

Chapter 29

BLOWING SHOFAR NOT ON ROSH HASHANAH

On each day of Rosh Hashanah, it is customary to blow 100 sounds on the Shofar. The question is what is the total number of sounds blown on the shofar during the remainder of the year?

Almost all Shofar blowing is done during the month of Elul. During this month, one blows four notes every weekday during this month with the exception of Erev Rosh Hashanah. Every year, the number of days of blowing during Elul is identical, namely 24 days. With four notes blown each day the number will be 96 notes. It is also customary to blow at the end of Yom Kippur, and the custom in Eretz Yisrael is to blow four notes, thus making a total of 100 notes, the same number as each day of Rosh Hashanah.

Whilst I was one of the Mitnachalei Hebron in the late 1960s, a photograph of me blowing the shofar in the Cave of Machpelah was taken, and this appeared in the Israeli newspaper “Hatzofeh”. I must admit that at that period I was unable to blow the shofar and the photograph just gave the “impression” that I was blowing it!

During part of the 1970s, I was on shlichut at the Jewish High School in Liverpool. I think it was my mother who then bought me a shofar and I learned to blow it. On one occasion, this came in very useful. I would daven on Rosh Hashanah in the Childwall Synagogue, and as with many shuls in the world, due to the extra-large number of worshippers on these days, there was an additional minyan in the Communal Hall. In order that the worshippers in this additional minyan should also have a sermon, the Rabbi of that Shul delivered them the sermon. Because he obviously gave a long sermon, the main minyan in the shul did not wait for him to return to the main shul, but blew the shofar before he returned, thus causing him to miss the shofar blowing before Musaf. Needless to say, he was extremely angry that they had not waited for him. I had my shofar with me, and after the service blew for him the 30 notes he had missed. On that occasion, my blowing went very well, that those who were still in the shul said that my blowing was better than that that had been blown in the shul!

A few years later I was back living in Kiryat Arba - Hebron and I was asked to blow the Shofar in the Cave of Machpelah. Even with the best shofar blowers, it sometimes happens on Rosh Hashanah that one is unable to blow. This happened to me on the then first day of Rosh Hashanah, and after blowing a few notes, I therefore asked someone else to continue.

I will now write about blowing the shofar each weekday morning during the month of Elul. My best shofar I would reserve for Rosh Hashanah, and would use a less good one during Elul. On some days the blowing was excellent and on other days I had trouble blowing and the notes were far from perfect, although probably kosher even for Rosh Hashanah.

Blowing the Shofar during Elul is only very briefly mentioned in the Shulchan Aruch, yet there is a very large amount of material on this subject in the Rabbinic literature.

I accordingly decided I would research in detail this Elul blowing. Various reasons such as stirring up the people for Teshuva are given for this blowing. However, I personally would have thought that the major reason was to give the Shofar blower practice, so that by Rosh Hashanah he would have had sufficient practice in blowing. But strangely, this reason hardly appears in the Rabbinic literature.

Before the period of the Internet, when performing research, I would have to travel almost every week to the Israel National Library in Jerusalem to do my research. At a later date, there was the Internet and there was a very important source to obtain relevant material, namely the website HEBREWBOOKS, which now has over 60,000 books which one can print from freely without any cost or limitation. One can even order via them reprints of rare books at a very reasonable price, and they come beautifully bound in a soft cover. The postage can be even more than the cost of the book!

Having access to HEBREWBOOKS on my computer was crucial when I did this research for this paper. The reason was that it was the period of corona, and I (and also my wife) were very strict on not leaving our house, or at a maximum, just going for short walks in the area of our house. It reached the stage where we had had our first “chisun” for corona and I was counting the days until I could safely leave the house. However, the Almighty had different plans, and just over a week after this chisun, I felt very unwell, and my doctor ordered an ambulance to take me to Shaarei

Tzedek hospital in Jerusalem, where they diagnosed me with corona. After about five days, they returned me to my house by ambulance.

Now for the details of how I prepared this paper on Shofer blowing in Elul. As I have already written, I had to do my research exclusively in front of my computer. Almost all the material I required I found on HEBREWBOOKS with a few items on other sources on the internet, and in addition, in some books in my house.

However, there were still a few items which were not accessible. I therefore looked on the online catalogue of the Israel National Library and saw they had two books which I required. One of the members of staff at the catalogue department of this library, Rabbi Yoseph Leichter, lives in Kiryat Arba and I telephoned him and asked if he could photocopy these references, which he immediately obliged.

