THE EMOTIONAL RESONANCE OF THE SHOFAR AND THE PREACHER’S VOICE

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Text Sheet

BIBLICAL TEXTS

1. Amos 3:6
   When a shofar is sounded (yitaqah) in a town, shall the people not tremble (yecheradu)?

2. Ex. 19:16
   On the third day, as morning dawned, there was thunder and lightning, and a dense cloud upon
   the mountain, and a very loud blast of the horn, and the people in the camp trembled
   (yecherad).

3. Joshua 6:3, 4, 5, 6, 16, 20
   Do this six days with seven priests carrying seven ram’s horns preceding the Ark. On the
   seventh day, march around the city seven times, with the priests blowing (yitqueu) the shofarot.
   And when a long blast is sounded on the horn, all the people shall give a mighty shout.
   Thereupon the city wall will collapse….On the seventh round, as the priests blew the shofarot,
   Joshua commanded the people, “Shout! For the Lord has given you the city.”....So the people
   shouted when the shofarot were sounded. When the people heard the sound of the shofarot,
   the people raised a mighty shot, and the wall collapsed.

4. Psalms 98:4-6
   Raise a shout to the Lord, all the earth break into joyous songs of Praise. Sing praise to the Lord
   with the lyre, with the lyre and melodious song. With trumpets and the blast of the shofar, raise
   a shout (hariu) before the Lord, the King.

5. Psalms 150:1, 3, 6
   Halleluyah. Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in the sky, His stronghold...Praise Him with
   the blast of the shofar (beteqa shofar); praise him with harp and lyre...Let all that breathes
   praise the Lord. Halleluyah.

6. Is. 27:13
   And in that day, a great shofar shall be sounded (yitaqa), and the strayed who are in the land of
   Assyria .shall come and worship the Lord on the holy mount, in Jerusalem

7. Lev. 25:8-10
   You shall count seven weeks of years—seven times seven years—so that the period of seven
   weeks of years gives you a total of forty-nine years. Then you shall sound the shofar blast
   (shofar teruah) in the seventh month, on the tenth day of the month—the Day of Atonement—
   you shall have the shofar sounded throughout your land, and you shall hallow the fiftieth year.
   You shall proclaim release throughout the land for all its inhabitants. It shall be a Jubilee for
   you...
8. **Num. 10:1,2,9,10**

The Lord spoke to Moses, saying, “Have two silver trumpets (hatzozrot), make them of hammered work... When you are at war in your land against an aggressor who attacks you, you shall sound the short blast (harotem) on the trumpets, that you may be remembered before the Lord your God and be derived from your enemies. And on your joyous occasions, your fixed festivals and new moon days,, you shall sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and your sacrifices of well-being. They shall be a reminder of you before your God. I am the Lord your God.”

9. **Lev. 23:24**

“Speak to the Israelite people thus: In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe complete rest, a sacred occasion commemorated with loud blasts” (zichron teruah).

10. **Num. 29:1**

In the seventh month, on the first day of the month, you shall observe a sacred occasion; you shall not work at your occupations. You shall observe it as a day when the horn is sounded (yom teruah).

11. **Ps. 81:4**

Blow the shofar on the new moon, on the full moon [alt. on the covering of the moon] (bakeseh), on our festival day.

12. **Ps. 89:16**

Happy are the people who know the sound [of the shofar] (yodei teruah). O Lord, they walk in the light of your presence.

13. **Ps. 47:6**

God (Elohim) ascends midst the sounding [of the shofar] (teruah), the Lord (Adonai), to the blast of the shofar.

14. **Is. 58:1**

[O, Isaiah, prophet] Cry with full throat, without restraint; Raise your voice like a shofar! Declare to My people their transgression, to the House of Jacob their sin.

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**RABBINIC TEXTS**

**TANNAITIC SOURCES**

1. **M. (Mishnah) Rosh Hashanah 1:1, 2**

There are four New Years

On the first of Nissan...

