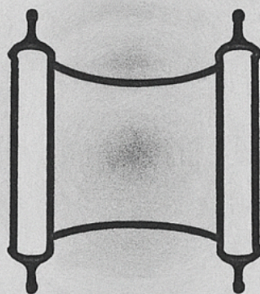


בס"ד

Reb Pinchas of Koretz

Imrie Pinchas

Shofar



Dedicated To:

אילנה דבורה בת שרה מרים

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Shofar

Siman #492

It is stated in the name of our teacher Saadia Gaon (Sefer Ta'amei Teki'at Shofar) that the shofar is to bring fear. Therefore, the infant will tremble and quake from the sound of the shofar, and he is not afraid of musical instruments.

And therefore each person must fear when he hears the sound of the shofar, and immediately when a person fears from the sound of the shofar, the Shechinah is elevated. And this is the meaning of the verse: "God has ascended with a blast, the Lord with the sound of a shofar" (Tehillim 47:6).

אִתָּא בָּשֵׁם רַבֵּינוּ סַעְדִּיָּה גָּאוֹן (לְכוּלְלָס, טַעֲמֵי תַקִּיעַת שׁוֹפָר) כִּי הַשׁוֹפָר הוּא לְהַבִּיא פַחַד. לֵכֵן הַתִּינוּק יִחַרַד וְיִחַיֵּל מִקוֹל שׁוֹפָר וְאִינוּ מִתַּפְחָד מִכְּלֵי זָמֵר.

וְעַל כֵּן צָרִיךְ כָּל אֶחָד לְפָחַד כְּשִׁשׁוּמַע קוֹל שׁוֹפָר, וְתַכֵּף כְּשִׁאָדָם מִתַּפְחָד מִקוֹל הַשׁוֹפָר נִתְעַלָּה הַשְּׁכִינָה. וְזֶהוּ פִירוּשׁ עָלֶיהָ אֱלֹקִים בְּתַרְנוּעָה ה' בְּקוֹל שׁוֹפָר (תְּהִלִּים מ"ז, ו).

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz teaches that everything in creation has a hidden rhythm of renewal, a kind of "sleep," through which life is restored and refreshed each day. Just as plants, animals, and even water contain a measure of this "sleep" that preserves and renews them, so too man surrenders his vitality in sleep, returning it to the higher Source. This mystery is heightened on Rosh Hashanah, when a deep spiritual "sleep" descends upon the Divine attributes, and from this concealment new vitality and blessing are drawn forth for the entire year. The shofar is central to this process, for its raw, trembling sound awakens awe and shakes the soul to its core, elevating the Shechinah and drawing down renewed life. Rabbi Saadia Gaon explained that while music does not inspire awe, the primal cry of the shofar terrifies even a child—its power is to stir true fear of Heaven. Thus, the call of the shofar is not only remembrance but a channel through which G-d ascends in awe and reestablishes His kingship in the world.

Practical Takeaway

When we hear the shofar on Rosh Hashanah, we should not treat it as a mere ritual or tradition. The shofar is meant to awaken fear and trembling, to shake us out of complacency and arouse us to real teshuvah. Its cry has the power to lift the Shechinah, renew our souls, and open a channel of Divine mercy. Approach the shofar with reverence and inner trembling, knowing that it is the key to renewal for yourself and for the world.

Chassidic Story

Once, on the first day of Rosh Hashanah, the students of Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz noticed that he lingered long before the tekiot of the shofar began. The congregation waited in suspense, wondering why he delayed. Finally, with great trembling, Rabbi Pinchas turned to the shofar blower and said: "Remember, every sound you release shakes the Heavens. Even a child trembles at the cry of the shofar, because it is not a sound of this world—it is the voice of the Shechinah rising." After the tekiot were blown, he explained that if a person truly feels that awe, then at the very moment of fear the Shechinah itself ascends and is uplifted. The students later recalled that year as one filled with unusual blessing and tranquility, which they attributed to the powerful awe Rabbi

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Pinchas infused into the shofar that Rosh Hashanah. (Source: *Imrei Pinchas*, Rosh Hashanah teachings)] **END NOTE]**

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Once he said in the synagogue before the sounding of the shofar, and he aroused the world to tears greatly.

פעם אחת אמר בבית הכנסת קדם התקיעות, והיה מעורר העולם לבכייה ביותר.

