

Section 7

Yom Teru'ah

Few novel *halakhic* issues are raised regarding *Yom Teru'ah* that are not shared by the other holidays on which *melechet avodah* is forbidden. (See § 5.1.) The only *halakhic* question that is addressed in the *Adderet* is whether one is required to blow the shofar on *Yom Teru'ah* as the Rabbanites do. The *Adderet* also addresses the interesting interpretive question of whether *Yom Teru'ah* can properly be considered the start of the year.

The topics I will cover in this section are:

1. Whether *Yom Teru'ah* is the start of the year
2. Whether one is required to blow shofar on *Yom Teru'ah*
3. The Requirement to "Shout" on *Yom Teru'ah*

"It is so that for most of the appointed times there is a reason for their being required; either because they are a remembrance for a certain miracle or a certain event. However, in the case of Yom Teru'ah the reason is not evident from the biblical text" –*Adderet* Eliyahu's Introduction to the Section on *Yom Teru'ah*

§6.1 Whether *Yom Teru'ah* can be considered the start of the year

The *Adderet* discusses the problem of whether *Yom Teru'ah* can be considered the start of the year in three different places: (i) in the section of setting the calendar, (ii) in the section on *Yom Teru'ah*, and (iii) in the section by Rav Calev Afendopolo on the *Shemita* year. This summary draws material from all three sections.

The Sages held that there were two starts to the year. The first start is the First Month ("Nisan"). This start is the general start of the year as well as the start for the counting of holidays. The second start is during the Seventh Month ("*Tishre*"), and it is the start of the business year.

It is clear that the First Month (the month in which *Chag HaMatzot* falls) is one of the two starts to the year because it is explicitly referred to as the First Month in the Torah and because it is written regarding the First Month: "This month shall be for you the beginning of months, it shall be for you the first month of the months of the year" (Exodus 12:2). Throughout the Torah all important dates and holidays are counted with respect to the First Month; thus, the First Month is the general start of the year and the start of the year for the counting of holidays.

The Seventh Month too marks another start to the year. In particular, *Chag HaSukkot* which occurs in the Seventh Month is referred to as both "the turning of the year" (Exodus 34:22) and the "feast of gathering at the leaving of the year" (Exodus 23:16). Although this particular phrasing literally refers to *Chag HaSukkot* as the "leaving of the year", since the year is cyclical the end of the year is also its beginning.

Further proof that the Seventh Month marks another start to the year can be drawn from the laws of *shemita* (the Sabbatical year, occurring every seven years) and *yovel* (The Jubilee Year, occurring at the end of seven *shemita* years). Every *shemita* year begins on *Chag Ha'Sukkot* as it is written “at the end of every seven years at the set time of the *shemita* year, in the holiday of Sukkot” (Deuteronomy 31:10). Furthermore, regarding every *yovel* we are commanded: “Then you will make proclamation with the blast of the horn on the tenth day of the Seventh Month...and you will hallow every fiftieth year and proclaim freedom throughout the land” (Leviticus 25:9-10)¹.

As a practical matter, it is also a necessity that the *shemita* begin in the Seventh Month and not the First Month – otherwise we would be required to give the land rest for two years out of every seven which is not scripture's intent. By way of illustration, if the *shemita* year were to start in the First Month then it would be forbidden to harvest crop (see Leviticus 25:5) that spring since the spring would be during the *shemita* year. In the fall of that same year, when the crop harvested in the spring of the upcoming year is usually sown, it would be forbidden to sow (see Leviticus 25:4) because it would still be the *shemita* year. Thus, in the spring of the year immediately after the *shemita* year there would still be no harvest and the land would have rested two consecutive years².

Because the *shemita* and *yovel* pertain to matters of business (debts, indentured servitude, the gathering of crops), the sages called the Seventh Month the start of the business year.

While all the arguments above support the Seventh Month being the start of the *shemita* year, it does not necessarily point to *Yom Te'ruah* being the first day of that year. Indeed, most of the proofs above implicate *Chag HaSukkot* as the start of the *shemita* and *yovel* years. Rav Bashyatzi notes, however, that just as the month is made up of full days so too is the year made up of full months. Thus, it is fitting that the “business year” year begins on *Yom Teru'ah*, which is the first day of the Seventh Month. In the Adderet's section on *Shemita*, however, Rav Calev Afendopolo notes that this is not the intent of the Torah and that counting the year from *Yom Teru'ah* is merely a practice that Israel accepted as a matter of convenience. Whether Rav Afendopolo is disagreeing with the words of his teacher or merely clarifying Rav Bashyatzi's words is not clear to me.

