



Cantor's Corner

It is that special time of the year. During the month of Elul, that precedes Rosh haShana, we blow the shofar every morning at the conclusion of the morning prayers. We hear three distinct sounds:

1. *Tekiah* — one long, straight blast
2. *Shevarim* — three shorter, wailing sounds
3. *Teruah* — 9 quick blasts in short succession

The shofar sounds, powerful in themselves convey the different liturgical themes of Rosh HaShana.

Rosh HaShana is the day when we appreciate that God is all-powerful; God is the King of the Universe and our King, Avinu Malkenu. *Tekiah* — the long, straight shofar blast — resembles the sound of the King's coronation. But for many of us, the idea of a "king" conjures up images of a greedy and power-hungry despot. Maimonides teaches us that in Jewish tradition, a king is first and foremost a servant of the people (Laws of Kings 2:6).

Every morning we wake up attached to the false illusion that we are the masters of the world. Rabbi Yehuda HaLevi remind us that those who idolize "time" and think that "time" is at their mercy are, in fact, its slaves.

When we think about the year gone by, we know deep down that we've failed to live up to our full potential. In the coming year, we yearn not to waste that opportunity again. The Kabbalists say that *Shevarim* — three medium, wailing blasts — is the sobbing cry of a Jewish heart, yearning to connect, to grow, to achieve.

On Rosh Hashana, we need to wake up and be honest and objective about our lives: Who we are, where we've been, and which direction we're headed. The *Teruah* sound — 9 quick blasts in short succession — resembles an alarm clock, arousing us from our spiritual slumber. The shofar brings clarity, alertness, and focus.

Temptations are many and come in many sizes and colors. If you are like me, you probably don't take the time to reconnect with your deepest desires and essence.

The questions cannot be postponed any longer: Am I on track? Am I pursuing my real mission in life? The shofar reminds us that we have no time to waste!

Hazzan Ramón

(at your service)