



---

# DERECH B'YAM HATALMUD

---



## **CONFUSING THE SATAN**

**Understanding the power of the  
Shofar's blasts**

**A guided approach to learning  
the description of the Shofar in**

**Mesechtas Rosh Hashanah 16a-16b**

**Rabbi Michoel Gros**

[www.derechbyam.com](http://www.derechbyam.com)  
[derechbyam@gmail.com](mailto:derechbyam@gmail.com)

## SECTION ONE



### Why Should the Shofar of a Ram Be Blown on Rosh Hashanah?

מס' ראש השנה דף טז.

#### OVERVIEW

*The Gemara towards the bottom of Rosh Hashanah Daf 16a says that on Rosh Hashanah, one should blow a Shofar from a Ram. The Gemara later teaches an additional requirement, that the Shofar should be bent.*

*What is the reason for these rules, and how can we use them to elevate our Rosh Hashanah prayers today? Is one of these requirements more important, and what does this teach us?*

#### מראה מקומות

- גמרא מ-טז. "תניא א"ר יהודה משום" עד "כאילו עקדתם עצמכם לפני"
- ריטב"א - טז. (ד"ה א"ר אבהו)
- תוס' - טז. (ד"ה בשופר של איל)
- רש"י - כו: (ד"ה כמה דכייף איניש)
- ר"ן - טז. (ד"ה אמר רבי אבהו)

#### Summary of the Gemara

*The Mishnah on the top of Rosh Hashanah Daf 16a mentions four times each year that the world is judged regarding specific items.*

**משום** – תניא א"ר יהודה משום – The Gemara towards the bottom of the amud brings a Baraisa which quotes **Rebbi Yehudah** who mentions practices which are observed on each of the four times that the world is judged, each corresponding to the item which is being judged on that day.

...

*The Barasia teaches (concerning Rosh Hashanah): Hashem said, “recite before Me on Rosh Hashanah (verses of) Kingship, Remembrance and Shofaros.”*

“(Verses of) Kingship to accept My dominion over you,” – זכרונות כדי שיעלה זכרונכם לפני לטובה  
“(Verses of) Remembrance so that remembrance of you should rise before Me for good.”

*The Baraisa asks: and with what (do we crown Hashem and remind Him of our merits<sup>1</sup>)? It answers: with a Shofar.*

*The Gemara quotes **Rebbi Abahu** who asks: למה תוקעין – אמר רבי אבהו  
– why do we blow the Shofar of a ram?*

*The Holy One, Blessed is He says, blow before Me with a Shofar of a ram, כדי שאזכור לכם עקידת יצחק – אמר הקדוש ברוך הוא תקעו לפני בשופר של איל  
– so that I remember for you the binding of Yitzchak the son of Avraham, ומעלה אני עליכם כאילו עקדתם עצמכם לפני – And I will consider it for you as if you bound yourselves before Me.*

### Understanding the connection between the Shofar and Akeidas Yitzchak

Rebbi Abahu teaches that it is preferable to blow a Shofar from an Ayil (ram) because this is a reminder of the Akeidah, the binding of Yitzchak.

**QUESTION:** What is the meaning of the statement of the Gemara that blowing the Shofar of a ram reminds Hashem of the Akeidah? Why is this necessary, and why is it done specifically on Rosh Hashanah?

**What can we do to tap into the merits of the Akeidah today?**

According to **Pesikta Rabbasi**, the Akeidah occurred on Rosh Hashanah. Consequently, on the second day of Rosh Hashanah we read the Torah portion of the section of the Akeidah.

---

<sup>1</sup> (Based on the **Ritva**.)

The commentators note that there is a greater significance in the connection between the blowing of the Shofar and the Akeidah than the mere fact that it occurred on Rosh Hashanah.

The Gemara later on daf 26a says that the Shofar from any (kosher) animal can be used, except for that of a Parah (cow), since it is called a Keren (horn) and not a Shofar, and since it is a reminder of the sin of Eigel HaZahav (the Golden Calf).

