesh*) was declared by *Beis Din* upon receiving witnesses who saw the new moon. Those communities who were very far away from the place of *Beis Din* were not always aware when *Rosh Chodesh* was actually declared. They therefore had to treat two days as *Yom Tov* just in case *Rosh Chodesh* was declared a day later than expected.
 - 8) Since *Rosh Hashanah* is right at the beginning of the month on *Rosh Chodesh*, even in places close to *Beis Din* were not necessarily aware when *Rosh Chodesh* would be declared to be. Even in *Beis Din* itself they sometimes treated the first day like a *Yom Tov* even after knowing that the first day would not be declared *Rosh Chodesh* any longer.
-

- 9) Since the *Beis Din* kept the first day of *Rosh Hashanah* as *Yom Tov* even when it could no longer be declared as *Rosh Chodesh*, the nature of the *Yom Tov* was more definite and because of a doubt, creating a two day *Yom Tov* that was decreed to be two days and not because of any further doubt which day was the real *Yom Tov*. Because of this, both days are like one and there is no new *Yom Tov* day to necessitate a *She'hechyanu*.
- 10) The *Mitzvos* of *Shofar*, *Lulav* and reading the *Megillah*.
- 11) One day represents a strict Day of Judgment and the next day is a softer Day of Judgment.
- 12) *Tekia* and *Terua*. The *Shevarim* and *Shevarim Terua* are just variations of how the *Terua* is supposed to sound.