And when he came to his home, he told us that the reason words of Torah are said before the shofar blowing is so that the people will hear.

וקשׁבא לביתו אמר לנו שהטעם בזה שאומרים דברי תורה קדם התקיעות כדי שישמעו העם.

And when the listener hears, he gathers his soul to himself, and he takes their souls and blows them into the shofar, and with this he elevates their souls.

וקאשר השומע ישמע מאסף נשמתו אליו, ולוקח נשמתו ותוקע בהן לשופר ומעלה נשמתן בזה.

And he told us that he could not explain this matter to others, for it is above speech. Just as one shows something with his head or hand and does not say it, so too is this matter.

ואמר לנו, כי לא יכול לתן להבין זאת לאחרים, כי הוא למעלה מן הדיבור, כמו שמראין על האדם ואינו אומר, רק מראהו בראשו או בידו ואינו אומר אותו.

And also, when a sick person has pain, he cannot say how it hurts, and he sighs with a voice without speech—so too is the shofar, a sound without words.

כן הדבר הזה. וגם החולה כאשר פואב לו אינו יכול לומר איך הוא פואב לו, והוא מתאנח בקול בלא דיבור, כך השופר גם כן קול בלא דיבור.

And he said: If I had not come into the world except to reveal this matter, it would be enough.

ואמר: אלמלא לא אתינא לעלמא אלא להשמיע דבר זה, די.

[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz revealed that the shofar is not mere sound but the voice of the soul itself, lifted beyond words. The Torah words spoken before the blasts gather the souls of those who hear, and through the blowing of the shofar their inner life is elevated toward Heaven. The cry of the shofar is like the sigh of a person in pain—too deep for words, yet more true than any explanation. Its essence is to awaken trembling, tears, and awe, and in that moment the Shechinah is uplifted.

Practical Takeaway

When listening to the shofar, one should not only hear a ritual blast but feel the soul's own cry. Approach it with the awareness that your very breath and life are being gathered and raised upward. The shofar is your innermost voice beyond words, and through it you connect with the Shechinah. **END NOTE]**

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On Rosh Hashanah of the year 5548 (1787), he spoke in the synagogue before the shofar blowing—which was not his usual practice.

בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה שְׁנַת תַּקמ"ח אָמַר בְּבֵית הַכְּנֻסֶת קִדְּם
הַתְּקִיעוֹת מֵה שְׁלֵא הָיָה זֶה דְּרָכּוֹ כָּלֵל

On Rosh Hashanah, a sleep falls upon Ze'ir Anpin (Peri Eitz Chaim, Shaar HaSofer ch. 6)—that is, upon the Torah, upon the angels, and upon all souls, as explained in the kavanos of “Hamapil Chevlei Sheina” (Pri Eitz Chaim, Shaar Krias Shema al HaMitah ch. 19).

בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה נּוֹפְלֵת שְׁנָה עַל זְעִיר אֲנָפִין (פְּרַע"ס
שְׁעַר הַסּוֹפֵר פָּרָק 6) דְּהֵיִינוּ עַל הַתּוֹרָה וְעַל
הַמַּלְאָכִים וְעַל כָּל הַנְּשׂוּמוֹת כְּמַבּוֹאֵר בְּכּוּנַת הַמַּפִּיל
(תַּבְּלִי שְׁנָה (פְּרַע"ק שְׁעַר קוּטְעַסמ"ט פָּרָק יט

Because of this, many difficulties and doubts fall into Torah, sufficient for the entire year.

וּמַחֲמַת זֶה נּוֹפְלִים כְּמָה קִשְׁיוֹת וּסְפִיקוֹת בַּתּוֹרָה
שְׂיִהְיֶה דִּי לְכֶם לְכָל הַשָּׁנָה

And it is taught in the Gemara (Shabbos 112b): “If the earlier ones were like angels, then we are like donkeys.”

וְאִתָּא בְּגִמְרָא (שַׁבָּת קיג, ב) אִם הָרֵאשׁוֹנִים
כְּמַלְאָכִים אֲנַחְנוּ כְּחִמּוּרִים

For the early ones had great intellect, and their hearts were like the entrance of the Ulam (Eruvin 53b). They drew down great light and brought Torah into the entire world—even into animals.

