

# Shofar so Good!

By Rabbi Yehudah ben Shomeyr

**Lev. 23:23-25 And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In the seventh month, in the first [day] of the month, shall ye have a sabbath, a memorial of blowing of trumpets, an holy convocation. Ye shall do no servile work [therein]: but ye shall offer an offering made by fire unto the LORD.**

Every time I hear that shofar at Rosh Hashanah it's as if time stands still. Chills run up and down my spine as a sense of holiness cleanses and even stops time for that brief moment. I can easily see why the Rabbi's and sages say the sound of the shofar actually scares Satan away.

I bask in the echo of that rams horn. I close my eyes and take a deep breath and prepare myself to spiritually meet my G-d. For this starts the 10 Days of Awe leading up to Yom Kippur. A time where I make sure things are right between me and G-d.

Legend has it that the Rams horn was given to Avraham Avinu during the Binding of Isaac. The Ram caught in the thicket had a large horn and a small horn and the smaller one was given to Avraham to use while G-d took the other one to heaven to use to announce the coming of Messiah in the Last Days.

As I hear and see the shofar on Rosh Hashanah I am reminded of who I am to be this and every year.

I am to be like a ram's horn, I am to be like a shofar.

Once a ram's horn is cut off from the head of the ram it begins a grueling process to become a shofar. An instrument used for combat becomes a claxon to call one to combat ones self. It becomes a spiritual alarm clock to wake the slumbering soul. It becomes a too one uses to send a message of repentance and salvation to the world!

First, the ram's horn is gutted of all of the gunk that is inside it. You can't just cut of a ram's horn and immediately start blowing and expect to hear a sound; it's stopped up. It is like us before G-d can use us as His mouth piece. He needs to clean us out of all of the gunk that is inside our lives that stops us from making a sound for Him.

Next, after the ram's horn is hallowed out, it is buffed and polished. For G-d to use me and get all the glory He has to put the finishing touches on me too.

And when one blows a shofar, what is it filled with to make a sound? Wind! Wind in Hebrew is Ruach, which also means spirit. We need to be filled with the Ruach Ha Kodesh, the Holy Spirit of G-d to be able to make a sound.

When G-d created man, didn't He breath into Adam's nostrils the "breath", the "ruach" of life (Gen. 2:7)!? Ruach, breath, wind, in Judaism is also synonymous with and symbolic of wisdom. To be used as His mouth piece, to share His message with mankind for His Glory we need to resound with a clear sound of wisdom for us to truly be heard.

Also there must be focus. You just can't put your mouth on a shofar and blow and all you'll get is a sound like when one puts their ear to a conch shell. If I am blowing into a shofar and no sound is coming out, what kind of "ruach" is being heard through me? I'll tell you, nothing but hot air! And does anyone want to listen to some one who's blowing of hot air? Does G-d get any glory from a bunch of hot air? No, never!

To make a pure clear sound one must focus ones lips and blow into the shofar a certain way. As a shofar, I must be focused to be able to channel G-d's "ruach" through me so I can make a pure, clear sound so His message can be heard loud and clear through me for His glory.

The shofar has many uses. Very specific sounds send a very specific message.

I Cor. 14:8 For if the trumpet give an uncertain sound, who shall prepare himself to the battle?

Shofars were used to call meetings together, to announce war, etc. But on Rosh Hashanah what message does G-d want to sound through me for the people to hear? The sound of Teshuvah (Repentance); for Rosh Hashanah, the Feast of Trumpets, leads to up to Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, the day that's all about repentance.

The blast of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur is very specific and embodies the process of repentance. There is a blast that awakens the soul. Followed by a series of broken wailing, sobbing sounds, topped off with a peaceful mellow steady blast of praise.

Some are confused about the silver trumpets that are mentioned, because they have a similar use. But most of the time (not always) when the word trumpet is mentioned by itself with out the descriptor “silver” it is usually a rams horn, a shofar. The silver trumpets were predominately used within the camp and on Rosh Kodesh (the new month) according to Numbers chapter Ten, not so much on High Holy Days except when one fell on the first of the month. Sometimes they were used in conjunction with the Shofar.

Shalom and Lashanah Tova!

-- Rabbi Yehudah