Even though the Shofar of any animal can be used on Rosh Hashanah, Rabbi Abahu is teaching here that the custom is to use the Shofar of a ram.

The **Ritva** in (ד"ה א"ר אבהו) says that if we **מחבבין מצוה זה** – show our love for this mitzvah by using the Shofar of a ram on Rosh Hashanah as a remembrance of the Akeidah and follow in the path of Avraham Avinu, then Hashem will view it as if He commanded us to tie ourselves upon the altar before Him and that we actually did so.

**Rabbi Eliyahu Dessler** in **Michtav M'Eliyahu** (Chelek Two, page 73) discusses the recitation of the Zichronos and Shofaros prayers prior to the blowing of the Shofar.

The act of Akeidas Yitzchak was a tremendous moment of Mesiras Nefesh, of self-sacrifice. Avraham was willing to offer up the life of his primary son, even though Yitzchak was supposed to be the one to continue his lineage, because Hashem had commanded him to do so. Yitzchak was willing to give up own his life as well.

Rav Dessler explains that when one recalls something, it is as if the item is placed in front of him at that moment. In the Zichronos prayer, we recite the words, **"וּתְרַאֶה לְפָנֶיךָ עֲקִידָה"** – the Akeidah should be remembered before You. With these words, it is as if Avraham is standing before Hashem at that very moment and binding his son on the altar.

The more this message is internalized and remembered on Rosh Hashanah, the more impact it has on us. If we remember the Akeidah on Rosh Hashanah and make it real in our hearts, this will cause us to give ourselves completely over to serving Hashem, as if we are bound on the altar. This will be considered an act of Kiddush Hashem, of dedicating ourselves to live for Hashem, just as Yitzchak was willing to die for Him.

If we can achieve this thought on Rosh Hashanah, this will cause us to gain the tremendous merit of the Akeidah.

## **Two parts of the Mitzvah**

The Mishnah and Gemara on 26a-26b discuss the identity of the Shofar blown on Rosh Hashanah.

## Summary of the Mishnah and Gemara on 26a-26b

*The Mishnah and Gemara on 26a discuss from which animals the Shofar can be taken. On 26b, they bring a debate whether the Shofar blown on Rosh Hashanah is the same as that blown on Yom Kippur and at the end of the Yovel year.*

*Rebbi Yehudah on 26b says that on Rosh Hashanah one should use זכרים כפופים – bent (curved) shofars from male animals. The Gemara explains that he holds this way because דכייף איניש דעתיה – the more that a person bends his mind to Hashem, טפי מעלי – the more it helps.*

Tosefos in (ד"ה בשופר של איל) on 16a says that Rebbi Yehudah is referring to בשל אילים כפופים – bent rams' shofars.

**QUESTION:** We see from here that there are two distinct but connected criteria regarding the Shofar: first, that it should be from a ram, and second, that it should be curved. We have already explained the reason to use the shofar of a ram; what is the reason that it needs to be bent?

**Rashi** in (ד"ה כמה דכייף איניש) on 26b explains the requirement for a Shofar to be curved in two ways. First, he says that whenever a person prays, his face should be bent over towards the ground as a sign of his submissiveness. We pray towards the Beis HaMikdash, where the Shechinah resides, so out of respect for it, we bow our heads when we pray. Therefore especially on Rosh Hashanah, due to the importance of the tefillos on this day, we should pray in this way.

Second, the bent Shofar from a ram is also a reminder of the Akeidah, the merit of which we try to gain on Rosh Hashanah.

For these two reasons, to humble ourselves in our tefilah and as a reminder of the Akeidah, a curved shofar should be used.

The **Maharal** in (ד"ה בשופר של איל) on daf 16a says that the use of a shofar from a ram is a reminder of the Akeidah, and using it shows that we submit ourselves to Hashem on Rosh Hashanah.

He says further that the Shofar demonstrates that we are giving our souls to Hashem, which saves us from the **Mekatreg**, the accusatory forces of the Satan on Rosh Hashanah. For this reason, the shofar needs to be Kefuf, bent over, as a sign of our submissiveness, which causes the **Midas HaDin** – the Divine attribute of judgment – not to have an effect on us.