§6.2 Whether one is required to blow shofar on Yom Teru'ah

Although we find that the verb form of *teru'ah* is sometimes juxtaposed with blowing of the shofar or other instruments as in “with trumpets and the sound of the shofar you will raise your voices (“*hari'u*”) before *Hashem*, the king” (Psalms 98:8), the word *teru'ah* does not necessarily refer to the blowing of the shofar. This is clear because we find in many other verses that the same verb refers to human

¹ Interestingly the *Shemita* year is referred to as starting on *Chag HaSukkot* but the *yovel* on the tenth of the seventh month, that is *Yom Hakippurim*. In the Adderet's section on *Shemita*, Rav Afendopolo explains that the *Yovel* actually began on *Chag HaSukkot* since that is the time when all Israel was gathered together for the *Chag* and afterwards could go back to their families. However, the Torah commands that we alert everyone of the *Yovel* on *Yom Kippur* several days in advance.
² Although the Adderet records that the land would rest 2 consecutive years if the *shemita* year began in the first month, it seems to me that the land would only have to rest 1.5 years. This is because the people could still gather fruit in the second half of the year following the *shemita* since fruit trees do not require replanting every year. Either way the argument still holds.

voices. For example, it is written “and *Yehoshua* heard the voice of the people as they shouted (“*bere’oh*”)” (Exodus 32:17). Thus, there is no requirement to blow shofar on *Yom Teru’ah*.

Notes on §6.2:

There exists according to the sages no special requirement to blow the shofar. Yet the Psalms arguably make reference to such a requirement:

Sing aloud unto God our strength; shout unto the God of Jacob. Take up the melody and sound the timbrel, the sweet harp with psaltery. **Blow the Shofar at the new moon, at the full moon for our *Chag*. For it is a statute for Israel, a law of the God of Jacob.** (Psalms 81:2-5)

The last two verses arguably indicate that the blowing of the shofar on at least one new moon (perhaps specifically *Yom Teru’ah*, the new moon of the Seventh Month) and at least one of the *Chagim* that falls during the full moon is to be considered a binding requirement, a “law of the God of Jacob”. How do the sages reconcile this verse with their belief that there is no requirement to blow the shofar? Furthermore, even if this verse does indicate, contrary to the opinion of the sages, a requirement to blow the shofar, what would be the source for such a requirement in the first five books of Moshe?

Unfortunately neither *Adderet Eliyahu* nor *Gan Eden* discuss these verses. Further, I could not find references to this verse in the commentaries *Keter Torah* and *Sefer Hamivhar*³. Rav Levi ben Yefet does, however, discuss these verses in his *Sefer HaMitzvot*. He suggests that the shofar would be blown on the new moon should the month happen to be a 29 day month so that the people would know when the new month was starting. It would seem then, that Rav Levi attributes the source of the law mentioned in this verse to a logical extension of laws regarding the calendar. Rav Levi’s interpretation, however, appears to me incomplete because it does not explain the apparent requirement to blow the shofar “at the full moon for our *Chag*” (Psalms 81:4).

The first five books of Moshe do include a requirement to blow two silver trumpets on all holidays (including *Yom Teruah* and the three *Chagim*) and new moons: “Also in the day of your gladness and in your appointed seasons (*mo’adeichem*) and in your new moons, you will blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings” (Numbers 10:10). However, the two trumpets in question are those that the Israelites were commanded to create and use for a specific set of purposes (Numbers 10:10). Given the specificity of the laws regarding these trumpets, it seems unlikely that this verse could also be extended as the source of the apparent requirement mentioned in the Psalms to blow *Shofar*. That is, one cannot argue through *Hekeish* that this verse suggests that Shofar must be blown in addition to or as an alternative to the silver trumpets.

