



The Greater Washington Community Kollel SHABBOS DELIGHTS

TORAH MINUTE

IN MEMORY OF RABBI KALMAN WINTER ZT"l

Expanding Our "I"

Presented by Rabbi Hillel Shaps, Kollel Scholar and Director of Special Projects

In addition to the many layers of significance attributed to the sounds of the shofar, commentators have also elaborated on the symbolism of the shofar's physical make-up. The Sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh points out that while one blows into a small opening in the shofar, the sound is emitted through a wider opening. This is symbolic of the verse that is read at the opening of the shofar service, *Min Hameitzar*: "From the straits I called G-d; G-d answered me with a vast expanse." The sound of the shofar is an expression of our desire to escape from confinement to expansiveness and space. But what does this mean in practical terms?

On a physical level, the idea can be readily understood. Someone who is constrained by financial hardship or another of life's pressures desires to escape to a more expansive situation – free of those constraints and worries. But the shofar's message isn't limited to the physical realm as it also speaks of spiritual expansion – the expansion of the soul.

The Sefer Bilvavi Mishkan Evneh explains that, while every person is concerned about their personal welfare, they are also concerned about the welfare of others, at least to a degree. The less one is concerned for oneself and is instead concerned for others, the greater that person is. The shofar expresses our desire to break out of the narrow confines of only thinking about ourselves and to develop an expansive outlook that takes in the needs of others around us as well.

This, according to Rav Shimon Skop, is the idea behind the Mishna's statement (Avos 1:14) "If I am (only) for myself, what am I?" The question, "What am I?" appears to be vague and indirect. It is unclear what the Mishna intends to teach us. Rav Skop explains that the Mishna is teaching us the necessity to expand our "I" to include others in our daily thought-processes. If I think of others and I am there for others, then they become part of my "I" and my "I" is indeed enlarged. On the other hand, "If I am only for myself" then my "I" is small and limited, and hence "What am I?".

When approaching these Days of Awe, we might be inclined to focus on ourselves – how do I prepare *myself* for the Day of Judgment? How do I make sure that I have the best davening experience? How do I assure a good judgment for *myself* for the coming year? The shofar's call reminds us to look beyond ourselves and consider both the physical and spiritual needs of others, to attend to their needs when possible, but also simply to daven for them. In all of these ways the result will be that we will have elevated and expanded our "I".

Wishing you a Good Shabbos and a Good Yom-tov! Kesiva V'Chasima Tova!

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TABLE TALK

Point to Ponder

Rav Ashi says if a non-Jew forced a Jew to eat matza on the first night of Pesach, even if the Jew did not have in mind to fulfill a mitzva, he has fulfilled his obligation. Rava adds that according to Rav Ashi's opinion if one blows a Shofar to hear music on Rosh Hashana, he has also fulfilled his obligation. (Rosh Hashana 28a)

If one eats matza without intent to fulfill his obligation (if he was forced by a non-Jew to eat the matza) he has fulfilled his obligation. (Rambam Chometz Umatzo 6,4)

However, the Rambam (Shofar 2, 4) says, "If one blows a shofar on Rosh Hashana to practice the art of blowing or if one hears from someone who is not intending to blow for the mitzva, he has not fulfilled his obligation." This indicates that the Rambam's position is that one must have intent to fulfill a mitzva in order to fulfill the obligation. If so why does one fulfill his obligation to eat matza even when he doesn't have intent?

Parsha Riddle

How is it possible that even after one has waited six hours after eating meat, one would not be allowed to eat milk products?

Please see next week's issue for the answer.

Last week's riddle:

How is it possible that even after one has waited six hours after eating meat, one would not be allowed to eat milk products?

Answer: If one is still in middle of the meal at which he ate meat and has not bentched yet.

HATORAH V'HAMITZVAH

HALACHA INSIGHTS FROM THE PARSHA

In the maftir of Rosh Hashanah (Bemidbar 29:1), the day is described as "a day of shofar-sounding." Elsewhere (Vayikra 23:24), however, it is described as "a remembrance with shofar blasts." There is a Talmudic opinion that resolves this dichotomous phrasing by explaining that the former verse refers to Rosh Hashanah that falls on a weekday, when the shofar is actually blown, while the latter refers to Rosh Hashanah that falls on the Sabbath, when the shofar is not blown, but merely "remembered" by the recitation of Biblical verses discussing it. The (Babylonian) Talmud ultimately rejects this interpretation, however, and concludes that there is no Biblical problem with blowing the shofar on the Sabbath, and it is merely rabbinically prohibited due to a concern that someone may carry a shofar to an expert in order to learn how to blow it, and thereby transgress the prohibition against carrying four cubits in a public domain. (Rosh Hashanah 29b)

The mishnah (ibid.) states that in the Temple the shofar was blown on Rosh Hashanah even on the Sabbath, and that after its destruction, R. Yochanan b. Zakai extended the dispensation to blow it on the Sabbath to "any place in which there is a beis din (rabbinic court)." The mishnah and accompanying Talmudic discussion present several different opinions regarding the breadth of R. Yochanan's extension. It is reported that a millennium ago, R. Yitzchak Alfasi blew the shofar on the Sabbath in his beis din, but the general halachic consensus is that in our era, we no longer have batei din of sufficient stature to qualify for R. Yochanan's extension. (See Tur and Beis Yosef OC #588)

In the consecutive years 5665-5666 (1904-1905), Rosh Hashanah fell out on the Sabbath, and the distinguished Hungarian-Israeli scholar R. Akiva Yosef Schlesinger argued strenuously that at least in Jerusalem, the shofar should be blown even on the Sabbath. Although he claimed to have the support of two of the leading contemporary Jerusalemite rabbis, R. Shmuel Salant and R. Eliyahu David Rabinowitz-Teomim, his campaign met with a vigorous and vehement backlash, and his attempt to reinstate the ancient custom ultimately failed (although rumor had it that he personally did once manage to secretly blow the shofar). (See Ha'Moadim B'Halachah, p. 53)

PRESENTED BY
RABBI YITZHAK GROSSMAN, ROSH CHABURAH

KIDS KORNER

Who Am I?

#1 WHO AM I?

1. I am for one day this year.
2. I am four, but really three.
3. I am a crying memorial.
4. I am your lawyer.

#2 WHO AM I?

1. I am an inauguration.
2. I am a court case.
3. Tu B'shevat is similar to me.
4. I make you taste many foods.

Last Week's Answers

#1 Torah (I am called a song, I am called a testimony, I mean teaching, I am married.)

#2 Selichos (I am for Elul and the Ten, I contain thirteen, For some I am a month, Mincha and I have something in common.)

The raffle has been postponed until after the shuls are reopened. We are still accepting entries to the raffle.

All children 13 and under who answer a "Who Am I?" correctly will be entered into a raffle to **WIN a Claw Machine Arcade Game**



Visit gwckollel.org to submit your answers.

Answer as many as you can. Each correct answer will entitle you to another raffle ticket and increase your chances of winning!

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Greater Washington Community Kollel wishes all of its friends, supporters, participants, and the entire community, a good Yom Tov and a sweet new year!

May you and your family be blessed with health, happiness, and peace!