On the first of Tishrei is the New Year for [reckoning] years, for Sabbatical years and Jubilee years...

At four times [during the year] the world is judged.

On Passover for the grain...
On Rosh Hashanah all who have come into the world pass before Him like a military troop [correcting to: \textit{kenumeron}], as it is stated, “He who fashions their hearts of them all, who discerns their doings” (Ps. 33:15).

2. M. R.H. 3:3, 5
The shofar [blown in the Holy Temple] on Rosh Hashanah was of the wild goat (\textit{ya’al}), with its mouthpiece overlaid with gold. And two trumpets [are blown] at the sides...The Jubilee Year is like Rosh Hashanah with regard to the blowing of the shofar and the benedictions. R. Judah says, “On Rosh Hashanah they use [curved] horns from males [from ram], and on Jubilee Years from wild goats.”

3. M. R.H. 4:7
The one who leads the prayer service on the festival of Rosh Hashanah, the second prayer leader [the one leading the \textit{musaf}, the additional prayer service] causes the shofar to be blown, but on occasions when Hallel [Pss. 114-18, are recited] the first one [the one leading the \textit{shacharit} service] leads the Hallel.

4. M. R.H. 4:9
The order of the [blowing of] the shofar (\textit{seder teqiot}) is three sets of three blasts [i.e., \textit{teqiah, teruah, teqiah}].

The length of the \textit{teqiah} is like three \textit{teruah}. The length of a \textit{teruah} is like three \textit{yevavot} [the interpretation of this word is unclear, though the Talmud with render it to mean, whimpers. The basic meaning is blasts of some sort on a horn].

5. Sifra Emor Parshata 11:10
What is the order of the sounds of the blasts?
He blows a \textit{teqiah}, and then a \textit{teruah}, and then a \textit{teqiah}, [he blows] \textit{teqiah, teruah, teqiah}; three sets of blasts that [add up to] nine blasts. The length of the \textit{teqiah}, should be the same as the \textit{teruah}, and the length of the \textit{teruah} is three broken notes (\textit{shevarim})

6. Sifre Numbers 77
[Commenting on Number 10:10, And on your joyous occasions, your fixed festivals and new moon days,, you shall sound the trumpets over your burnt offerings and your sacrifices of well-being. They shall be a reminder of you before your God. I am the Lord your God,” the following midrashic interpretation connects the verse to the three sections of the \textit{musaf amidah; shofarot, zichronot} (remembrances) and \textit{malchiot} (sovereignty)]

R. Nathan says, “It is said, ‘You shall sound the trumpets,’ lo a reference to the ram’s horn; ‘they shall serve as a reminder,’ this [refers to sounding for] remembrance; ‘I am the Lord your God,’ this [refers to sounding for] God’s sovereignty.”
If so why [in the Rosh Hashanah liturgy] have sages placed [verses referring to] the sounding of the shofar for God’s sovereignty first, then for remembrance second, and finally for the ram’s horns blast?
The sense is: first accept Him as king over you, then seek mercy from him, so that you will be remembered by him,. And with what? With the shofar of freedom (\textit{cherut}).
And the shofar indicates only freedom, as it is said, “And in that day, a great shofar shall be sounded (\textit{yitaqa}), and the strayed who are in the land of Assyria shall come and worship the
Lord on the holy mount, in Jerusalem” (Is. 27:13). But I do not know who will blow it? Scripture therefore says, “The Lord God will sound the shofar” (Zech. 9:14).

TALMUDIC (AMORAIC) SOURCES

1. b. (Babylonian Talmud, redacted 6th-7th century in Babylonia) R.H. 16a
   Commenting on M. R.H. 1:2
   Said, The Holy One Blessed be He, 'Blow before me with a shofar of a ram so that I can remember in your behalf the binding of Isaac the son of Abraham, and I will consider it as if you had bound yourselves before me.”