There is also an excellent Torah Library in Yeshivat Nir in Kiryat Arba (a library which I started when I was in Mitnachalei Hebron). It happened that at this period, serious renovations were going on at this Yeshiva (which needless to say, the occurrence of corona is delaying these renovations), and as a result the books in their library are almost inaccessible, although the Bar-Ilan “Shut Project” of responsa which is on their computer is accessible. One their Avraichim, Rabbi Eliahu Amno, looked up one these responsa and made a photocopy of it for me. In addition, the Kiryat Arba Municipal Library, is adjacent to my house and the staff there loaned me a book which is in this library.

I personally have a collection of detailed calendars brought out by various groups and these give usually under the date of the first of Elul, the custom of that group regarding the blowing of the shofar. These calendars include amongst others, “Luach Tukachinski”, Luach Davar b’Ito, and Luach Belz, and these are quoted in the paper.

I mentioned above that there are cases where even the most expert shofar blowers are unable to blow on Rosh Hashanah. Rabbi Eliahu Ben-Pinchas who lives in Kiryat Arba, and originally came from Kfar Pines in Israel, related to me that it was in the 1940s that on Rosh Hashanah the expert Shofar blower at their minyan was unable to blow even one note, nor were the other worshippers. Fortunately, there was teenager there who succeeded in blowing.

Another case was reported by Rabbi Aharon Steinman zt’l. It occurred during the Second World War whilst he was located in a small place in

Switzerland. Neither the expert Shofar blower, nor any of the worshippers were unable to blow. They just managed to blow a few notes and Rabbi Steinman was doubtful whether they observed the mitzvah.

One does not blow the shofar on the last day of Elul, in order to make a separation between the customary blowing during Elul and the obligatory blowing on Rosh Hashanah. But what happens when Rosh Hashanah occurs on Shabbat and therefore, even if one blew on the Friday erev Rosh Hashanah there would be a day's break of blowing before the second day of Rosh Hashanah? The Rabbinic literature states that one still does not blow on the Friday, since although one does not blow on Shabbat one says "Zichron Teruah". Despite this, the "Singers Prayer Book" the siddur used in England and authorised by the then Chief Rabbi of England, Rabbi Natan Adler, and also the siddur authorised by the late Chief Rabbi Yoseph Hertz, state that when erev Rosh Hashanah occurs on Friday one does blow. I searched and searched but could find no source for such a statement. I therefore sent a question up to Wikipedia Reference Desk. I only received one answer but unfortunately it in no way answered this question.

My paper was divided into three sections. The first discussed in detail the various reasons put forward for blowing on Rosh Chodesh Elul, or alternatively, during the entire month of Elul; the second described the various Sephardi customs for blowing at least during Elul, but unlike the Ashkenazim, the blowing takes place during the recitation of Selichot which Sephardim recite at least throughout the month of Elul, rather than at the end of Shacharit; the third discussed a number of subjects connected with this Elul blowing, and these included, whether one has to have a kosher shofar during Elul; hearing the shofar via a telephone; whether or not a child under Barmitzvah age can blow in a Shul minyan; whether or not one recites a berachah on this Elul blowing; whether this blowing is limited to a Shul minyan or does a person davening individually also have to blow; if one is in the middle of one's davening can one stop to listen to the shofar.

Regarding the blowing of the Shofar by a child during Elul, Rabbi Yaacov Blau of Kiryat Arba informed me that from the time he was about 6 years old he learned to blow the shofar, and during Elul he would run from minyan to minyan to blow. He is indeed an expert shofar blower.

I also discussed whether one should only blow until Rosh Hashanah or alternatively until Yom Kippur, or even to Hoshana Raba. Another point I

wrote about was those who blow in the evening during Elul, when should they blow on Motzaei Shabbat during Elul, and whether the same criterion apply as for the blowing at the end of Yom Kippur.

An unusual paper I came across during this research was entitled “Hilchos Monkeys” and the author gave examples of using monkeys to perform certain mitzvot. (Monkeys are indeed used to assist people with, for example, paralysis.) In his list, he did not specifically mention a monkey blowing the Shofar during Elul, although he did include Rabbi Hershel Schechter’s comment that a monkey could read the ketuvah under the chuppah! Maybe, although it may well be difficult to teach a monkey to blow a shevarim and a teruah, it might be possible for the monkey to blow a tekiah, and a human would blow the other notes! Even on Rosh Hashanah, one man could blow the tekiah and other people could blow the other notes.

In order to get a historical perspective of when various Rabbis quoted in this paper had lived, where the information was known, I added the period in which they lived and also their location.

