

A Festival of Shofar Sounding and Shouting

“¹³It will also come about in that day, a great shofar will be blown. Those perishing in the land of Assyria and the exiles in the land of Egypt will come and worship Adonai on the holy mountain in Jerusalem” (Isa 27:13)

In Ps. 98:6 we read: *“With trumpets and sound of the shofar blast a sound before the King, Adonai!”* We receive a blessing when we understand the meaning of *Yom Teruah* and on the blowing of the *shofar*: *“Blessed are the people who know the joyful shout, They walk in the light of Your presence, Adonai” (Ps. 89:15).* On *Yom Teruah*, the actual day of the sounding of the *Shofar*, it is imperative for every person to hear (*lishmoa*, the infinitive of *shema*) the *shofar*. The mitzvah of the *shofar* is to hear the *shofar* being blown, not actually blow it yourself, hence the blessing: *Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech HaOlam, Asher Kidshanu Bemitzvotav Vitzivanu Kol Lishmoa HaShofar (Blessed are You, O Lord, King of the Universe who sanctified us by Your commandments and instructed us to listen to the sound of the shofar).*

Teruah is an awakening blast – a theme generally associated with the Holy Day. *Teruah* is also translated in the Bible as a *shout*. The Messianic reign is associated with a shout (Is. 12:6, 42:11; Jer. 31:7; Zeph. 3:14). In Isaiah: *“²³Sing, O heavens, for Adonai has done it! Shout, depths of the earth! Break forth into singing, mountains, forest, and every tree in it! For Adonai has redeemed Jacob and will be glorified through Israel.”* The first coming of Yeshua was associated with a shout: *“⁹Rejoice greatly, daughter of Zion! Shout, daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your king is coming to you, a righteous one bringing salvation. He is lowly, riding on a donkey—on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zech. 9:9).* The second coming of Yeshua is associated with a shout: *“¹⁶For the Lord Himself shall come down from heaven with a commanding shout, with the voice of the archangel and with the blast of God’s shofar, and the dead in Messiah shall rise first” (1Thes. 4:16).*

Whether it is by the blast of a *shofar* or by the force of a supernatural shout, God’s goal is the same – to awaken us! The Book of Ephesians has many references to *Yom Teruah*: *“¹⁴for everything made visible is light. This is why it says, Wake up, O sleeper! Rise from the dead, and Messiah will shine on you” (Eph 5:14).* In Ephesians 4 *“³⁰Do not grieve the Ruach ha-Kodesh of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.”* Being sealed is a direct reference to *Yom Kippur*. The Lord created this festival to teach us that we will be judged on *Yom Teruah* and will be sealed unto the closing of the gates on *Yom Kippur*.

Isaiah 26 ties the resurrection with the awaking shout of the *shofar*: *“¹⁹Yet it will be: Your dead will live! My corpses will rise! Awake and shout for joy, you who dwell in the dust! Your dew is like the dew of the dawn. The land of dead souls will come to life!”* This theme of awakening is used throughout the Bible, e.g., John 11:11, Ro. 13:11: *“Besides this, you know the time—that it is already the hour for you to awaken from sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first came to trust.”* It is also found in Psalm 78:65 and Daniel 12:1,2: *“¹At that time Michael, the great prince who stands guard over the sons of your people, will arise. There will be a time of distress such as has never occurred since the beginning of the nation until then. But at that time your people—everyone who is found written in the book—will be delivered. ²Multitudes who sleep in the dust of the earth will awake—some to everlasting life, and others to shame and everlasting contempt.”* The *shofar* is the physical instrument that Adonai instructed us to use to awake from spiritual slumber: *“⁵²in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last shofar. For the shofar will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we will be changed” (1 Cor. 15:52).* Paul said in verse 1 Cor. 15:51 that he was showing us a great mystery – perhaps it is the mystery associated with the *shofar*!

In the days of old, the *shofar* was used on very solemn occasions. The first mention of the *shofar* is in Mount Sinai, when the voice of the *shofar* was exceedingly strong and all the people who were in the camp trembled: *“...and the blast of an exceedingly loud shofar. All the people in the camp trembled... When the sound of the shofar grew louder and louder, Moses spoke, and God answered him with a thunderous sound” (Ex. 19:16,19).* Thus, the *shofar* we hear on *Yom Teruah* should remind us of our people’s receiving of the Torah and our obligations to it. The *shofar* used to be sounded when war was waged upon a dangerous enemy. Thus, the *shofar* we hear on *Yom Teruah* ought to also serve as a battle cry to wage war against our inner enemy – our evil inclinations and

passions as well as the devil (*Ha Satan*) himself. The *shofar* was also sounded on the Jubilee Year, heralding freedom from slavery (see Lev. 25:9-10). Spiritually, this refers to freedom from the slavery of sin, the desires of this world & serving the devil (Ro. 6:12-13; Jas. 4:4).

Another reason for sounding the *shofar* is that *Rosh HaShanah* is the Jewish celebration of the birth of creation. If this is correct, then God began to rule over the world on this day. When a king begins to reign, he is heralded with trumpets and *shofar* blasts: “*O clap your hands, all ye people; shout (Teruah) unto God with the voice of triumph... God is gone up with a shout (Teruah), Adonai with the sound of a trumpet (shofar).*” Wake up *Kol Simcha* and blow the *shofar* for your king is soon coming!