It seems to me that the best solution to the present problem is that “the law of the God of Jacob” refers not only to the blowing of the shofar but also to the singing, shouting, and playing of the timbrel and harp mention earlier in the Psalm. In other words, the law mentioned is a general command to celebrate and express happiness on the *Chagim* and new moons with singing, shouting, timbrel, harp and shofar being some of the possible ways to fulfill this command. Such an explicit command to celebrate has a clear source in the first five books of Moshe for both *Chag Ha’Shavu’ot*: “and you will rejoice before Hashem your God” (Deuteronomy 16:11) and *Chag Ha’Sukkot*: “and you will rejoice in your *Chag*” (Deuteronomy 16:14). It seems reasonable that it should also extend by way of *Hekeish* to other holidays and new moons because these too were happy occasions. Indeed, Saul held festive feasts

³ All these works are quite extensive. I looked only in the places discussing *Yom Teru’ah* where I thought these verses might be mentioned.

on the new moon (1 Samuel 20:5) and it was customary to visit the prophets on the new moon (2 Kings 4:23). Regarding the holidays, some such as Passover commemorate joyous occasions and so the command to be joyous would seem to logically apply equally to these holidays. Furthermore, even regarding *Yom Teru'ah* which does not necessarily commemorate a joyous occasion, we find that Nehemiah commands the people to be joyous: "Go eat fatty foods and drink sweets and send portions unto to him to he who has nothing prepared, for this day is holy unto our Lord. Do not be grieved for the joy of Hashem is your strength" (Nehemiah 8:10). Thus, I believe that the "law of the God of Jacob" referred to in this Psalm is the general requirement to act joyously on the holidays and new moons (with the exception of Yom Kippur). I believe that this explanation is superior to claiming that the Psalm references a specific requirement to blow shofar because there is no clear source in the first five books of Moshe for such a requirement.

Although I have argued that there is a general requirement to be joyous on holidays, I will note that for the purposes of explaining the verse in Psalms 81, it is sufficient to demonstrate that there is a requirement to be joyous on at least one new moon and at least one *Chag* that falls at the time of the full moon (either *Chag HaMatzot* or *Chag HaSukkot*). This follows because the phrase "blow the shofar on the new moon, at the full moon for our Chag" could be read either as a general statement or as referring to a specific new moon or Chag.

§6.3 The Requirement to Shout on Yom Teru'ah

The Sages held that additional "shouting", through actual shouting, singing, or instrument playing should be done on *Yom Teru'ah* in accordance with the meaning of *Teru'ah* discussed in §6.2. However, the sages held at least three different opinions regarding the timing and cause of this shouting.

First, Some of these sages held that this "shouting" was done at the *Musaf*⁴ offering along with the blasting of the silver trumpets: "Also in the day of your gladness and in your appointed seasons (*mo'adeichem*) and in your new moons, you will blow with the trumpets over your burnt offerings and over the sacrifices of your peace-offerings" (Numbers 10:10). Second, other sages held that the additional shouting was done at the time of the daily offering because the verse above does not specify that the "burnt offerings" mentioned were *Musaf* offerings and because only *Yom Teru'ah* is an appointed season, a new moon, and a day of happiness⁵. For these first two groups of sages the requirement to "shout" no longer holds in the absence of the temple. A third group of sages, however, held that the "shouting" was done to awaken people to the upcoming period of repentance before *Yom HaKippurim*. For these sages, the requirement to "shout" still holds today⁶.

⁴ The *Musaf* offering was an additional sacrificial offering made on Shabbat and holidays.

⁵ I can think of two separate ways to understand this opinion as it is described in *Adderet Eliyahu* and *Gan Eden*. First, these sages may have believed that this verse referred only to *Yom Teru'ah* and that since no specific offering was mention in the verse, they assumed it was discussing the standard daily offering. Alternatively, these sages may have believed that this verse refers to all holidays and new moons. The clause mentioning the new moon required trumpets on the new moon offering, the clause mentioning appointed times on the *Musaf* offering, and the clause mentioning the day of happiness refered specifically to Yom Teru'ah and it was meant to apply to the daily offering. Thus, only *Yom Teru'ah* included all three blastings of the trumpets.

⁶ I am not sure how these sages implemented this requirement or whether this requirement is in anyway reflected in the current liturgy.