**QUESTION:** If only one shofar was available, a straight one from a ram or a bent one from another animal, which should be used? Is it better to use a ram's shofar as a remembrance of the Akeidah, or a bent one to remind ourselves to humble ourselves before Hashem in our tefillos?

**What can we learn from the answer to this question which can aid our tefillos on Rosh Hashanah?**

The **Ra"n** in (ד"ה אמר רבי אבהו) says that when Rebbi Abahu on 16a says that a shofar from a ram should be used, he is indicating that there is a **Minhag B'alma** (a general custom to do so), but not an absolute requirement. Therefore if a ram's shofar is not available, a shofar from another animal could be used. (The **Ritva** says similarly.)

The **Shulchan Aruch** in 566:1 says that there is a mitzvah to use a shofar from an Ayil (ram) and for it to be Kafuf (bent).

The **Mishneh Berurah** (5) says that the shofar of any animal can be used, but it is better for it to be kafuf.

He notes that the Shulchan Aruch does not indicate which of the two characteristics is more important. However, he says that the majority of the Rishonim (the **Tur**, the **Rosh**, the **Ran** and the **Ritva**) say that Kafuf is better.

The Mishneh Berurah says that if it is possible to acquire only one shofar, it is better use to use one from an Ayil Kafuf (the bent shofar of a mountain goat) instead of one from a Keves Pashut (a straight shofar from a ram). The first is preferable because the Gemara says that there is a specific establishment to blow a curved shofar, as a sign that we bend out hearts to Hashem in prayer (while the use of a shofar from a ram is only a custom).

Ideally, the Mishneh Berurah says that one should blow a bent shofar of a ram as a remembrance of the Akeidah and a sign of our submission to Hashem. However, he says that doing so is only a **מצות מן מובחר** and a **הידור מצוה** – the ideal way to beautify the mitzvah, but not the primary fulfillment of the mitzvah itself.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>2</sup> Note that the **Rambam** in **Mishneh Torah** (Hilchos Shofar 1:1) differs with the other Rishonim. He understands that the Mishnayos are teaching that *only* a bent shofar from a ram can be used, and that a shofar from any other animal is invalid. The **Pele Yoetz** (Tokea) cites the **Yaavetz** who says it is proper to be concerned for this view and to only use a shofar from a ram because everyone agrees that is ideal. (Even the other opinions who do not require it, still hold that it is preferable.)

## SECTION TWO

### Confusing the Satan

מס' ראש השנה דף טז.-טז:

#### OVERVIEW

*The Gemara on the top of Rosh Hashanah 16b says that we blow the shofar on two occasions on Rosh Hashanah to confuse the Satan.*

*This statement needs elucidation. What does it mean to confuse the Satan? In addition, how can we fool him each year anew? Why does he not figure our plans from one year to the next?*

#### מראה מקומות

- גמרא מ-טז. " (ואמר) רבי יצחק" עד טז: "דלא איערבב שטן"
- תוס' – טז: (ד"ה שאין תוקעין בתחלה)
- רש"י – טז: (ד"ה כדי לערבב)
- תוס' – טז: (ד"ה כדי לערבב את השטן)

#### Summary of the Gemara

*ה (ואמר) רבי יצחק למה תוקעין בר"ה – The Gemara towards the bottom of daf 16a quotes **Rebbi Yitzchak** who asks, why do we blow the Shofar on Rosh Hashanah?*

*The Gemara interjects and asks: למה תוקעין – Are we asking why we blow the Shofar? רחמנא אמר תקעו – The Torah commands us to blow it!*

*אלא למה מריעין – Rather, the Gemara is asking: why do we blow a Teruah on Rosh Hashanah?*

Again, the Gemara interjects and asks, מריעין – is the Gemara asking why we blow a Teruah? "זכרון תרועה" – רחמנא אמר – The Torah commands us to do so!

