

Hashem through the blasts. It seems that the blasts served one purpose for the times, but produced a timeless result of exaltation of Hashem.

Furthermore, the version cited refers to blowing the *shofar* on *Rosh Chodesh Elul* alone. The prevailing *Ashkenazic* practice is to blow for the whole month. Furthermore, it is hard to understand how their blowing on *Rosh Chodesh*, to inform the people when Moshe ascended, would prevent further idolatry. Other versions indicate that they blasted the *shofar* every day that Moshe was still up on the mountain. [Rather than 'on' *Rosh Chodesh*, it says 'from' *Rosh Chodesh*.] This way, they would know that the time had not yet come for his return. He descended on *Yom Kippur*, when they did not blow *shofar* initially. They did so later, for a different reason. This explains our practice, partially. We do not blow for the entire forty days, but for the month of *Elul* alone. A third version ends with the words 'every year and for the entire month.' This does not explain why they would stop before *Yom Kippur*, if the purpose was to prevent a second mistake.

In reality, various different practices are recorded by the poskim. In some countries they would blow all forty days, through *Yom Kippur*. They would not blow on *Shabbos*, or during the day of *Yom Kippur*, but at the end of the day. Some countries blow until *Rosh Hashanah*. Within both practices, some start on the first day of *Rosh Chodesh*, though *Elul* has not yet begun. If they started on the second day, the first version would not have a total of forty days. Nowadays, *Elul* is always only twenty-nine days. The poskim say that one should not blow on *Erev Rosh Hashanah* itself. Some had the practice not to blow three days before *Rosh Hashanah*. Most communities blow in the mornings at the end of *shacharis* services. Some communities also blow at the end of *mincha*, or if they *daven* an early *maariv*, at the end of *maariv*. Oriental communities who recite *selichos* during the entire month blow it during or after the *selichos*. Most of them then blow a second time toward the end of *shacharis*. Some Spanish-Portuguese communities only blow it during the Ten Days of Penitence. Some Turkish and Syrian communities do not have the *minhag* at all.

To explain the practices and their sources, the commentaries and poskim point out that there must be more to the institution. The Israelites had miscalculated and made a mistake the first time. They had learned a bitter lesson. Why would they make the same mistake again? Furthermore, what does the mistake of idolatry have to do with Hashem being exalted through these blasts? The biggest question is, why the *shofar*?

Additional reasons are added for the initial institution. The *shofar* sound arouses repentance. This is based on a *passuk*: Could a *shofar* be sounded in the city and the people would not tremble? [Amos 3:6] There is also a principle of *kedai le'arbaiv hasatan*, to confound the Satan, the prosecuting forces. The prosecuting force accuses us of sinning. We want to divert him from confronting us on *Rosh Hashanah*. He knows that on *Rosh Hashanah* the *shofar* is sounded. This way, he will not know the true date, and perhaps he will give up. Alternatively, his case against us is weakened when we show such love for the *shofar*. These seem to be separate reasons, that have little to do with preventing mistaken calculations or exalting Hashem. However, the way the reasons are worded indicates a connection. Some say that the penitence refers to the Israelites after the golden calf. This was a period, while Moshe was on the mountain with Hashem, during which

the people repented. The Satan was the cause for their previous downfall. He had conjured an image of Moshe dying, so that the people thought they needed a replacement. The *shofar* was to confound him then as well, for he always tries again. When the people took such measures to prevent future idolatry, Hashem was exalted. This *shofar* drew the people after Hashem. The *shofar* was used due to its connection to penitence and to kingship. It serves as a rallying call to penitence and to come to follow the King. It was also a reminder of the original revelation that led to the first *Luchos*. This time the *shofar* was initiated by the Israelites, or perhaps Moshe. One version implies that Hashem told Moshe to blow the *shofar*. All of this only accounts for the blasts on *Rosh Chodesh Elul*. Nonetheless, the people might have continued it based on Moshe's instructions.

Another *passuk* indicates that the *shofar* should be blown for a month [Tehilim 81:4]. To fulfill this verse, those who blow it for the first twenty-eight days of *Elul*, skip *Erev Rosh Hashanah*, and blow two days of *Rosh Hashanah*, have blown it for a complete month of thirty days. [This works with a calendar that always has twenty-nine days of *Elul* and two days of *Rosh Hashanah*. When *Elul* could be thirty days, and *Rosh Hashanah* one day, the numbers would be adjusted slightly. If *Elul* was twenty-nine days, and *Rosh Hashanah* one day, this would not work.] The break before *Rosh Hashanah* is also to confound the Satan. It is also a way to remind us that these blasts are not an actual fulfillment of the real *mitzvah* of *shofar*. That is only on *Rosh Hashanah*. Once *Rosh Hashanah* has passed, there is no longer a need to confound the Satan. [See PdRE 46, RDL 17-20. Tur BY Darkei Moshe Bach Sh Ar OC 581:1, commentaries.]

B) Analyzing the reasons

We now have six basic reasons for the institution, that may or may not be connected. It is to commemorate the original blasts of *Rosh Chodesh Elul* when Moshe went up to get the second *Luchos*. That blast was also to prevent a repeat of the miscalculation of the forty days. Hashem was exalted with that blast. The *shofar* arouses people to repent. It also draws people away from idolatry and to follow Hashem. It confounds the Satan.

To commemorate the original blast, we would only do it on *Rosh Chodesh*. If they also blew it for forty days to prevent mistakes, we would blow it through *Yom Kippur*. If its purpose is to arouse repentance, it could be for *Elul* or through *Yom Kippur*. If it is to confound the Satan, we understand why it is not blown after *Rosh Hashanah*. However, for this reason alone it need not be blown for the entire month. Furthermore, many communities do not blow the full set of blasts. Those who do so, do not cover all combinations. Therefore, the poskim maintain that these reasons all overlap. They are all needed to explain different parts of the institution. Thus, the institution was made for all of these reasons, and different parts of it satisfy different reasons. Nonetheless, the prevailing practices do not necessarily satisfy all reasons.

An interesting note is made by some commentaries. The Talmud says that Moshe always ascended in the early morning. This would have been the time when the *shofar* was sounded. Therefore, the *minhag* is to blow in the morning. This does not explain those who blow it at *mincha* or *maariv*, which was apparently the original *minhag*. Confounding the Satan also seems to be at odds with this *minhag*. [If the Satan is confounded by our repeated attachment to the *shofar*, this would fit well.] It seems that the *minhag* to