



### **Rosh Hashana: Choosing G-d as King**

One of the basic features of our relationship with G-d is reciprocity. Reciprocity means that our actions are reciprocated in kind by G-d. While we may not see the direct link between the two actions {because generally speaking the ways of G-d must necessarily remain opaque to humankind to facilitate free choice}, reciprocity is indeed one of our core beliefs. People may sometimes ask, "Why doesn't G-d do this or that?" And the correct answer to that question is often is that the action necessary to generate the reciprocal response was not effectuated.

A prime example of this principle is the holiday of Rosh Hashana.

In its purest form, Rosh Hashana is the day we accept upon ourselves the sovereignty of Almighty G-d. In effect, we are the ones who coronate G-d as King over us and the entire universe. As we state in one of the central Rosh Hashanah prayers: "Our G-d and the G-d of our forefathers, reign over the entire universe with Your glory .... King over the entire universe who sanctifies Israel and the day of remembrance."

If G-d is the creator of everything and master of the world, does He need us to declare Him King?!

The answer is yes, He does.

To be sure, G-d can do whatever He so chooses to do, period. But what He has chosen to do is to make His position as king over the world contingent upon human beings' freely choosing Him as such.

This process is also an expression of our understanding of the notion of governance. Governance imposed by force is dictatorship. Only when it is established in concert with a country's citizens is it considered to be sovereignty. G-d desires sovereignty, not dictatorship.

The day of Rosh Hashana is when we freely choose to accept G-d's sovereign authority, acknowledge Him as our king, and pledge our obedience to Him. In turn, He accepts our request.

This idea is a key explanation for what the blowing of the Shofar represents: a people freely coronating their chosen king. This is also the theme that permeates all the special prayers of the day.

If you have been taught to think of Rosh Hashana simply as a day of judgment, this is inaccurate. The judgment of humankind and the world is a consequence of our request for G-d to be our Sovereign. G-d's judgment is actually His deliberation of the upside and downside of accepting our proposal.

While our U.S. national elections occur every four years, our choice of G-d as king is an annual event. There are no nominations, politicking, or campaigns. Very simply, there is just each and every one of us, standing alone with G-d Almighty, freely making our own choice.

*(by Rabbi Shmuel Kaplan from Eclectic Thoughts of Meaning)*

### **The Sounds of the Shofar**

When the Shofar is blown on Rosh HaShana, three different types of noises are sounded. The first is a "teki'ah." This sound is one long continuous burst. The second sound is called a "shevarim." It consists of three shorter blasts. The third sound is the "teruah." The teruah is a set of nine short bursts of sound, a staccato blast. The Gemora in Rosh HaShana tells us that these later two sounds are meant to sound like crying: "... drawing a long sigh... uttering short piercing cries." The Ben Ish Chai writes that these sounds are meant to contrast with the tekiah. The tekiah, he explains, is a sound of triumph and joy, while the shevarim and teruah are sounds of pain and suffering. Because of the opposing feelings they represent, when one blows the shofar, he is not to connect the tekiah with the others, by blowing the sounds with the same breath.

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Why do we have both sounds of joy and sounds of sorrow emitted from the Shofar? The Ben Ish Chai explains by means of a story. A man had a ring specially made for him. Upon this ring, he had engraved the words "This, too, will pass." If he were troubled and in pain, he would look at his ring and remember that the suffering would eventually end. This thought comforted him. During times of happiness and comfort, he would gaze at the ring as well. He would realize that his wealth and good fortune could change for the worst in an instant. Good times are not forever. He would recognize that there was no reason to become conceited and haughty over circumstances which were beyond his control and could turn adverse without any warning. This ring reminded the man that all in his life had to be put in perspective, and that one should live his life neither complacent nor despondent.

The tekiah, the first sound, is a sound of joy and happiness. Immediately after we hear the long exultant blast, we hear the shevarim and teruah. These are both sounds of sadness, pain and suffering. The stark contrast between these sounds is intentional. We are supposed to remember while listening to the shofar that we cannot forget G-d during times of contentment, and we cannot let our egos swell from our achievements. Success can quickly turn into failure. Only with G-d's help did we prosper, and only with G-d's help will we continue to do so. However, upon hearing the sorrowful sound of the Shofar, we should not think that in times of suffering G-d has forsaken us. We should not become depressed and despondent. Right after these blasts, we sound a tekiah again, to signify that G-d is there, and in His mercy will help us return to a state of jubilation again.

*(by Rabbi Yehudah Prero from Project Genesis at [www.torah.org](http://www.torah.org))*

#### Yahrzeits This Week:

|               |                                     |            |                                       |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|------------|---------------------------------------|
| Terry Frank   | 3 Tishrei - Sunday night / Monday   | for mother | Sara bas Tzvi                         |
| Howard Elbaum | 7 Tishrei - Thursday night / Friday | for father | Avraham Menachem ben Yitzchak Yehudah |

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#### DAVENING AND SHIURIM SCHEDULE

**Friday – Erev Rosh Hashana, 9/11 — 29 Elul**  
Selichot & Shacharit — 6:10 a.m.  
Hatoras Nedarim  
Candles — 7:03 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

**Shabbat — Rosh Hashana, 9/12 — 1 Tishrei**  
Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.  
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:51 a.m.  
Minchah — 6:50 p.m.  
Yom Tov Candles — 8:05 p.m.  
Ma'ariv — 8:05 p.m.

**Sunday — Rosh Hashana, 9/13 — 2 Tishrei**  
Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.  
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:52 a.m.  
Shofar — After 11:00 a.m.  
Minchah and Tashlich — 6:00 p.m.  
Ma'ariv — 8:00 p.m.

**Monday — Tzom Gedalia, 9/14 — 3 Tishrei**  
Fast begins — 5:21 a.m.  
Selichot & Shacharit — 6:25 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:50 p.m.  
Fast ends — 7:44 p.m.

**Tuesday, 9/15 — 4 Tishrei**  
Shacharit— 7:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

**Wednesday, 9/16 — 5 Tishrei**  
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

**Thursday, 9/17 — 6 Tishrei**  
Shacharit — 6:50 a.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 7:00 p.m.

**Friday, 9/18 — 7 Tishrei**  
Shacharit — 7:00 a.m.  
Candles — 6:52 p.m.  
Minchah / Ma'ariv — 6:55 p.m.

**Shabbat, 9/19 — 8 Tishrei**  
Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.  
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:53 a.m.  
Shabbos Shuva Drasha — 5:25 p.m.  
Minchah — 6:40 p.m.  
Shkiah — 7:09 p.m.  
Ma'ariv — 7:51 p.m.

**Sunday — Erev Yom Kippur, 9/20 — 9 Tishrei**  
Shacharit — 8:00 a.m.  
Minchah — 3:00 p.m.  
Yom Tov Candles — 6:49 p.m.  
Fast begins — 6:49 p.m.  
Kol Nidrei— 6:35 p.m.

**Monday — Yom Kippur, 9/21 — 10 Tishrei**  
Shacharit — 9:00 a.m.  
Sof Z'man Kriat Shema — 9:54 a.m.  
Yizkor — after 11:00 a.m.  
Mincha & Ne'ila — 5:00 p.m.  
Fast Ends — 7:47 p.m.  
Shofer and Ma'ariv — 7:47 p.m.  
Birchas Levanah — After Ma'ariv