

10-03-24 To Roeh Israel Abilene – Rosh Hashanah
Holy Day Torah Portion; Gen 21:1-34,
Haftarah: 1 Sam 1:1-2:10
Suggested Acheron K'tuvim: 1 Thess 4:13-18

The Voice of the Shofar

Central question of this message: Are you hearing the voice?

Today we are in the first of the fall festivals of Leviticus 23, the festival of Rosh Hashanah, as it has now been called.

How can the “head of the year” be in the 7th Hebrew month? That is because in Hebraic thinking, there are a number of “new years” in the annual cycle. The first Hebrew month, Nisan begins the “new year for redemption.”

Tishrei begins the “new year for judgment.” And since the judgment of G-d is an awesome thing, Jews have rearranged our civil calendar, as well as our Torah cycle, around this particular month.

In Scripture this day is described as *shabbaton zikron teruah* (literally a “Sabbath of remembrance *teruah* - the name of the staccato shofar blast).

Lev 23:23-25

23 Again the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, 24 "Speak to the sons of Israel, saying, 'In the seventh month on the first of the month, you shall have a rest, **a reminder by blowing of trumpets**, [Heb. *teruah*] a holy convocation. 25 'You shall not do any laborious work, but you shall present an offering by fire to the Lord.'"

23

וַיִּדְבֹר יְהוָה אֶל-מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר:
And spake the Lord unto Moses, saying,
1696 3068 413 4872 559

24

דִּבֶּר אֶל-בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל לֵאמֹר בַּחֹדֶשׁ הַשְּׁבִיעִי
Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, In month, the seventh
1696 413 1121 3478 559 2320 7637

בַּאֲתֶר לַחֹדֶשׁ יְהִי לָכֶם שַׁבָּתוֹן זִכְרוֹן
in the first of the month, shall have ye a sabbath, a memorial of
259 2320 1961 3807a 7677 2146

תְּרוּעָה מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ
blowing of trumpets, an convocation. holy
8643 4744 6944

The Hebrew word translated in this passage as “trumpets” is actually *teruah*. This is the name of one of the shofar blasts, and although it doesn’t specifically say this sound must be made by a shofar, our people do not make this sound *on anything but a shofar*. The *teruah* is the sound of nine quick staccato blasts. It actually signifies a shout of acclamation, announcement, or joy.

It is the same word as used in Psalm 47.

Ps 47:5-8

5 God has ascended with a shout [Heb. teruah],
 The Lord, with the sound [lit. “voice”] of a trumpet [Heb. shofar].
 6 Sing praises to God, sing praises;
 Sing praises to our King, sing praises.
 7 For God is the King of all the earth;
 Sing praises with a skillful psalm.
 8 God reigns over the nations,
 God sits on His holy throne.

עָלָה אֱלֹהִים בְּתִרְעָה יְהוָה בְּקוֹל שׁוֹפָר:
 God is gone up with a shout, the Lord with the sound of a trumpet.
 5927 430 8643 3068 6963 7782

זִמְרוּ אֱלֹהִים זִמְרוּ לְמֶלְכֵנוּ זִמְרוּ זִמְרוּ
 Sing praises to God, sing praises: unto our King, sing praises sing praises.
 2167 430 2167 4428 2167 2167

כִּי מֶלֶךְ כָּל-הָאָרֶץ אֱלֹהִים זִמְרוּ מִשְׁכִּיל:
 For is the King of all the earth: God sing ye praises with understanding.
 3588 9999 4428 3605 776 430 2167 7919

מֶלֶךְ אֱלֹהִים עַל-גּוֹיִם אֱלֹהִים יֹשֵׁב עַל-כִּסֵּא קְדָשׁוֹ
 reigneth God over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness.
 4427 430 5921 1471 430 3427 5921 3678 6944

The shofar is central to our faith. Our people believe that the first shofar was fashioned from one of the horns of the ram which was caught in the thicket at the Akaidat Yitzhak.

We believe that Abraham took one of that ram's horns and fashioned the first shofar. And that Gabriel took the other horn into heaven with him, so that the shofar could sound from there as well.

It was the heavenly shofar that was heard by the assembled mixed multitude at the foot of Mt. Horeb when G-d gave us the Torah.

Ex 19:17-20

17 And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. 18 Now Mount Sinai was all in smoke because the Lord descended upon it in fire; and its smoke ascended like the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mountain quaked violently. 19 When the sound of the trumpet [Lit. "voice of the shofar"] grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and God answered him with thunder [Lit. "voice"].