2. b. R.H. 16a-b
   Rabbi Isaac [third generation amora, land of Israel] said, “Why do they blow the shofar on Rosh Hashanah?”
   Why do they blow the teqiah! God said, “Blow the teqiah.”
   Rather [what Isaac was asking], why sound the teruah?
   Why sound the teruah! God said, “[It is a day] commemorated with teruot.”
   Rather [he was asking] why do they blow the teqiah and the teruah while they are sitting and blow the teqiah and the teruah while standing?
   In order to confound (le’arbev) Satan.

3. b. R.H. 26b
   Commenting on M. R.H.3:3, 5
   Said R. Levi [third generation amora, land of Israel], “The commandment of Rosh Hashanah and of [Jubilee year on] the Day of Atonement is [fulfilled] with curved horns, and for all the rest of the year with straight ones.”
   [The gemara asks]: But we have learned in our Mishnah: The shofar of Rosh Hashanah [should be] of a wild goat and straight?
   He [R. Levi] stated [his position] in accordance with that tanna [R. Judah]...
   On which issues do they [R. Judah and the anonymous view of the Mishnah] disagree?
   One master [R. Judah] thinks that the more a person on Rosh Hashanah bends over [some mss. have, bends his mind], the better it is; and at [the conclusion] of the Day of Atonement [in a Jubilee year], the more a person straightens out, the better. But the other master [the anonymous view in the Mishnah] thinks, that on Rosh Hashanah the more a person is straight, the better. And on fasts days the more a person bends, the better.

4. b. R.H.33b
   Commenting on M. R.H.4:9 (The length of a teruah is like three yevavot):
   But it has been taught [cites the text from Sifra], the length of the teruah is three broken notes (shevarim)?
   Said Abaye [fourth generation Babylonian amora], “In this [about the meaning of the following biblical text] they [the two texts] disagree. For it is written, ‘You shall observe it as a day when the horn is sounded (yom teruah)” [Num. 29:1]. And the Aramaic translators render as, ‘A day of
yevava; and it is written regarding the mother of Sisera, ‘Through the window she looked, and she cried (vateyavev)’ (Jdgs. 5:28).

One master [the view in Sifra] thinks that [the teruah] is like trembling [alt: moaning] [ganuchei ganache], hence speaks of broken notes, shevarim] and the other master [the anonymous view in the Mishnah] thinks it refers to sobbing [yelu lei yalal, short whimpers].”

5. b. R.H. 34a
Commenting on M. R.H. 4:9
R. Abbahu instituted in Caesarea [the following sequence for blowing the shofar]: Teqiah, shevarim, teruah, teqiah...
He was in doubt whether [the teruah] refers to a type of moaning or whimpering.
[A series of objections follow which indicate that if the note was truly like moaning, then adding the whimpering sounds interrupts between the sounding of the teruah in the manner of moaning and the subsequent teqiah. And if the correct note is the whimpering sound, then sounding the broken, moaning notes, interrupts between the teqiah and this way of blowing the teruah note. The text then resolves this challenge by indicating that R. Abbahu instituted three sets of notes: 1. teqiah, shevarim, teruah, teqiah; 2. Teqiah, shevarim, teqiah; 3. Teqiah, teruah, teqiah.]
[In light of this understanding of R. Abbahu’s practice, the gemara asks]: If so, one should do the opposite as well [and blow teqiah, teruah, shevarim, teqiah?]
Generally when a tragedy happens to a person, he first moans and then he whimpers.

MIDRASHAIC TEXTS (AMORAIC and POST-AMORAIC)

PESIQTA DERAB KAHANA (Edited 5th century in land of Israel)

1. PRK 23:3
Judah b. R. Nahman in the name of R. Simeon b. Laqish commenced [by citing the following verse], “‘God (Elohim) ascends midst the sounding [of the shofar] (teruah), the Lord (Adonai), to the blast of the shofar (Ps. 47:6).’
When the Holy One, blessed be He, ascends to take his seat on the throne of justice on Rosh Hashanah, he goes up [with the intention of judging] with strict justice. But when Israel take up their shofarot and blow them, the Holy One, blessed be He, arises from his throne of justice and sits on the throne of mercy, for it is written, ‘the Lord (Adonai), to the blast of the shofar. [The midrash builds upon the standard rabbinic interpretation of Elohim (God) standing for God’s attribute of justice, while the term, Adonai (Lord) symbolizes mercy.] And he is filled with mercy for them and then transforms the attribute of justice into that of mercy.”