אלא למה תוקעין ומריעין כשהן יושבין – Rather why do we blow a Tekiah and a Teruah while (the congregation is) sitting, ותוקעין ומריעין כשהן עומדין – and then blow a Tekiah and Teruah again while standing?<sup>3</sup>

כדי לערוב השטן – The Gemara answers (on the top of 16b): we do this to confuse the Satan.

וא"ר יצחק כל שנה – The Gemara cites an additional teaching from Rabbi Yitzchak: שאין תוקעין לה בתחלתה מריעין לה בסופה – any year in which they do not blow a Tekiah in its beginning (on Rosh Hashanah), they will blow a Teruah (out of sorrow) at its end.

מאי טעמא? דלא איערבב שטן – What is the reason? Because (the) Satan did not become confused (and was able to prosecute us).

**Tosefos** in (ד"ה שאין תוקעין בתחלה) cites the **Bahag** who says that the Gemara is not discussing a year in which (the first day of) Rosh Hashanah fell on Shabbos and the shofar was not blown for that reason. Rather, it is addressing a year in which the shofar was not blown for other reasons (even if this was due to an accident). In such a circumstance, the curse would apply.

Other Rishonim disagree on this point, holding that even when an accident occurred and the Shofar could not be blown, the curse would not apply. It would only take effect in a year in which the Shofar was willfully not blown.

### Understanding the impact of the Shofar on the Satan

**QUESTION:** What is the meaning of the statement that we blow the Shofar, כדי לערוב השטן – to confuse the Satan? How does this occur?

**Rashi** in (ד"ה כדי לערוב) says that we blow the Shofar שלא ישטין – so that the Satan does not block us our prayers. When he hears that we are מתבבין את המצות – eagerly doing the Mitzvos, מסתתמין דבריו – this impedes his words.

---

<sup>3</sup> (The original practice was to sit for the first blowing and stand for the second. Today we stand for both.)



**Tosefos** in (ד"ה כדי לערבב את השטן) and the **Ra"n** in (ד"ה למה תוקעין ומריעין) bring the **Aruch** in (ערך ערב א') who cites a statement of the Talmud Yerushalmi<sup>4</sup> which quotes the verse, בַּלֵּעַ הַמָּוֶת לְנֶצַח – (Hashem) will eliminate death forever (Yeshaya 25:8).

The Gemara (Bava Basra 16a) teaches that the Satan is also the Malach HaMaves (the angel of death) and the Yetzer Hara (evil inclination). Hashem promises to destroy him in the future, on the day that the Great Shofar is blown, meaning when Moshiach comes.

When the Satan hears the first series of Shofar blasts, he is **בהיל ולא בהיל** – partially confused, but can still accuse us and block our prayers. When he hears the second blasts, he says that this must be the Shofar of the Moshiach. The thought that he might be immediately destroyed frightens the Satan, sending him into a panic. Due to this, he is unable to accuse us, and our teshuva is permitted to ascend unimpeded to Hashem.

The **Chasam Sofer** in his **Drashos** says that these two approaches are both correct. He says that when the Satan first sees that we are passionate about doing the Mitzvos (as Rashi says), he fears that we will be awakened to do Teshuva. If are inspired enough, this may lead to the ultimate Teshuva which brings Moshiach and the annihilation of the Satan (as Tosefos and the Ra"n say).

(This explanation can be used to answer the question of how the Satan gets confused each year. Even though the Satan hears the double blowing of the Shofar each Rosh Hashanah, he has a new fear each year that this year will be the one in which we do complete teshuva and bring Moshiach.)

---

<sup>4</sup> (Not found in our printing of the Yerushalmi. The **Smag** says it is a Midrash.)

## SECTION THREE



### Is There a Problem of Blowing the Shofar Too Many Times?

מס' ראש השנה דף טז:

#### OVERVIEW

*The Gemara on 16b says that we blow the Shofar twice each day on Rosh Hashanah. Since we fulfill our obligation with the first blowing, why is there no problem of Bal Tosif – of adding onto the mitzvah – when we blow the second series?*

#### מראה מקומות

- גמרא טז: עד "דלא איערבב שטן"
- תוס' (ד"ה ותוקעים ומרעים)
- חידושי הריטב"א (ד"ה כדי לערבב) מ-"וכי תימא והא איכא"

#### Summary of the Gemara

*The Gemara on the top of 16b says that we blow the Shofar twice, once while sitting and once while standing.*

**QUESTION:** Why does the Rabbinic practice to blow the Shofar twice on Rosh Hashanah not transgress the Torah prohibition of Bal Tosif, of not adding onto a Mitzvah (since one series of blasts is sufficient to fulfill the mitzvah)?