מִן־ out of <u>4480</u>	הָאֱלֹהִים God; <u>430</u>	לִקְרֹאת to meet with <u>7125</u>	הָעָם the people <u>5971</u>	אֶת־ <u>853</u>	מֹשֶׁה Moses <u>4872</u>	וַיּוֹצֵא And brought forth <u>3318</u>	17
		הָהָר: the mount. <u>2022</u>	בְּתַחְתִּית at the nether part of <u>8482</u>		וַיִּתִּיצְבוּ and they stood <u>3320</u>	הַמַּחֲנֶה the camp <u>4264</u>	
יָרַד descended <u>3381</u>	מִפְּנֵי אֲשֶׁר because <u>834</u> <u>6440</u>	כָּלֹו altogether <u>3605</u>	עָשָׁן was on a smoke, <u>6225</u>		סִינַי Sinai <u>5514</u>	וְהָר And mount <u>2022</u>	18
כַּעֲשָׁן as the smoke of <u>6227</u>	עָשָׁנוֹ the smoke thereof <u>6227</u>	וַיַּעַל and ascended <u>5927</u>	בְּאֵשׁ in fire: <u>784</u>	יְהוָה the Lord <u>3068</u>	עָלָיו upon it <u>5921</u>		
		מְאֹד: greatly. <u>3966</u>	הָהָר mount <u>2022</u>	כָּל־ the whole <u>3605</u>	וַיַּחְרַד and quaked <u>2729</u>	הַכִּבְשָׁן a furnace, <u>3536</u>	
	וַחֲנֹק and waxed <u>2390</u>	הוֹלֵךְ long, <u>1980</u>	הַשּׁוֹפָר the trumpet <u>7782</u>	קוֹל the voice of <u>6963</u>	וַיְהִי ³ And when sounded <u>1961</u>		19
בְּקוֹל: by a voice. <u>6963</u>	יַעֲנֵנוּ answered him <u>6030</u>	וְהָאֱלֹהִים and God <u>430</u>	יִדְבֹּר spake, <u>1696</u>	מֹשֶׁה Moses <u>4872</u>	מְאֹד louder and louder, <u>3966</u>		

Clearly, G-d's voice is closely-associated with the sound of the shofar, particularly with the *tekiah godolah* – the long final blast.

And we find in Scripture that Yeshua will return to us with the voice of the shofar.

1 Thess 4:13-18

13 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brethren, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve, as do the rest who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who have fallen asleep in Jesus. 15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive, and remain until the coming of the Lord, shall not precede those who have fallen asleep. 16 **For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout** [Heb. teruah], **with the voice of the archangel, and with the trumpet** [shofar] **of God**; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. 17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air [spirit], and thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

The themes of return, regathering and resurrection are all connected with the shofar. But these connections are only found in the writings of the prophets.

The shofar is certainly not a metal trumpet, although some today are confused regarding that fact. It is the horn of a kosher animal (with the

exception of the horn of a cow) which has been fashioned into a horn that can be blown. Not only is the horn itself sanctified, but those who sound it are likewise to be sanctified.

A shofar blower, according to our traditions, must be bar (or bat) mitzvah, a student of Torah, and be properly trained by a shofar blower before him. Once he or she has shown proper mastery of Torah and of the shofar, the shofar blower is called up and anointed in a ceremony similar to that of a prophet, priest or king, which inducts him into the ranks of those who blow the shofar in the assembly. It is fine for those who lack this appointing and anointing to own a shofar, and to sound it privately. But it is not proper for just anyone to blow the shofar in any official manner in the congregation or in an assembly. Neither would it be proper for just anyone to stand up in the congregation or assembly to preach.

The shofar has a large number of legitimate uses, and can be blown by persons who have been properly selected, trained and anointed to that task. The shofar blower can be chosen from among all of Israel (including those grafted-in), regardless of family affiliation, or even nation of origin.

There are far more passages in Scripture regarding the use of the shofar, than are written regarding preaching. I am not saying that G-d regards preachers less highly than he does shofar blowers, but I am saying that G-

d's Word contains a dramatic and persistent emphasis upon this holy office, and it is not to be entered into lightly.

So, let's return to discussion of this special day. We find additional instructions regarding this festival in Numbers 29.

Num 29:1-6

'Now in the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall also have a holy convocation; you shall do no laborious work. It will be to you **a day for blowing trumpets**. 2 'And you shall offer a burnt offering as a soothing aroma to the Lord: one bull, one ram, and seven male lambs one year old without defect; 3 also their grain offering, fine flour mixed with oil, three-tenths of an ephah for the bull, two-tenths for the ram, 4 and one-tenth for each of the seven lambs. 5 'And offer one male goat for a sin offering, to make atonement for you, 6 besides the burnt offering of the new moon, and its grain offering, and the continual burnt offering and its grain offering, and their libations, according to their ordinance, for a soothing aroma, an offering by fire to the Lord.