2. PRK 23:8
[Interpreting several words in Ps. 81:4] “Blow the shofar on the new moon, on the full moon [alt. on the covering of the moon] (bakeseh), on our festival day”—
Said the Holy One, blessed be He, “If you improve your deeds before me, lo, I shall become for you like a shofar. Just as a shofar takes in at one [narrow] end and lets out at the other [wide
side], so shall I arise from the throne of justice and take my seat on the throne of mercy and become filled with mercy for you and have mercy on your and turn the attribute of justice into the attribute of mercy.

3. PRK 24:1

When a shofar is sounded (yitaqah) in a town, shall the people not tremble (yecheradu)? (Amos 3:6). [The text opens with a parable about a city about to be invaded and some elders within warn the people. Some inhabitants listened and were saved; others did not and perished. The text then cites and explains Ezek. 33:7-9 that speaks of the prophet serving as a watchman to warn Israel.] So too, “When a shofar is sounded in a town” on Rosh Hashanah, “and the people”—Israel—“do not tremble, then if evil befall the city, the Lord has not done it.” The Holy One, blessed be He, is not pleased with the death of the wicked...O people [of Israel], what do I require of you. “Turn back, turn back from your evil ways, that you not die, O House of Israel” (Ezek. 33:11).

**PESIQTA RABBATI** (Date uncertain, 5th-9th centuries; location of redaction debated, ranging from the land of Israel to Greece or Italy)

1. PR 39:1

Let our master teach us; Is a shofar which had a perforation in it that was patched up regarded as fit to blow?

Our master taught as follows, “If the patch hinders, the blowing of the shofar is regarded as unfit; but if not, it is fit [citation of M. R.H. 3:4].

What is the basis for this? For it is written, ‘And the Lord, God shall blow a shofar’ (Zech. 9:14). Just as the shofar of the Holy One, blessed be He, is whole (shalem), so too should the shofar of Rosh Hashanah be whole.

Why?

Because on Rosh Hashanah the Children of Israel are saved (nigalin) from the angel of death.”. [They are saved from Satan, the angel of death, who at the ends of days will be defeated by God].

2. PR 40:5

[The unit focuses on the Ten Days of Repentance between Rosh Hashanah and the Day of Atonement].

Isaiah said, “But yet for [Israel] shall be a period of ten; if it return, then there will be removal” (Is. 6:13). Said the Holy One, blessed be He, “On Rosh Hashanah I judge my world, and I should have on that day completed the judgment. And why do I suspend [it] for ten days? In order they you still will repent...’If Israel shall return, then there will be removal.’ For if you are moved to repent during these days, even if you have some sins, I will remove them and declare you innocent. But if you do repent during them, you should know that your judgment will be rendered on the Day of Atonement. And I shall not have done it to you; rather, you shall have done it to yourselves. Why? For in ordaining for you that you shall blow shofars on Rosh Hashanah [it was] in order that you tremble at the blowing of the shofar to prepare yourselves for repentance. [As] the prophet said, ‘When a shofar is sounded (yitaqah) in a town, shall the
people not tremble (yecheradu)? As a result, ‘If evil shall befall a city, and the Lord shall not have done it’” (Amos 3:6).

3. PR 40:7
   The Holy One, blessed be He, said, “In this world I desire to have mercy upon you by means of the shofar, so too in the future [perhaps the messianic era], I will have mercy upon you by means of the shofar. How is this known? From that which is read from the prophet [as the haftarah], ‘Blow a shofar in Zion, sound the alarm on my holy mount. Let all dwellers on the earth tremble, for the Day of the Lord has come.’” (Joel 2:1).

