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ASERES YEMEI TESHUVA • SEPTEMBER 18, 2026 • 7 ELUL 5787

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Shofar Blowing

The Tur (*Siman* 581) begins the laws of Rosh Hashanah by citing a passage from *Pirkei d'Rabbi Eliezer*:

“On Rosh Chodesh Elul, Hashem said to Moshe Rabbeinu, ‘Go up to the mountain,’ in order to receive the second set of *luchos*. ‘And the sound of the shofar was sounded in the encampment,’ so that the people would not err again in following after *avodah zarah*.”

In other words, Moshe Rabbeinu's ascent to Har Sinai was accompanied by the blast of a shofar to ensure that the nation would not repeat the sin they had committed the first time Moshe ascended to receive the *luchos*, when they served the *Eigel Hazahav*.

This explains why we blow the shofar from the first day of Elul. But do we have an explanation as to the practice of blowing the shofar throughout the month of Elul? After all, we can assume that the shofar was not blown throughout the forty days that Moshe was in Shamayim receiving the second set of *luchos*.

The Tur (see *Bach* and *Perisha*) states that

we continue to blow the shofar throughout the month of Elul to arouse us to do *teshuvah*. We are aware that Elul is a time designated for *teshuvah*, and the sound of the shofar helps us get into the proper mood to repent.

Obviously, the obligation and opportunity to repent do not end when Elul ends. Rather, the process of *teshuvah* continues throughout the entire 40 day period corresponding to Moshe Rabbeinu's third 40 day period on Har Sinai. This period begins on Rosh Chodesh Elul and culminates on Yom Kippur.

If so, the Bach wonders, why do we do not blow the shofar throughout all 40 days, until Yom Kippur? After all, this is still a time for *teshuvah*, as we identify these days as the *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*.

The Bach answers that the Tur offers another reason for blowing the shofar: to confuse the Satan. We therefore do not blow the shofar on Erev Rosh Hashanah or during the *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*, in order to confuse the Satan.

In summation, according to the Bach, the

Tur offers three reasons for our custom of blowing the shofar.

1. In remembrance of the shofar that was sounded when Moshe ascended the mountain on Rosh Chodesh Elul.
2. To arouse us to repent.
3. To confuse the Satan.

The combination of these reasons explains why our custom is to blow the shofar from Rosh Chodesh Elul through the entire month of Elul, except for Erev Rosh Hashanah, as well as why we do not blow the shofar during the *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah*.

The Bach requires further analysis because the idea to confuse the Satan seems to be relevant only until Rosh Hashanah, but not afterward. If so, the question returns: why don't we blow the shofar after Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur?

ADDING ON

Rav Chizkiyahu Feivel Plaut (*Likutei Chaver Ben Chaim*, Vol. 2, at the beginning of the laws of Rosh Hashanah) offers

another answer for why we do not blow the shofar during *Aseres Yemei Teshuvah* until Yom Kippur.

He explains that blowing the shofar after Rosh Hashanah could potentially constitute a violation of the prohibition of *bal tosif* — “do not add to the *mitzvos* of the Torah” (בל תוסיף).

Rav Plaut adds a proof from the commentaries that explain why one does not sleep in a sukkah on *Shemini Atzeres*: doing so would potentially violate the prohibition of *bal tosif*.

It seems that Rav Plaut understands that

bal tosif does not apply to performing a mitzvah before the Biblical mitzvah has been fulfilled. Therefore, there is no issue with blowing the shofar before Rosh Hashanah. Once Rosh Hashanah has passed, however, and the mitzvah of shofar has already been fulfilled, continuing to blow the shofar could constitute an addition to the mitzvah, and thus raise the concern of *bal tosif*.

Rav Plaut requires further analysis too.

The Rambam (*Mamrim* 2:9) permits Chazal to add onto existing prohibitions when they specifically inform everyone that their addition is not included in the



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Biblical *halachah*. If so, the question returns: Why not institute the blowing of the shofar after Rosh Hashanah until Yom Kippur to arouse repentance, and simply inform everyone that the addition of blowing shofar during these days is not included in the Biblical mitzvah of blowing shofar on Rosh Hashanah?

ר' חזקיה פייבל פלויט

R' Chizkiyahu Feivel Plaut (24 Shevat 1818 – 26 Kislev 1894) was a student of the Chasam Sofer and eventually Rav of Shurin for 50 years, where he also opened a yeshivah. Starting from 1878, he published eleven *sefarim* on many topics. Many of his contemporaries quote him, including the Maharam Shick, Harav Yehudah Assad, and the Ksav Sofer. He writes, “With His kindness, I have reached old age, but I have not merited to have children. Therefore, I decided to give my parents an eternal name among the Jewish people by writing this *sefer*.” He explains that since the entire idea of publishing a *sefer* was for his parents’ sake, he decided to name it after them as well.

Born Again

The *Bas Ayin* (*Devarim* 11:26) explains the phrase (*Tamid* 32a): Who is a wise man? The one who sees the future (הרואה את הנהלך).

The word *nolad* is literally translated as “born.”

He explains that one is supposed to constantly think of bettering himself and repenting. And one who repents, it is as if he is reborn – he has a clean slate.

Therefore: who is a wise man? The one who constantly repents and sees himself as if he is born again.

The *Bas Ayin* adds that the letter *aleph* is interchangeable with the letter *ayin*; thus, Elul (אלול) can be (עולל), meaning infant, because during Elul, when one properly repents, he becomes a “new infant” with a clean slate.

גמר חתימה טובה

בת עין

Harav Avraham Dov Auerbach (1760 – 12 Kislev 1840) was born in Chmielnik, Ukraine, where his father served as a Maggid. He became a student of Rav Menachem Nochum (1730–1797), the founder of the Chernobyl dynasty and author of the *Me’or Einayim*. He also studied under R. Mordechai Twersky (1770–1837), the son and successor of Rav Menachem Nochum, as well as Rav Levi Yitzchak of Berditchev (1740–1809), renowned author of the *Kedushas Levi*. Rav Avraham Dov served as the Rav of Zhitomir and Ovruch, Ukraine, until 1831, when he emigrated to Eretz Yisrael, settling in Tzfas. There, he assumed leadership of the local Chassidic community during a particularly turbulent period. He survived the upheavals of the 1834 Peasants’ Revolt and the devastating 1837 earthquake, but ultimately succumbed to the plague that struck the city in 1840. His teachings were later compiled and published in Zhitomir, 1869.