It is from this passage that the other name of the festival is derived: *Yom Teruah* – day of the shofar blast.

So, we have now three titles for this same festival: *Shabbaton Zikron*; *Yom Teruah*; and now in this later age, Rosh Hashanah.

What is most interesting about the title *Shabbaton Zikron* (Sabbath of remembrance), is that *nowhere* in Scripture are we told *what it is* that we are commanded to remember.

Surely it is important that we should remember *something*, for G-d would not have called it a Sabbath of Remembrance without something in mind.

This question has occupied the minds of our people since the time of Moses, and lacks a definitive answer even today. But I think I might have some insight into that question for you today.

In this generation, our people have used this occasion to light *yartzheit* candles to remember the six million of the last generation who were exterminated. That is proper, and holy, and good.

But is *that* recent event really what we are to remember? I think there must be something more than that.

And since the sound of the shofar is tied directly to that remembrance, then I think we can begin to maybe discern what it might be that G-d might have in mind. I wonder if our people might have been giving one another hints about the deeper meanings, even without knowing it, for many generations.

The customary greeting in Hebrew is "*l'shanah tovah*," which means "for a good year".

In Yiddish, we say "*Gut Yantev*", or "Good Holy-day" in colloquial English. This greeting is appropriate for all holy days with the exception of Yom Kippur. We're not, technically, supposed to have a "good" Yom Kippur, since that is the day we are to fast and afflict our souls.

A more extensive greeting in the Jewish community is "*L'shana tovah tikatevi*", which means "May you be inscribed for a good year."

This begs a question, "Into *what* should we be inscribed?" Our traditions indicate that the inscription we hope for will be that our name will appear in the book of deeds, and most importantly the "Book of Life." This is even part of the liturgy of this holy day in the section called "*Avinu Malcheinu*" (Our Father, Our King).

John affirmed this Jewish understanding as accurate in Revelation chapter 20.

Rev 20:11-15

11 And I saw a great white throne and Him who sat upon it, from whose presence earth and heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and books were opened; **and another book was opened, which is the book of life;** and the dead were judged from the things which were written in the books, according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up the dead which were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead which were in them; and they were judged, every one of them according to their deeds. 14 And death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire. 15 **And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.**

A proper response to today's holiday greeting would be "*U'metukah*", meaning, "and sweet".

Most certainly, having your name inscribed in the Book of Life would be the ultimate expression of “sweet”.

The Hebrew people have been, for many generations, trying to figure out the significance of the blowing of the shofar on Yom Teruah, and the connection with what we are to remember on this day.

Consider the thoughts of Rabbi Eliezer, as recorded hundreds of years ago in our ancient writings. Midrash Rabba Vayikra 29:1.

'The Holy One, blessed be He, said to Adam, 'This will be a sign to your children. As you stood in judgment before Me this day and came out with a free pardon, so will your children in the future stand in judgment before Me on this day and will come out from My presence with a free pardon.' When will that be? 'In the seventh month, on the first day of the month.'

There is considerable value to his teaching. I think he was beginning to see something prophetic when he said, “This will be a sign to you and to your children...”.

When you restore the word “shofar” to its most primitive form, and then restore it to the pre-Babylonian pictographic Hebrew, where each letter carries with it a concept. You can see more of its meaning. It contains the concepts of “voice”, and “prince”.

In a very real way, the Hebrew word shofar literally means “voice of the Prince”.

Which prince? The only Prince that is closely associated with G-d. The only Prince that speaks with the very words of G-d to mankind. That Prince is Messiah Yeshua.

We, as believers, know that the festivals of Leviticus 23 are a roadmap of the kingdom. We have seen the fulfillments of Passover, Unleavened Bread, First Fruits, and even Shavuot. But the long summer lingers, and we still await the prophetic fulfillment of Yom Teruah as a kingdom event.

On this day of Yom Teruah, we are commanded to *remember*.

I believe it is important that we remember our offenses to our fellow man over the last year, and if we have not already reconciled, we must do so

now. Look to Matthew 18:15 for guidance. And remember to let your words be edifying, as is set forth in Ephesians 4.

Eph 4:1-6

4 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, entreat you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which you have been called, 2 with all humility and gentleness, with patience, showing forbearance to one another in love, 3 being diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. 4 There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling; 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all.