After having written the first draft of the paper, as with all my other papers, I printed it out, and then carefully checked it word by word, line by line. I then then had a person who is proficient in the details of the Hebrew language to edit the paper.

I should mention that this paper is considerably longer than most of the other papers I have written. The number of references/footnotes is about 250 which is about twice as many as my other papers.

As with my other papers, I photocopied the relevant parts of my source material and attached it to the end of the paper.

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September 17

Blowing the Shofar on erev Rosh Hashanah

It is a custom among the Ashkenazim to blow the Shofar each weekday morning at the end of the shacharit service, throughout the month of Elul. However, on erev Rosh Hashanah, one does not do so, in order to make a distinction between the customary blowing during the month of Elul and the obligatory blowing on Rosh Hashanah, and this also applies if erev Rosh Hashanah occurs on a Friday. However the "Authorised Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew Congregations of the British Empire" (popularly known as the "Singer's Prayer Book") states that if erev Rosh Hashanah occurs on a Friday, one does blow the Shofar. I cannot find a source for this which is brought in the Singer's Prayer Book. Can any user please let me know the source for this. Thank you. [Simonschaim](#) (talk) 08:54, 17 September 2020 (UTC)

Not sure if this helps, but I found *The authorised Daily Prayer Book of the United Hebrew congregations of the British Empire* (London, 1904) (<https://archive.org/details/authoriseddailypr00sing>). [Alansplodge](#) (talk) 16:43, 17 September 2020 (UTC)

Thank you Alansplodge. However this is the source where I found it, and I am searching for the source from where they took it. כתיבה מחייבה טובה [Simonschaim](#) (talk) 17:40, 17 September 2020 (UTC)

Ah yes. That makes sense. Sorry, no luck on that. [Alansplodge](#) (talk) 20:30, 17 September 2020 (UTC)

Not a source, but a possible reason for this exception. The point of not performing the customary Elul blowing on the eve of Rosh Hashanah is to create a hiatus to set the blowing of the shofar apart. The shofar would not be customarily sounded on a Shabbat, so if it is blown on Shabbat, that by itself already sets it apart from the customary blowing, and no hiatus is needed. In that case erev Rosh Hashanah falls on a Friday. --[Lambiam](#) 21:16, 17 September 2020 (UTC)

Thank you. However, כיון שאומרים זכרון תרועה הוי כמו הקיעה שער הציון brings in משנה ברורה [Simonschaim](#) (talk) 11:46, 18 September 2020 (UTC)

תורה TORAH MUSINGS

Hilchos Monkeys

Posted by: [Avi Eisen](#) • [Log In](#), [Add Entry](#) • [Mar 31, 11](#) • [13 Comments](#)



By: [Rabbi Avi Eisen](#)

Folks – since it is still Ader with two days of Purim around here[1] I just didn't have the "frame of mind" to prepare a more "narrative" post for this week. As such, I thought that I would take this opportunity to share with you some very important halachos concerning monkeys that everyone should know.

I don't make this stuff up! I did! It's really all there in the sources. Enjoy!

1. King Solomon had several pet monkeys.[2]
2. If one's pet monkey escapes on Shabbat one is permitted to chase after it and recapture it. There is no concern for violating the restrictions of "trapping" or "muktza".[3]
3. Although a monkey is not a non-Jew, nevertheless, one is not allowed to have one's monkey participate in cooking, including putting a pot of food on the fire. Any food prepared by a monkey remains forbidden under the principle of "bishul akum".[4]
4. A monkey may not derive as a sho'et.[5]
5. One is permitted to allow one's monkey to prepare the four Tzitzit.[6]
6. So too, a monkey may be appointed to serve as one's shalich to deliver mishle'ach monot on Purim.[7]
7. A monkey that forces itself upon a woman does not disqualify her from marrying a kohen.[8] Yes, this really has happened.[9]
8. The Mishnah says that one who is drunk is comparable to a dancing monkey.[10]
9. When one comes across a monkey (or elephant) one recites the blessing "Baruch atah... meshaneh fabric".[11]
10. There is a Chassidic custom[12] not to stare at a monkey. This is based on the teaching that the avilars who built the Tower of Babel were turned into monkeys.[13]
11. One's monkey is permitted to pour the water upon one's hands as required before eating bread[14] (netilat yadaym), though some disagree.[15]
12. One must always feed one's monkey before feeding oneself.[16]
13. Monkeys are disqualified from serving in the Beit Hamikdash in any way.[17]
14. It seems to be unanimous among the entire spectrum of orthodoxy that a monkey can be honored at a wedding ceremony with the reading of the ketuba.[18]
15. It is considered inauspicious to dream about monkeys.[19]
16. There is an opinion that the President of Israel, Mr. Shimon Peres, is actually a monkey.[20]

[1] <https://www.torahmusings.com/2010/03/why-i-observe-two-days-of-purim/>

[2] Divrei Hayamim II 8:21.