כִּי מַחֲמַת שְׁהָרֵאשׁוֹנִים הָיָה לָהֶם מוֹחִין גְּדוּלִים וְלָכֶם
שָׁל רֵאשׁוֹנִים כְּפִתְיָחוּ שָׁל אוֹלָם (עֲרוּבִין נג, ב) וְהָיוּ
מִמְשִׁיכִין אוֹר גְּדוּל, הָיוּ מוֹרִידִים אֶת הַתּוֹרָה בְּכָל
הָעוֹלָם אֲפִלוּ בְּבֵהמוֹת

Such as the donkey of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair, which would not eat untithed food and had Ruach HaKodesh to sense it (Chullin 7a).

כְּגוֹן חִמּוּרוֹ שָׁל רַבִּי פִּינְחָס בֶּן יָאִיר שְׁלֵא הָיָה אוֹכֵל
שְׂאִינוּ מִעֶשֶׂר וְגַם הָיָה לוֹ רוּחַ הַקֹּדֶשׁ לְדַעַת שְׂאִינוּ
(מִעֶשֶׂר (חולין ז, א

And also the donkey of Rabbi Yosi of Yokrat, upon which they placed a pair of sandals (Taanis 24a).

וְגַם חִמּוּרוֹ שָׁל רַבִּי יוֹסִי דְּמִן יוֹקְרַת דְּאֲנָשִׁי עָלָיו זִוְגָא
(דְּסַנְדְּלִי וְכו') (תַּעֲנִית כד, א

Torah spread even into the inanimate, plant, and living realms. Therefore, one must weep on Rosh Hashanah, for through this all intellects and all worlds are created.

וְהָיָה הַתְּפִשְׁטוֹת הַתּוֹרָה אֲפִלוּ בְּדוּמָם צִמַּח וְחַי וְלִכְדָּ
יֵשׁ לְבָכוֹת בְּרֵאשׁ הַשָּׁנָה, וְעַל יְדֵי זֶה נִבְרָאִים כָּל
הַמּוֹחִין וְכָל הָעוֹלָמוֹת

For it is the removal of waste from the brain through tears—for a child who cries much will be wise.

כִּי הוּא הוֹרְדַת הַפְּסוּלֵת מִן הַמוֹחַ עַל יְדֵי הַדְּמְעוֹת. כִּי
תֵינּוּק הַבּוֹכָה הַרְבֵּה יִהְיֶה חָכָם

And one blows the shofar, for the nature of the shofar is to terrify, as it is said (Amos 3:6): “If a shofar is blown in a city, shall the people not tremble?”

וְתוֹקְעִים בְּשׁוֹפָר, כִּי טָבַע הַשׁוֹפָר לְהַחֲרִיד, כְּמוֹ
שֶׁנֶּאֱמַר (עֲמוֹס ג, ו) אִם יִתְקַע שׁוֹפָר בְּעִיר

And as Rambam wrote (Hilchos Teshuvah 3:7; cf. Saadia Gaon, Ta'amei Teki'as Shofar), for when a child hears the sound of the shofar he trembles, unlike when he hears the sound of musical instruments.

וּכְמוֹ שֶׁכָּתַב הַרְמַב"ם (הַלְכוֹת תְּשׁוּבָה ג, ז;
וְלִכְלוּלָס, טַעֲמֵי תְקִיעַת שׁוֹפָר) כִּי הַתֵּינּוּק כְּשִׁשׁוּמֵעַ
קוֹל הַשׁוֹפָר הוּא חָרַד מִשְׂאִינוּ כְּשִׁשׁוּמֵעַ קוֹל כְּלִי
לְשִׁיר

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And through this, that dread falls upon the people of the world, there is elevation, as it is said (Tehillim 47:6): “God has ascended with a blast.”

ועל ידי זה שנגפלה חרדה על בני העולם – על ידי זה יש עליה כמו שנגאמר (תהלים מז, ו) עלה אלקים בתרועה.

And the intellects return, and all the doubts are resolved, and he elaborated further.

וחזורים המוחין ונתרצו כל הקשיות, ועוד האריך.

Afterwards, when he came to his home after leaving the synagogue, he said:

ואחר כך פשפא לביתו אחר יציאת בית הכנסת, אָמר:

He said: I did not finish for you in the synagogue, for this—that we pray on Rosh Hashanah “And let every being know that You are his Maker, and let every creature understand...”—for the animals are called the product of man.