I believe it is also important that we remember our offenses to G-d over the last year, and if we have not already repented, we must do so now.

Let no account, whether on earth or in heaven, remain outstanding and unpaid.

But I also believe on this day of Yom Teruah, the voice of our shofars here below serves to *remind* G-d of something as well.

If tradition is accurate, and we were created as a new creature by receiving the breath of life on Yom Teruah; and, if tradition is accurate and redemption from our fall was announced to Adam likewise on that very same day – Yom Teruah; and if the voice of the Prince really is found represented by the voice of the shofar; then there is much significance in not only this day, but also the sound of the shofar.

I believe it is good for us to pause on this day, and during the next nine days as well, to pull out the road maps of our lives, and look at them closely.

Can you put your finger on that map, indicating where you are today? Can you trace with your finger the road you are on, or where you are headed? The correct path is bright, lined with stars, and is straight toward your final destination. At the end of this shining path lies unspeakable joy, unfathomable light of G-d's countenance, and perfect love.

Raise your spiritual eyes, my holy friends, and look at it. Then walk in it.

I believe at this season G-d likewise opens His heavenly map, and is tracing with His finger the progress of our world upon it. Nothing He sees is surprising to Him. Nothing is unknown, nor unforeseen.

I believe there are very few sounds from this earth that are able to penetrate the gates of heaven, and be heard above. Certainly one is the whimpering cry of a child in prayer... but also I believe the shofar's loud voice is clearly heard in the throne room above.

And when G-d hears from heaven the sounds of our shofar blasts, and our songs of praise, He also remembers His promises made to our forefathers, and to us. An important promise is that of salvation by faith, for those who will only but accept that holy gift.

After the time of repentance and reconciliation, let us then bow before our King, as sons and daughters, in praise of His holy work, completed on the cross, for us.

Let us keep our faith strong, in the face of these coming days of tribulation.

And we should always be listening to hear the sounds of the heavenly *tekia גדולה*, the final long blast of the shofar. It was heard only once before, and that was at Sinai. But it shall sound once again, for the shofar of G-d is yet in the hand of the archangel, who awaits the command to sound it once again.

With this coming shofar blast, that final *tekiah godolah*, the dead shall arise first, and then we who remain will meet them in the sky... and G-d will no longer need to remember His promise, because it will have been fulfilled.

And so it is that I will greet you now with *l'shana tova tikatevi*. May you be inscribed in the Book of Life for not only a good year – *but for eternity* – for that inscription is written in the blood of the Lamb.

I wish to close with an intercessory prayer for the nation of Israel, and the soldiers who are fighting for her survival.

Prayer for IDF Soldiers

מי שברך אבותינו אברהם יצחק ויעקב הוא יברך את סילי צבא הגנה לישראל, העומדים על משמר ארצנו וערי אלהינו מגבול הלבנון ועד מדבר מצרים ומן הים הגדול עד לבוא הערבה ביבשה באויר ובמים. ימן ה' את אויבינו הקמים עלינו נגפים לפניך. הקדוש ברוך הוא ישמר ויציל את סילינו מכל צרה וצוקה ומכל נגע ומחלה וישלח ברכה והצלחה בכל מעשה ידיך. ידבר שונאינו תחתיכם ויעטרם בכתר ישועה ובעטרת נצחון. ויקים בכם הכתוב: כי ה' אלהיכם ההלך עמכם להלחם לכם עם אויביכם להושיע אתכם: ונאמר אמן

He Who blessed our forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob — may He bless the fighters of the Israel Defense Forces, who stand guard over our land and the cities of our G-d, from the border of the Lebanon to the desert of Egypt, and from the Great Sea unto the approach of the Aravah, on the land, in the air, and on the sea.

May the Almighty cause the enemies who rise up against us to be struck down before them. May the Holy One, Blessed be He, preserve and rescue our fighters from every trouble and distress and from every plague and illness, and may He send blessing and success in their every endeavor.

May He lead our enemies under our soldiers' sway and may He grant them salvation and crown them with victory. And may there be fulfilled for them the verse: For it is the Lord your G-d, Who goes with you to battle your enemies for you to save you.

Added: Please L-rd, we beseech You, give the IDF soldiers peace on this your holy day of Yom Teruah. Grant them the privilege to hear the shofar blasts, clear and strong, wherever they are. Cause the enemies of your people to be at peace with us today.

Let all people in every nation who call upon Your name this day repent of their sins, and return to You with a pure heart. May your holy heavenly scribe be busy writing their many names into the Book of Life.