[3] OC 308:31, 316:12; Haliva Berura 316:57, 308:58; Shear Hatzen 658:3. The ruling of Rabbi Yitzchak Zilberstein cbb in Yharov Na, V'Kabul.

[4] Shvus Mitzoi 3:164. See there for more on having your monkeys and other pets help you around the kitchen.

[5] Tosefta, Chulin 1.

[6] Tosefta, Eruvin 2: (2:50C 47B d.)

[7] Divan Seder to Gitin 22b; Pitrei Teshuva 148; Chashkai Chemed, Megilla 7a

[8] Mesechet Derech Eretz, Arayot, 7.

[9] Yersufim, Megilla 4:1.

[10] Tanchuma Nasch 12

[11] Berachot 58b, O.C. 325:8

<https://www.torahmusings.com/2011/03/hilchos-monkeys/>

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מנהג כל חשוון להקנה חמשה	ל"ח	מחזור תשעה

Chart showing whether one blows shofar just on Rosh Chodesh Elul or during entire month

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א"ת
ס' ה"א

אולם לכמה ראשונים, נראה שהיה להם גרסה אחרת. הם כוללים
הראב"ה (מאה ה-12),³⁹ מחזור ויטרי (התחלת מאה ה-13),⁴⁰ צדה לדרך⁴¹
(מאה ה-14) והטור (התחלת המאה ה-14),⁴² שמביאים דברי פרקי דרבי
אליעזר אולם הם כותבים: "ולכן התקינו חכמים שיהיו תוקעין בראש
חודש אלול כל החודש," דהיינו שהם הוסיפו את המילים "כל החודש."⁴³

✓ אע"פ שראינו שלרא"ש היה גרסה בלי המילים "כל החודש" הוא הוסיף
"וכן נהגו באשכנז לתקוע כל חודש אלול."⁴⁴ כמו-כן כל לוחי השנה
(שמוזכרים לעיל), וגם הפירוש "דרך החיים" על הסיודור, כותבים בפירוש
שתוקעים בכל חודש אלול.

✓ משה היה בהר סיני ארבעים יום דהיינו עד יום כיפור, לכן מדוע תוקעים
רק בחודש אלול ולא עד יום כיפור? הרב אלעזר מגרמייזא (שחי במאות ה-
12-13) בספרו "הרוקח" כתב על זה: "התקינו שיהו תוקעין מ' [ארבעים]
יום עד יום הכפורים על שם מ' יום אחרונים שעלו משה למרום ואמר
לתקוע בכל יום כדי שלא יטעו עוד בעבודה זרה." אולם הוא מסיים שרק
תוקעים עד ראש השנה.⁴⁵

✓ הפירוש "קצה המטה" שנכתב ע"י הרב חיים צבי אהרנרייך על הספר
"מטה אפרים" מביא רמז בספר תהלים לתקיעת שופר בחודש אלול. הוא
ביסס דבריו על ה"בית יוסף" שכותב שהמילה "הללו" מופיע שתים-עשרה
פעמים בתהילים ק"נ וזה כנגד ה-12 חדשי השנה, וכופלים הפסוק האחרון

א"ת א"ת א"ת

א"ת א"ת א"ת

39 רבינו אליעזר בן יואל הלוי, ספר ראב"ה, חלק שני, (חברת מקיצי נרדמים: ברלין, תרצ"ו),
הלכות ראש השנה סי' תקמב
40 רבינו שמחה מויטרי, אחד מתלמידי רש"י, מחזור ויטרי, (שמעון הלוי איש הורוויץ: נירנברג,
תרפ"ג), סי' שכב
41 הרב מנחם בן אהרן אבן זרח, ספר צדה לדרך, (פירארא, שי"ד), הכלל החמישי בהלכות ראש
השנה ... פרק שני
42 טור, או"ח סי' תקפ"א
43 הרב שם טוב טאגין בספרו "כתר שם טוב" כתב (עמ' 10) שזה היה הטור שהוסיף את המילים "וכל
החדש"; אולם רואים שהיו אחרים שעשו את זה בתאריך יותר מוקדם.
44 הרא"ש, שם, מסכת ראש השנה, פרק רביעי
45 הרב אלעזר מגרמייזא, הרוקח, הלכות ראש השנה סי' רז

Sample page of first draft