לא סימתי לכם בבית הכנסת, כי זה שאנו מתפללין בראש השנה "ויודע כל פעול כי אתה פעלו ויבין כל יצור" וכו'. כי הבהמות נקרא פעול האדם.

For although the donkey of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair had Ruach HaKodesh, nevertheless he would ride upon it, and sometimes, when it did not wish to go on the path, he would strike it.

כי אף על פי שחמורו של רבי פנחס בן יאיר היה לו רוח הקודש, אף על פי כן היה רוכב עליו, ופעמים כשלא היה רוצה ללכת בדרך היה מכה אותו.

And we pray that Torah spread into all creatures, and that every creation understand man. And understand this.

ואנחנו מתפללין שתתפשט התורה בכל הברואים, ויבין כל יצור האדם, והבן.

And he said: If I had not spoken words of Torah beforehand, it would not have been possible to blow (in his words: “דורך בלאזין” (דעם אויר)).

ואמר: אם לא הייתי אומר דברי תורה קודם, לא היה (אפשר לתקוע בזה"ל: "דורך בלאזין דעם אויר).

And because the people heard the words of Torah, I took all the souls with everything and blew them into the shofar (in his words: “און האב ארויף גיבלאזין מיט דעם שופר”).

ומחמת שהעולם היו שומעין הדברי תורה לקחתי את כל הנשמות עם הכל ותקעתי בשופר (בזה"ל: "און האב ארויף גיבלאזין מיט דעם שופר).

Afterwards he said: I cannot explain this matter to you, for there is Torah that is above speech, as it is written in the Tikkunim (23a): “And the enlightened are enlightened from themselves until they are unable to speak it with their mouths.”

ואחר כך אָמר: לא אוכל להבינכם דבר זה, כי יש תורה שהיא למעלה מן הדיבור, כמ"ש בתיקונים (כג, א): והמשכילים אינן משכילים מגרמיהו עד דלא יכלין למללא בפומיהו.

And this is like a parable: when a man is sick, he cries out because he cannot explain or express to people the extent of his illness and his pains.

והוא דרך משל כשאדם חולה צועק מחמת שאינו יכול להרחיב ולפרש לבני אדם את גדל חליו (ומכאוביו).

And he praised this matter—that through the dread that falls, etc.

וקלס את הדבר הנ"ל שעל ידי זה שנגפלה חרדה וכו'.

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[NOTE Summary

Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz revealed profound secrets about the shofar and Rosh Hashanah. He explained that on Rosh Hashanah a great “sleep” falls upon the Divine attributes, the Torah, the angels, and the souls. From this concealment arise difficulties and doubts in Torah, but through weeping and the sound of the shofar, these are clarified and resolved. The shofar terrifies not like music, but as a primal cry that awakens awe, elevates the Shechinah, and restores clarity to the mind. He stressed that the Torah must spread into all of creation—into man, animals, and even the inanimate—just as in earlier generations when even the donkey of Rabbi Pinchas ben Yair carried holiness. Torah before the shofar blowing gathers the souls, and the blasts themselves lift them upward. Yet, he admitted, this truth is above speech: like the cry of a sick person who cannot articulate his pain, the shofar is a voice without words, an essence that transcends expression.

Practical Takeaway

When approaching Rosh Hashanah, one should not only focus on personal prayers but also on the elevation of all creation through Torah and shofar. The weeping of the heart purifies the mind and makes room for wisdom. The shofar must be heard as more than sound—it is the cry of the soul that transcends words. Enter Rosh Hashanah with trembling, tears, and awe, knowing that in those moments, the Shechinah ascends and all spiritual worlds are renewed.

Chassidic Story

On Rosh Hashanah of 5548 (1787), Rabbi Pinchas of Koretz did something unusual: he spoke in the synagogue before the tekiot. He aroused the entire congregation to tears, then later explained that he had given over Torah words so that the people’s souls could be gathered and elevated through the shofar blasts. He said plainly: “If I had not spoken Torah first, it would not have been possible to blow.” Afterward he confessed to his disciples that this mystery is above language—like the cry of one in pain who cannot put his suffering into words. The shofar, he taught, is that very kind of cry, a sound that carries the soul itself upward. His disciples recorded that this year brought unusual blessing and clarity in Torah, as if the doubts had been lifted through those trembling blasts. (Source: *Imrei Pinchas HaShalem*, Rosh Hashanah teachings) **END NOTE]**