**Tosefos** in (ד"ה ותוקעים ומרעים) asks: **תימה** (a statement of a difficult question): blowing the Shofar twice on Rosh Hashanah should violate the prohibition of Bal Tosif<sup>5</sup> (since we were **יוצא** – we fulfilled our obligation – with the first series of blasts). Why does it not?

He answers: the prohibition of Bal Tosif does not apply to doing a single mitzvah twice. For example, he says that a Kohen can recite Birkas Kohanim multiple times in a single congregation, or a person can take the Lulav and Esrog more than one time on a single day.

The **Ritva** in (ד"ה כדי לערבב מ-"וכי תימא והא איכא") asks the same question and brings two answers.

First, he brings that of Tosefos. He adds to it that the prohibition of Bal Tosif only applies when an element is added **בגוף המצוה** – into the body of the mitzvah item itself – such as inserting a fifth bayis into the Tefillin or a fourth bracha to Birkas Kohanim.

However, he says that if a person does a Mitzvah properly and fulfills his obligation, he is permitted to do the same act again. He cautions that this applies only if the person does not make a new Bracha on the second act. If a person repeated to Bracha, this would cause him to violate Bal Tosif.<sup>6</sup>

He brings a second answer, that a person violates Bal Tosif only when he decides on his own to add onto a Mitzvah. However, the Rabbis are permitted to add elements onto a Torah Mitzvah or to lengthen its period of observance when they see that it is necessary to do so. Doing so would not violate Bal Tosif (or Bal Tigra, if they remove elements from a Mitzvah).

If the Rabbis decide to add onto a Mitzvah, there would be a Torah obligation for all Jews to observe their decree, based on the verse, **לֹא תִסּוּר מִן הַדָּבָר אֲשֶׁר נִגִּידוּ לְךָ יְמִין וּשְׂמָאל**, – “do not turn from the matter they tell you, right or left” (Devarim 17:11).

By eagerly observing the establishment of the Rabbis of the double shofar blasts this year, **אי"ה** we will humble ourselves before Hashem and His Will and will gain the merit of the Akeidah. In doing so, we will hopefully receive a year of brachos and be blessed with the coming of Moshiach and the final victory over the Yetzer Hara.

---

<sup>5</sup> (Devarim 4:2)

<sup>6</sup> Regarding a Kohen reciting Birkas Kohanim multiple times on a single day, since he precedes each with a bracha, this should be a problem of Bal Tosif according to the Ritva. However, Footnote 103 in the Mosad HaRav Kook edition of the Ritva says that he holds that a Kohen recites a bracha only on the first time he recites Birkas Kohanim each day.

## About Us

**Derech B'Yam HaTalmud produces materials to aid in the learning and teaching of Gemara B'Iyun. Currently available are written and electronic materials and video shiurim on the Moadim, Daf Yomi and other sources. It also offers a live daily and weekly iyun shiur in Ramat Beit Shemesh, Eretz Yisrael.**

**Its first publication, Derech B'Yam HaTalmud on the first Perek of Mesechtas Gittin, is available as a two-volume hardcover sefer or as an E-Book.**

**Its next projects include a sefer on the first Perek of Kessubos and materials on Bava Metzia (Perek Shanim Ochzin) and Sukkah (Perek Lulav HaGazul).**

**Contact us for more information, to receive updates and future materials or to inquire about sponsorship opportunities:**

- Email [derechbyam@gmail.com](mailto:derechbyam@gmail.com)
- WhatsApp to: 055-339-3251 (EY) or (732) 261-3666 (US)
- Visit [www.derechbyam.com](http://www.derechbyam.com)