MEDIEVAL RABBINIC VIEWS

1. Maimonides (Moses ben Maimon, 1135-1204, Spain and Egypt)
   Law of Repentance 3:4
   Even though the blowing of the shofar on Rosh Hashanah is a [Divine] decree [i.e., no rationale is provided], it contains an allusion [to a rationale], as if to say: Awaken, those who sleep from your slumber, and arise, those who slumber, and inspect your deeds and return in repentance and recall your Creator. Those who forget the truth amidst the vanities of time and waste their entire year in vanity and emptiness, which do not benefit nor save, look into yourselves and improve your ways and deeds, and let every one of you abandon his evil way and his thoughts that are not for good.

2. Rashi (Shlomo Yitzchaki, 1040-1105, France)
   Talmud commentary on b. R.H. 16b
   “In order to confound Satan”—So that he will not accuse (yastin). For when he hears Israel expressing love for the commandments, his words are shut up.

3. Tosafot (a group of commentators on the Talmud, French, German 12-14th centuries)
   Talmud commentary on b. R.H. 16b
   “In order to confound Satan”—The Arukh [an 11th century Talmudic dictionary composed by Nathan b. Yechiel of Rome] following the Jerusalem Talmud [refers to the verse], “He will destroy death forever” (Is. 25:8), and it is also written, “And in that day, a great shofar shall be sounded (yitqah), and the strayed who are in the land of Assyria shall come and worship the Lord on the holy mount, in Jerusalem” (Is. 27:13). When he (Satan) hears the sound of the shofar the first time, he is afraid and not afraid. But when he hears it a second time, he says, “This surely is the sound of the great shofar that will be blown and the time has come to be destroyed.” And he is confounded, and he does not have an opportunity to prosecute.

4. Shlomo ben. Aderet (1235-1310, Spain)
   Novellae on Talmud Rosh Hashanah 16b
   “In order to confound Satan”—There are those who explain this to mean to subdue one’s inclination, for as it is written, “When a shofar is sounded (yitqah) in a town, shall the people not tremble (yecheradu)?” (Amos 3:6). And Satan is the evil inclination as our rabbis said (b. B.B. 16a): Satan is the evil inclination, is the angel of death.
MEDIEVAL RABBINIC SERMONS

1. Yakov ben Hananel Sikily (14th century, Spain)

Torat Haminchah on Rosh Hashanah, Sermon 77

For a person needs to fear, be agitated, and tremble from Yom Hadin [the Day of Judgment, Rosh Hashanah], and the blowing of the shofar awakens to be in awe and to fear, as it is written, “When a shofar is sounded (yitaqah) in a town, shall the people not tremble (yecheradu)?” (Amos 3:6). And when a person trembles and is afraid some of the forces of worldly desire will be eliminated, and these are Satan who sinks a person into the sea of desire.

2. Isaac Arama (15th century, Spain)

Akedat Yitzchak, chapter 67

If the teruah by itself signals being troubled, being sad, and the teqiah, by itself signals joy, then a combination of these two note, i.e., shevarim, signals a mind which is somewhere between the other two emotional states. If the assumption about the emotions represented by the sequence of teqiah, shevarim, teruah, teqiah is correct, then the custom of blowing [this sequence] during the malchiyot [sovereignty section of the musaf amidah], makes sense... Malchiyot, i.e., proclaiming God's Majesty, is welcomed by the completely righteous who can afford to react to these sounds with joy and equanimity, i.e., teqiah, The completely wicked person, on the other hand, shrinks from such an encounter and is represented by the teruah sound of the shofar. The great majority of people who fall somewhere between those two categories, view the coming of a reward for their meritorious deeds with a certain feeling of gladness, while trembling at the thought of the impending retribution for the sins they have committed [and thus respond to the shevarim].