



Two Parables for Shofar

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“The Holy One declares: ‘speak words of coronation to make Me King over you, state memoirs, in order that I recall your merits. And how? Through blowing the Shofar.’”

This is explained in the well-known discourse of the Rebbe Maharash, who cites two parables to explain the Shofar blowing. The first parable is from the Baal Shem Tov, And the second is in the name of Rabbi Levi Yitzchok of Berditchev, as printed in the discourse.

The Baal Shem Tov’s parable is: Once there was a prince. Eventually the king decided to send the prince away to be educated in a distant land. Subsequently, for whatever reason, the prince forgot about his father the king, and the royal customs – he even forgot the language spoken in the king’s palace and in the capital.

Finally, when the prince returned to the capital, and desired to rejoin the king, he was not allowed in. He had forgotten the language. So what does the prince do? – He cries out. And his voice reaches his father, the king, who recognizes his son’s voice. At once, he welcomes his son into his royal chambers and garbs him in splendid garments, as detailed in the parable.

The second parable tells of a king who became lost in a forest. Then a wise man appeared, who recognized the king, and led him back to the capital.

A time later, the wise man acted improperly, in a way that upset the king, and he was found guilty at trial. So the wise man’s final request was to don the clothing that he had worn when he met the King – and that the king should don the garments he had worn the day they met in the forest, when he had helped him back to the palace.

The metaphor is, Rabbi Levi Yitzchok continues, that God came to each the nations and offered them His Torah, and no one wanted it – until He came to the Jewish people, and they accepted His Torah.

Therefore, when Rosh Hashana comes, we blow the Shofar like at Sinai, and God is reminded that at one time He tried to give His Torah and no one accepted it – only the Jews, His people, desired the Torah. At that point, He forgives us, and the relationship is restored. The blowing of the Shofar on Rosh Hashana evoke the situation when He gave us the Torah.



פרשת ראה

The difference between these two parables is: The first example refers to an act on the part of the prince, who cries out "with an inner cry" to remind the king – the Jew's Shofar blast arouses the King to His son's voice. – The 'voice' signifies repentance.

The second parable cites the giving of the Torah, which reflects the Jew's importance.

And these are the two aspects of Shofar: Subjugation to God as our King – the message of the first parable; and "reminding God's of our favor" – the message of the second parable. So how are these two variant ends achieved? Specifically through the blowing of the Shofar.

